

Want to feel like a teenager again? Just dig out the books you were forced to read at school

Level 1: Elementary / Pre-Intermediate

1 Warmer

a. Discuss in pairs.

- What three books do you remember fondly from childhood or adolescence? What did you enjoy about them? Share with your classmates.
- Would you like to re-read any of those books as an adult? Why (not)?

2 Key words

a. Fill the gaps in the sentences using these key words from the text.

memory

smell

surprise

term

union

1. a thought of something that you remember from the past _____
2. have a particular scent or smell _____
3. an organisation of workers that protects their rights, improves working conditions and negotiates fair contracts _____
4. something that is unexpected or happens suddenly; make someone feel this way _____
5. one of the periods in the year during which classes are held in schools and universities _____

dishwasher

forget

journalist

material

medicine

6. a writer for newspapers and magazines _____
7. something that other things can be made from or are needed for a particular activity _____
8. not remember to do something that you are supposed to do _____
9. something you take to help with an illness, especially a pill or a liquid _____
10. a machine for washing plates, cups, forks, etc. _____

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b. Use some of the key words from task A and complete the examples. You may have to change the form of the word.

1. Before writing novels, the author worked as a _____ for the local newspaper.
2. During the fall school _____, the students read twelve classic novels.
3. To her _____, she found letters from her grandfather to her grandmother in a box.
4. Looking at her photo album brought back many _____ of old friends.
5. The teachers' _____ fought for smaller class sizes and better pay.
6. He took some _____ to make his headache go away.

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Nell Frizzell

28 August, 2024

- 1 Re-reading the first chapter of *Animal Farm* brings back memories. I see myself as a teenager, wearing a Punkyfish T-shirt under my school shirt. My hair is tied with plastic butterfly clips, and I smell of my mum's deodorant.
- 2 Reading about Boxer and Clover, I remember liking a boy who wore skater shoes. Now, at 39, I understand the book in a new way. I've been to Russia, joined a union, sat through long meetings, and worked on a building site. I've also read Orwell's other books. When I was 14, I missed many details in the book.
- 3 But the biggest surprise? I re-read the whole book during a ferry ride to Dublin. *Animal Farm* is not a long book! How did we learn about it for a whole term? Now, I'm studying to become a teacher, and *Animal Farm* is on the curriculum. I can study part-time, get extra money and buy a new pencil case.
- 4 The length of other books surprised me too. *A Christmas Carol*? You can finish it in a day! The book is only 112 pages. I now know that Dickens was a journalist. At 16, I didn't know that. He loved strange details like any writer today. What I remember most is the view from my classroom, the food in the dinner hall, and a Virginia Woolf poster on the wall. I also remember my school skirt. Mum and I found special material in a fabric shop. When I moved, my skirt made a funny sound.
- 5 There's so much I forgot over the years. *Frankenstein* is from Geneva? Boxer hurt his foot? Jack makes himself a crown? But I didn't forget the details from my life. They came back very clearly.
- 6 There's so much I forgot over the years. *Frankenstein* is from Geneva? Boxer hurt his foot? Jack makes himself a crown? But I didn't forget the details from my own life. They came back a little too clearly.

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3 Comprehension check

a. Answer the questions using information from the article.

1. What does the author say re-reading the first chapter of *Animal Farm* did?
2. What is one detail the author used to describe herself as a teenager?
3. What surprised the author about the length of *Animal Farm*?
4. What book is mentioned as being part of the teaching curriculum?
5. What does the author say she remembers best about reading Dickens's *A Christmas Carol*?
6. What book does the author mention you can finish in a day?
7. Why does the narrator suggest re-reading books like *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* and *Lord of the Flies* later in life?

4 Key language

a. Read the sentences from the article. Circle the correct verb tense.

1. But I **didn't forget** the details from my own life.
a. simple present b. simple past c. simple future
2. Because these books **will mean** something different to you then.
a. simple present b. simple past c. simple future
3. The whole thing **is** only 112 pages!
a. simple present b. simple past c. simple future
4. You'll **be able** to travel through time.
a. simple present b. simple past c. simple future
5. Reading this book **transports** me back to school.
a. simple present b. simple past c. simple future

5 Discussion

a. Discuss these statements.

- We remember the books we read as children and teenagers very clearly.
- Remembering being a teenager is better than being a teenager.
- Time changes how we feel about things that happen to us.

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6 In your own words

a. Do some research about the current bestselling novels for adults, teens and/or children. Answer these questions.

- Which books sound the most interesting to you? Why?
- Are there books that have similar topics on the bestseller list? If so, what are they?
- What do you look for in a good book?
- What book would you recommend for teenage students?

b. Report your findings to the class and share the facts you learned and your opinions.