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**YOUR BRAIN
ON FICTION:**

Benefits of Reading for Kids



We all know reading is "good" for kids. Reading generally improves students' vocabulary, literacy skills, content knowledge, and more. But does it matter if it's fiction or nonfiction? And why, exactly, would you want to encourage students to read fiction for pleasure? Well, recent research gives us some answers to this question.

Reading fiction for fun, it turns out, helps build kids' brains!

Studies show increased brain activity through fiction reading. For instance, Spanish researchers caused the primary olfactory cortexes of study participants to "light up" in MRIs by having them read words with strong odor associations, such as "perfume" and "coffee." French scientists similarly activated subjects' motor cortexes (which coordinate the body's movements) in those reading active sentences such as "Pablo kicked the ball." And Emory University researchers sparked subjects' sensory cortexes by having them read metaphors involving texture, such as "The singer had a velvet voice." (Synonymous phrases without sensory content didn't have the same effect.) Subsequent research at Emory has shown that fiction reading even enhances readers' ability to visualize others' movements, in a way similar to sports visualization used by athletes.

Can reading fiction improve emotional and "school smarts," too? The answer is yes. Research at New York's New School and elsewhere has shown that literary fiction helps readers develop greater empathy. And an ongoing, multi-year study of 17,000 British students found that kids who read fiction for pleasure showed accelerated intellectual progress by the teen years—not just in vocabulary and spelling, but in math as well. Lead researcher Dr. Alice Sullivan reported that "the impact was around four times greater than that of having a parent with a post-secondary degree."

So, the research is in: reading great fiction will help boost your students' brains in both expected and unexpected ways. To get started, here are some **new titles** for fall, chosen by our professional Collection Development and Analysis team based on School Library Journal's Rave Reviews.

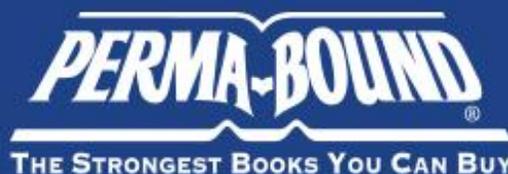
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