

Before you read the article, use [vocabulary.com](http://vocabulary.com) to find the definition and part of speech for each word listed below.

Respond to the following prompts in complete sentences. Consider what you know about yourself + others as well as what you've learned in the past.

1. What makes a piece of literature considered "Timeless" or "Universal"?
2. What is the most valuable lesson you learned from a piece of literature?

**Disgruntled**

**Decode**

**Voracious**

**Transcend**

**Indifference**

**Concise**

**Assertion**

**Delve**

**Empathize**

**Articulate**

3. Why do we read stories?

#### 4. How is writing style influenced by purpose?

5. E.P. Whipple once said, “Books are lighthouses erected in the great sea of time.” Explain the meaning of this quote and how it is applicable to your **own life**.

## Are Books the Magic Wands we’ve been Looking For?

1 Why do we even bother with reading? Many might even argue that we could be doing more productive things with our time other than reading. However, there seems to be something magical about the power of books. Literature has the ability to transform, or at least convince our imaginations that we’ve been transformed. Even though many adolescent students and adults alike show a sense of disgruntlement toward “flipping the pages”, they should probably consider how reading has side-effects that are often unattainable through any other measure.



Did you know that reading actually offers therapeutic benefits? In a recent study

2 conducted by researchers at the University of Liverpool, it was found that reading literature significantly decreased depressive moods and emotional issues. Participants, who were patients suffering with diagnosed depression, reported feeling more confident because of a reduced sense

of social isolation. After reading pieces of classic literature and poetry, patients were prompted to take an introspective view of the reading. In a group setting, a facilitator made the reading “come alive” as they applied what they read to both old and new life experiences. **Because the participants were able to articulate shared feelings and experiences aroused by a text, they were able to understand a sense of camaraderie rather than loneliness.** This simple concept of reading used as therapy doesn’t have to be utilized in a group, medical setting. **In fact, we could possibly trigger the same results on our own by applying what we read to our lives.** Continued research studies have even found that reading can reduce stress by around 68%! That’s a **staggering number.** Themes of classic literature are considered “classic” because they are universal and timeless. It’s amazing what the ancient Romans or even **Harry Potter can teach us about life, relationships, and the world around us.** **The peace we get from reading literature,** which helps us to know that we’re not alone in our daily struggles, can certainly be considered a top reason to be a voracious reader!

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3 **George R. R. Martin, writer of the famous reader lives a thousand lives before he dies...the man who never reads lives only** **Game of Thrones** series once wrote, “A one.” **The true magic found within the heart of reading is that it allows us the privilege to transcend our present circumstances. Whether it be through taking a “journey” to a distant land through the eyes of a character or simply “walking in someone else’s shoes”, reading ultimately educates us. When we read about different places and cultures, we can better understand different perspectives. In turn, we are more likely to become empathetic toward those around us. When we don’t understand a way of thinking, we cannot possibly understand their voice, reasoning, or struggle. By reading stories from those who lead very different lives than ourselves, we are able to more fully comprehend how the past always intertwines with the future.** This idea alone beautifully illustrates why “deep reading” is necessary in order to reap the benefits of literary endeavors. When we read a text deeply, we aren’t merely reading words, we are **seeing the stories in our minds. We are understanding what we read, and most importantly we are applying the stories to our own lives.** Deep reading doesn’t mean decoding difficult words and texts, but rather delving into how the lives, tales, and assertions of others immerse us into uncovering complex emotions and situations. Simply stated, reading is a concise way to travel the globe, uncover hidden meaning, and see how the lives of others are complicated by relationships, trials, and triumphs. Reading great literature can even remove our indifference

toward the suffering of others and make us into more compassionate,

forbearing beings. 4 When deep reading occurs, we never truly emerge the same as before we started the story. This slow, applicable experience is considered by some to be what makes us “human”. **When we read stories of failure, disgrace, or even suffering, we learn how to combat our own, private demons. The characters in books teach us how to or how to**



not handle the many peaks and valleys of everyday life.

Identifying with characters in stories actually teaches us a lot about ourselves and the relationships which we find ourselves in. In fact, a reader might even learn to be more determined, or persevere when they find themselves in the belly of the whale, if they are able to subconsciously tap into what they've learned from a book character.



5 As a whole, we should read because we need magic in our lives to lift us out of darkness, teach us valuable lessons, and show us that we are truly never alone.

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# Reading Comprehension Questions

1. What is the effect of the author's use of words like "indifference," "transcend," and "empathetic"?
  - A. They encourage the reader to view literature as a humanistic aid rather than an academic boost.
  - B. They encourage the reader to see the underlying sarcasm the speaker is using.
  - C. They create a tone of remorse, regret, and slight guilt.
  - D. They give the reader an idea of how literature encourages obliviousness.
2. What is the central idea of paragraph 3?
  - A. Reading discourages personal evolution.
  - B. Reading can be transformational if utilized correctly.
  - C. Reading encourages childlike creativity.
  - D. People do not understand the impact that illiteracy has on children.
3. Read the following quote from the text:  
**"Reading great literature can even remove our indifference toward the suffering of others and make us into more compassionate, forbearing beings."**  
Which word could replace *forbearing* and mean nearly the same thing?
  - A. Underlying
  - B. Disregarding
  - C. Nonchalant
  - D. Merciful
4. How does the author connect ideas in the selection?
  - A. By stringing together the benefits supported by statistics and anecdotes
  - B. By highlighting the primary relationship between reader and writer
  - C. By incorporating common terminology throughout the piece

- D. By placing emphasis on how illiteracy affects values throughout each paragraph
5. How does the author support his claim throughout the selection?
- A. By including examples of how “deep reading” propels academic success
  - B. By exposing non-readers as lacking intelligence and the ability to create lasting relationships
  - C. By giving realistic examples of the benefits of “deep reading” in multiple different areas of life
  - D. By creating a picture in the reader’s mind of what literature does for the imagination
6. What is the author’s primary tone in this selection?
- A. Informative
  - B. Whimsical
  - C. Apathetic
  - D. Comical
7. Why did the author choose to include the allusion in paragraph 4?
- A. To enhance characterization
  - B. To continue the idea that reading can be an alternative to therapeutic programs
  - C. To punctuate the idea classic literature teaches us lessons about our current selves
  - D. To refine the central claim of paragraph 2
8. Which line from the passage *best* supports the central idea?
- A. “This slow, applicable experience is considered by some what makes us ‘human’.”
  - B. “The true magic found within the heart of reading is that it allows us the privilege to transcend our present circumstance.”
  - C. “By reading stories from those who lead very different lives than ourselves, we are able to more fully understand how the past always intertwines with the future.”
  - D. “...we should read because we need magic in our lives to lift us out of darkness, teach us valuable lessons, and show us that we are truly never alone.”
9. Read the following quote from the text: **“By reading stories from those who lead very different lives than ourselves, we are able to more fully understand how the past always intertwines with the future.”** Which word could replace *intertwines* in the sentence and mean nearly the same thing?
- A. Controls
  - B. Constricts
  - C. Connects
  - D. Cooperates
10. Which group of words *from the passage* conveys the author’s attitude about her subject?
- A. *Decoding, identifying, facilitator*
  - B. *Magical, transcend, power*
  - C. *Isolation, suffering, trials*
  - D. *Trigger, circumstance, combat*

**Constructed Response:**

**How does the author refine her claim in the selection? Use at least 2 examples from the text to justify your idea.**