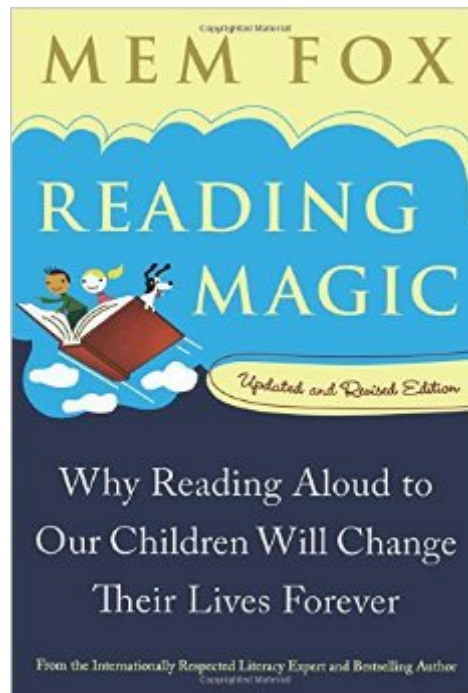


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# Reading Magic: Why Reading Aloud To Our Children Will Change Their Lives Forever



## Synopsis

The must-have guide to reading with children, now in a new and revised edition! Best-selling children's author and internationally respected literacy expert Mem Fox reveals the incredible emotional and intellectual impact reading aloud to children has on their ability to learn to read. With passion and humor, Fox speaks of when, where, and why to read aloud and demonstrates how to read aloud to best effect and get the most out of a read-aloud session. She discusses the three secrets of reading, offers guidance on defining and choosing good books, and—for this new edition—includes two new chapters on boy readers and phonics, a foreword, and a list of "Twenty Books That Children Love." Filled with practical advice, activities, and inspiring true read-aloud miracles, this book is a turn-to classic for educators and parents.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I have read this book and all of the editorial reviews and customer reviews of this book. I have to respectfully disagree with much of what was written. Mem Fox is trying to get parents to understand the unique and positive benefits of reading aloud. I taught kindergarten and first grade for 11 years and believe me, there is a distinct difference in children who have been read to and those who have not. I live in Boca Raton, FL which has a fairly educated population and affluent one at that, and I was astounded by the number of women in my Mommies groups who did not think you should read to kids until they were three or four. So to wonder to whom Mem is writing for is ridiculous. ALL types of parents can benefit from this knowledge. There is sufficient research to suggest the

benefits, but parents would not be interested in reading a research-based book. As for her taking on the wholistic vs. phonics debate, it is clear what side the reviewers are on. As a reading/writing specialist, I can assure you, Mem was not discounting phonics at all. She was merely saying that phonics alone will not make someone a good reader. There are two other cueing systems at work when people read and phonics is only a third of the process. I could spew research here but I won't. I believe she was suggesting to not make it the be all and end all of learning to read. I can assure you the children who could read by the end of kindergarten were not using phonics alone in their strategies for reading. And if you want a book with lists of books to read to kids, Jim Trelease has already written that one. Why would she duplicate that? This book is an excellent read and I wish I had it to give to each parent who had children in my classroom. Even in kindergarten, many parents told me they had no time to read to their children. How very sad they did not understand the importance. This book drives that point home. Oh, and by the way, I recommend ANY children's book written by Mem Fox. They are among my children's most favorites. Here are just a few-- Sleepy Bears, Koala Lou, Time for Bed, and Whoever You Are...oh, and for teachers I emphatically recommend Radical REflections- It will change your teaching paradigm for sure.

I respectfully disagree with many people in these reviews who are touting that this book is a glib solution, most especially the citation of the NRP Report!! I am a postgraduate educated Reading Specialist, and can tell you that report was compiled by numerous people who have no education on the subject of reading instruction. Also, that report is misconstrued and in schools allowed to be used as support for phonics worksheets as an isolated way to teach reading. I don't know about you, but I didn't learn to read totally by being able to identify a picture, and writing the beginning or ending or medial sound on a blank line of a worksheet. No, I listened. (Do those reviewers know the all too important impact of a child's listening comprehension?) I also looked at the pictures (that's called Context Clues). And I looked at word structure and vocabulary (that's called the Structural Cueing System). I made sense of what I was reading (currently referred to as metacognition). I now remediate adolescent readers. And let me tell you - direct systematic phonics has failed them! It's because they have not made sense of their reading. What they read doesn't engage them or motivate them. Think about it - what is your definition of reading? Do you have a scientific montage of words or is it plainly just decoding symbols to decipher meaning from the message? For me, reading is making meaning. When children are read aloud to (as I do DAILY in my secondary remediation classes), numerous things happen in the brain. Read brain-based learning books. Then tell me how phonics worksheets are THE only and recommended way to learn. When children are

read aloud to, the basis for making meaning is created. I can guarantee you in an unscientific study that my students were NOT read to as children or even in their later lives. We may be able to get those kids past decoding in their early years - Kindergarten and First Grade - but reading aloud increases and hones listening comprehension, attention to task, and visualization - components of reading comprehension that are often overlooked. Reading aloud creates meaning - provides motivation and engagement for kids. It is a HUGE component of reading comprehension, and should not be treated lightly. Mem Fox does not purport ANYWHERE in this book that it is the be all and end all. She is an outstanding author who knows that fluent and fluid language is a part of the puzzle. Readers who are looking for a quick fix and pat answers to reading difficulties - sure, yes, can look at the NRP Report, and get whatever answers they need to get. And for those parents who perhaps misunderstand many components of reading, you really do need to consult a specialist before you make wide sweeping generalizations. For most of us, we have never given thought to how we learn to read. There are varied and enumerated reasons that a child cannot read - some of them are phonological or processing related and some of them are meaning related. For whatever reason, there is NOT just ONE answer, like NRP would have you believe. But if you talk to any educated reading professional, he or she will tell you straight up how that report is regarded. With the whole language vs phonics debate roaring wildly these days, I think our time is better spent -Reading aloud to children.

As a Speech Language Pathologist and Children's Literacy Coach I can attest to the fact that reading to children is a critical element in literacy acquisition. Children must learn the flow of language and the variance and flexibility of words in order to appreciate literature and write well. Reading to children of ALL ages ( yes even middle and high school!) is critical for the development of advanced reading, writing and listening skills. What can be better than creativity and imagination being fostered during a warm, entertaining storytelling session.....with the stories coming from brilliant authors ( like Mem Fox)? I recommend this book to all my parents, my fellow teachers and to my friends. It makes a great book for new parents. It makes a great addition to any one's library who has an interest in children's literature, literacy or storytelling. Thank you Mem Fox for writing such a great book!

I started to read this book over a cup of coffee today. Four cups (decaf!) later I completed the book. I couldn't put it down! I think this book should be given to every new parent! I read the other reviews and agree that reading aloud isn't going to work for every child. But why not try it? Why not make it

a priority in your family anyhow? Even if it doesn't make your child a top reader... your child, you, your entire family, will benefit in some way by reading aloud. And it is fun! Both of our kids happen to be excellent readers (they're 10 and 7) and read well above grade level. Is it because we have always read aloud to them? Is it because we have used many of the strategies discussed in the book (even without knowing it at the time)? Who knows. For me, there is nothing like cuddling up in a comfy, warm spot, with a child on each side, reading, talking and laughing about a good book. It doesn't get much better than that!

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