



# Help your teen develop literacy skills

For parents of middle and secondary school students

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## What is literacy anyway?

### The dictionary says that literacy is...

1. *the quality or state of being literate, esp. the ability to read and write*
2. *a person's knowledge of a particular subject or field*

### UNESCO states that...

*"Literacy is about more than reading and writing - it is about how we communicate in society...[It] takes on many forms: on paper, on the computer screen, on TV, on posters and signs."* (statement for the United Nations, Literacy Decade 2003 – 2012)

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## Multiple Literacies

Examples of literacy are everywhere! Help your teen recognize and make personal connections to literacy in his daily life:

- computer literacy (using software)
- web literacy (surfing the Internet)
- digital literacy (cells, e-mail, MSN)
- visual literacy (graphics, text, TV)
- auditory literacy (radio, conversing)
- home literacy (routines, chores)
- community literacy (bus schedules)
- social literacy (manners, etiquette)
- work literacy (procedures, routines)
- curriculum literacy (school subjects)

## READING SKILLS

### Different text forms

Help your teen gain valuable reading skills by taking an interest in what she's reading and discussing it with her.

Encourage him to practice reading as often as possible and be open to various text forms:

- text books
- novels (graphic/text)
- comic books
- newspapers/flyers/magazines
- instructions for building models
- product/food packages
- e-mails
- CD covers
- poems
- song lyrics/raps

## WRITING SKILLS

### Different compositions

Like reading, or anything else worthwhile the best way to help your teen improve her writing skills is through practice. Find fun ways to build vocabulary together such as: solving crossword puzzles, guessing the meaning of personalized licence plates, playing word games, analyzing song lyrics, etc. Encourage your teen to write as much as possible by creating a variety of different compositions:

- e-mails
- shopping lists
- wish lists
- songs/poems/raps
- journals/diaries
- invitations
- trip itineraries
- budgets
- jokes
- letters to friends

## How is your teen smart?

### **Multiple intelligences**

Every teen processes information differently and every teen is engaged and stimulated by different methods of presenting that information. Howard Gardner (*"Multiple Intelligences"*) places learners under 9 different categories:

1. Visual/Spatial
2. Verbal/Linguistic
3. Mathematical/Logical
4. Bodily/Kinesthetic
5. Musical/Rhythmic
6. Interpersonal
7. Intrapersonal
8. Naturalist
9. Existentialist

Recognizing what type of learner your teen is will greatly help in choosing what material or strategies he will respond to, both at school and at home.

***"Know your Child."***

*Tip sheet prepared by Chris Vanellis,  
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