

Revisiting YOUR Classics

You might think this is going to be about classic books such as *Frankenstein* or *Alice in Wonderland*, but it's not. Instead of discussing what books are classics in the literary sense, what books are classics to you? As a child what did you read that still resonates with you today? It does not need to be an important book by a famous author such as Mark Twain or William Shakespeare, but rather something you read that still holds a special place in your memory. It can be any type of book – a picture book, nonfiction, a graphic novel/comic book, or just a work of fiction that you remember reading.

If you can't remember a specific title, maybe you remember parts of a book or a type of book you liked as a child. Maybe you liked adventure, fantasy, or even a folktale such as Goldilocks and the Three Bears. Any of these can help you start a dialogue about books with your children. But what if you didn't love reading? Well, maybe reading wasn't your favorite hobby, but is there a book you read as a child that you enjoyed? You don't have to give your children a list of books, but just talking about one you remember fondly can help put the fun back into reading. All it takes is one book to show your children that reading can create positive memories.

You can enjoy your favorite books again by sharing them with your child. Talk about the books you read as a child. They do not need to be classics to the rest of the world, but if they are important to you your child will see how books can make an impact, no matter how small. With so much pressure to succeed and read specific books in class, discussing books you enjoyed as a child shows them how much fun reading can be outside of schoolwork.

I know it's no surprise that I enjoyed children's books. Even now there are some great titles found in the Children's Department. But I still remember books I read as a child and how much fun I had reading them. Although one of my favorites is *Island of the Blue Dolphins*, an award winner by Scott O'Dell, it is not the accolades that I associate with the book. Instead, I remember the adventurous story of a girl stranded on an island for several years. But another one of my favorites is *The Digging-est Dog* by Al Perkins. A book for beginning readers, it's the funny story of a dog that grew up in a pet store and doesn't know how to dig. Once he learns how to dig he starts to dig all around town!

You never know what kind of conversation you and your children can have once you start discussing books. It can open doors not only for them, but for you as well. Not only does the discussion give you an opportunity to have an active role in their literacy development, but you can learn what books have made an impact on your children. Who knows – maybe discussing books they like will persuade you to read the same books. Or, you can decide to read something with your children, creating fond memories for them to share.

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