

Boys and reading

A lot of boys are having trouble reading.

- The U.S. Department of Education reading tests for the last 30 years show boys scoring worse than girls in every age group, every year.
- Eighth grade boys are 50 percent more likely to be held back than girls.
- Two-thirds of Special Education Students in high school are boys.

Overall college enrollment is higher for girls than boys.

Why might boys be having trouble

- Biologically, boys are slower to develop than girls and often struggle with reading and writing skills early on.
- The action-oriented, competitive learning style of many boys works against them learning to read and write
- Many books boys are asked to read don't appeal to them. They aren't motivated to want to read.
- As a society, we teach boys to suppress feelings. Boys aren't practiced and often don't feel comfortable exploring the emotions and feelings found in fiction.
- Boys don't have enough positive male role models for literacy. Because the majority of adults involved in kids' reading are women, boys might not see reading as a masculine activity.

Our Mission

Our mission is to motivate boys to read by connecting them with materials they will want to read, in ways they like to read.

Our mission is to:

1. Make some noise for boys.
We have literacy programs for adults and families. GUYS READ is our chance to call attention to boys' literacy.
2. Expand our definition of reading.
Include boy-friendly nonfiction, humor, comics, graphic novels, action- adventure, magazines, websites, and newspapers in school reading. Let boys know that all these materials count as reading.
3. Give boys choice.
Motivate guys to want to read by letting them choose texts they will enjoy. Find out what they want. Let them choose from a new, wider range of reading.
4. Encourage male role models.
Men have to step up as role models of literacy. What we do is more important than all we might say.
5. Be realistic. Start small.

Boys aren't believing that "Reading is wonderful." Reading is often difficult and boring for them. Let's start with "Here is one book/magazine/text you might like."

6. Spread the GUYS READ word.
Encourage people to use the information and downloads on this site to set up their own chapters of GUYS READ, and get people thinking about boys and reading.

Press Release

GUYS READ is a web-based nonprofit literacy initiative for boys founded by Jon Scieszka. It is a sponsored program of the New York Foundation for the Arts.

Statistics and anecdotal evidence shows that boys are having trouble reading. The basic idea of GUYS READ is that boys can be motivated to read by connecting with texts they will want to read.

What boys like to read is not often the same as what they are required to read. Literary fiction is the mainstay of required school reading. Yet boys often prefer non-fiction, humor, information, comics/graphic novels, and more humor.

The GUYS READ website (funded by Jon Scieszka, the generous contributions of writers and illustrators to the GUYS WRITE FOR GUYS READ anthology, and the publisher Penguin Putnam) is designed to raise public awareness of the problem of boys' literacy, and to offer boys reading they will enjoy.

The website is built in partnership with Amazon to take advantage of the data of millions of reading recommendations. The recommendations are not value judgements about what is "great literature." They are more effectively recommendations based on what other guys have liked.

Jon Scieszka thought of the idea of GUYS READ after growing up with five brothers, teaching elementary school for ten years, raising a daughter and son, and writing books for kids for the last fifteen years.