

In a reading rut? How to get back into reading for fun

Level 1: Elementary

Article summary: This article explains the advantages of reading, why people tend to fall out of the habit and offers tips on how to rebuild the habit.

Time: 60 minutes

Skills: Reading, Speaking, Writing

Language focus: Giving advice with the imperative, *should*, and *could*.

Materials needed: One copy of the worksheet per student

b. Before reading the article carefully, students use the key words to fill the gaps in the sentences to ensure that they know how the words are used in other contexts.

Key:

1. *fiction*
2. *distraction*
3. *rut*
4. *gossipy*
5. *memoir*
6. *empathetic*
7. *habit*
8. *thoughtful*
9. *routine*
10. *open-minded*

1. Warmer

a. This activity aims to get students thinking about reading and reading habits. If students aren't readers, encourage them to think about reading at school or friends of theirs who are heavy readers. Be prepared to support with emergent language where necessary, as some key words might be quite specialised (e.g. *genre*, *science*, *mystery*, *trilogy*, etc.).

2. Key words

a. Ask students to do this task individually and then compare their answers in pairs or small groups. As an extension activity, ask students to highlight the key words in the article.

Key:

1. *fiction*
2. *habit*
3. *empathetic*
4. *distraction*
5. *rut*
6. *memoir*
7. *open-minded*
8. *thoughtful*
9. *gossipy*
10. *routine*

3. Comprehension check

a. Students answer the questions based on the information in the article. If possible, encourage students to add more explanatory information or opinion when they answer, e.g. students might agree or disagree with the perspectives of the article or offer up equivalent statistics from their own contexts.

Key:

(Suggested answers)

1. *Around half*
2. *Reading fiction*
3. *It can protect your brain.*
4. *It can help reduce stress, to rest, to slow down, to sleep.*
5. *Doing something else*
6. *books that will make her seem smarter*
7. *Detective stories and gossipy memoirs*
8. *Not at all. It's all valuable.*
9. *10 minutes a day for 20 days*
10. *Make you happy*

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4. Key language

a. This activity is designed to help students identify ways to give advice. Guide them to find the key words and then copy down the complete sentence. If they are confused by *figure out*, remind them about phrasal verbs, and tell them that it means *to discover* or *decide* in this context.

Key:

1. *Figure out what you enjoy.*
2. *Keep it short.*
3. *You should start with shorter books.*
4. *You could try reading for 10 minutes before bed for about 20 days.*

b. This activity is designed to help students find examples more freely so that they can begin to identify the structures presented to give advice. If needed remind students that the passive is formed by putting the object of the verb in the subject position + the verb *to be* in the appropriate tense + past participle.

Key:

You could read the first chapter, and see which one or two interests you; You should start with shorter books; Do it daily; Make it fun.

c. Here students categorise the two kinds of advice—modal and imperative. You can explain to stronger students, in the form of a timeline or flowchart, the strength of the advice relative to how it's presented:

STRONGER MORE GENTLE

ADVICE

ADVICE

Imperative ←— *Should* ←— *Could*

Key:

Imperative: Figure out, Keep, Do, Make

Modal: should start, could start, could try,

5. Discussion

a. Students discuss the statements related to the article and give their reasons and justifications for each answer, referring to their own experiences wherever possible. Feel free to refer them back to their Warmer activity discussions after reading the article.

6. In your own words

a. Encourage students to explain in detail, and in the final bullets, support them in using the language they've learned today to give advice. If you have an online class, this could be converted into an activity to prepare a blog post, social media response or video essay so that students can comment on each other's blog posts to keep the task going.

b. Students then present their opinions to the class, supporting their points with as much information as possible. In larger classes, you might prefer to organise group presentations in a book club style presentation, putting forward one book per group.