

Teenagers Change Their Minds!

Teenage patterns

Because of all the changes teenagers go through on a day to day basis, it's not surprising that sometimes they seem to just give up on books altogether. At other times they might become obsessive about certain books – teenagers do tend to go for the extreme in all things.

By now it will probably be obvious whether a child is a habitual reader or not. If they aren't then this doesn't mean you should give up encouraging them. But at the same time, you can't let it become a big issue as you could end up doing more harm than good.

You set the tone

The role that adults can play in encouraging children to get the book 'habit' has already been mentioned in this guide but it's worth reiterating. Nothing is certain of course, but children who are used to the adults around them reading are often more likely to enjoy reading themselves and see it as something that's not just part of school life.

'Reading lets me escape from everyday life to a world influenced by the impossible'

Emily, age 14

A sabbatical from fiction

Teenagers sometimes give up reading fiction and go back to it at a later age. Teenage boys especially often transfer their time to reading non-fiction, preferring real life subject matter to fiction – a more mature manifestation of collecting dinosaurs or action toys!

Changing habits

Even non-readers can get caught up in a passing trend (as demonstrated with *Twilight*, or *Harry Potter*), and this can sometimes break a pattern and lead to them enjoying other books.



Moving on to adult reading

It's important to try not to be over-critical or patronising about the choice of books teenagers make. It's likely that they will sometimes choose books that adults will think are shallow or silly or shocking. Let them!

Also be careful about thrusting new books on them that you think they 'ought' to read. Most teenagers prefer discovering things for themselves, 'owning' their discoveries and sharing with their friends (or not – sometimes it's more personal than that). And it's not uncommon for them to mix reading more adult titles with younger titles too, by way of light relief.