



Reading & the growth of the mind

- You must tackle books that are beyond you
- A good book rewards you for trying to read it
- P.331 - "It is hard to read a bad book, too, for it defies your efforts to analyze it, slipping through your fingers whenever you have it pinned down. In fact, I'm the case of a bad book, there is nothing to pin down. It is not worth the effort of trying. You receive no reward for your struggle."
- 1) not worth reading analytically (99%)
- 2) worth reading analytically one
- 3) worth re-reading
- 3 Types If books
- P.333 - "... you find on returning to it, that there was less than you remembered. The reason, of course, is that you yourself have grown in the meantime.. your mind is filled, your understanding greater. The book has not changed, but you have."
- There is no limit to the amount of growth and development that the mind can sustain

P.66 - "To make knowledge practical we must convert it into rules of operation"

Rules

- Rule 1: You must know what kind of book you are reading, and you should know this as early in the process as possible, preferably before you begin to read
- Rule 2: State the unity of the whole book in a single sentence, or at most a few sentences
- Rule 3: Set forth the major parts of the book, and show how these are organized into a whole
- Rule 4: Find out what the author's problems were
- Rule 5: Find the important words and through them come to terms with the author
- Rule 6: Mark the most important sentences in a book and discover the propositions they contain
- Rule 7: Locate or construct the basic arguments in the book by finding them on the connection of sentences
- Rule 8: Find out what the author's solutions are
- Rule 9: You must be able to say with reasonable certainty "I understand" before you say "I agree" or "I disagree" or "I suspend judgment"
- Rule 10: When you disagree, do so reasonably and not contentiously
- Rule 11: Respect the difference between knowledge and mere personal opinion by giving reasons for any critical judgment you make

Analytical Reading

- The author makes an argument and the reader makes a judgment
- The reader owes the author to think critically about what they said and respond
- No point in responding to a critic who says "I don't know what you're saying but I think you're wrong"

Reading a book is a conversation

- 4 responses to an author when you disagree
- 1) You are uninformed
- 2) You are misinformed
- 3) You are illogical
- 4) Your analysis is incomplete

Aids to reading

- 1) Relevant experiences
- 2) Other books
- 3) Commentaries and abstracts
- 4) Reference books

Systematic Skimming (pre-reading)

- 1) Look at the title page
- 2) Study the table of contents
- 3) Check the index
- 4) Read the publisher's blurb
- 5) Look at the pivotal chapters
- 6) Turn the pages, dipping in here and there (never more than a paragraph or 2)

2 kinds of Inspectional Reading

Superficial Reading

P.36 - "In tackling a difficult book for the first time, read it through without ever stopping to look up or ponder the things you do not understand right away."

4 stages of learning to read

- 1) Reading readiness
- 2) Basic reading skills
- 3) Vocabulary building
- 4) Refinement & enhancement

How to make a book your own

- Underlining (major points)
- Vertical lines at margin (to emphasize underlined statements)
- Star, asterisk, etc. (to emphasize important statements or passages)
- Numbers in the margin (to indicate a sequence of points made by the author)
- Numbers of other pages in margin (cross references)
- Circling of key words/phrases (like underlining)
- Writing in the margin (to ask questions)
- Structural
- Conceptual
- 2 types of notetaking
- Learn by doing
- Create a reading habit
- Beginning reader will not be graceful (like the beginning skier)

Fourth level of Reading: syntopical reading

- Syntopical reading = more than one book of the same subject
- Talking point: how has this level of Reading changed Bookworm from day 1?
- 5 Steps to Syntopical Reading
- Step 1: Find the relevant passages
- Step 2: Bring the authors to terms
- Step 3: Get the questions clear
- Step 4: Define the issues
- Step 5: Analyze the discussion

Reading practical books

- 2 kinds
 - 1) presentation of rules
 - 2) principles that generate rules
- 2 major questions
 - 1) what are the author's objectives?
 - 2) What means for achieving them is he proposing?
- Agreement with a practical book requires action by the reader
- P.189 - "any practical can never solve the practical problems with which it is concerned... a practical problem can only be solved by action itself."

Talking points

P.40 - subvocalization (Reading at thinking speed, not talking speed) Goal of good reading courses: speed AND comprehension

Pitcher/Catcher analogy

- Message is sent by the writer, received by the reader
- Skillful authors have more control over their message
- We need to be skilled readers to receive the whole message
- Goal: not to remember, but to learn and understand
- Informed = to know something is the case, Enlightened = to know why something is the case
- Being able to remember vs. being able to explain
- Being informed is the prerequisite to being enlightened (just don't stop at being informed)

4 levels of reading

- 1) Elementary Reading "What does the sentence say?"
- 2) Inspectional Reading "What is the book about?"
- 3) Analytical Reading Many, organized questions
- 4) Syntopical Reading Placing many books in relation to one another

The Essence of Active Reading (4 questions)

- 1) What is the book about as a whole?
- 2) What is being said in detail and how?
- 3) Is the book true, in whole or in part?
- 4) What of it?
- If you ask no questions, you'll get no answers

How to read...

- History
 - Suggests what's possible (since it has been done before)
 - We must try to understand what happened (and what is happening)
- Practical books
 - If we agree, there must be action
- Poetry/Stories
 - Even though the story may not be true, we should think it is
 - Usually includes "poetic justice" (we feel good about the outcome)
- Science/Math
 - Goal: not to become competent but to understand the problem
- Philosophy
 - P.264 - "Out of the mouths of babes comes, if not wisdom, at least the search for it."
 - 5 Philosophical Styles
 - 1) the philosophical dialogue
 - 2) the philosophical treatise or essay
 - 3) the meeting of objections
 - 4) the systemization of philosophy
 - 5) the aphoristic style
 - Orthodox = "right opinion"
 - Scared/canonical
 - Have to accept it
 - Talking point: why do you accept the Bible as ultimate truth?
- Social Science
 - Hard to fault the author
 - Must be read synoptically