Your Brain On Books

10 Things That Happen to Our minds When We Read.
Reading books and other materials with vivid imagery is not only fun, it also allows us to create worlds in our own minds. But did you know that this happens even if you don’t mean it to? Researchers have found that visual imagery is simply automatic. Participants were able to identify photos of objects faster if they’d just read a sentence that described the object visually, suggesting that when we read a sentence, we automatically bring up pictures of objects in our minds.
2. Spoken words can put your brain to work:

Critics are quick to dismiss audio books as a sub-par reading experience, but research has shown that the act of listening to a story can light up your brain. When we’re told a story, not only are language processing parts of our brain activated, experiential parts of our brain come alive, too. Hear about food? Your sensory cortex lights up, while motion activates the motor cortex. And while you may think that this is limited only to audio books or reading, experts insist that our brains are exposed to narratives all day long. In fact, researcher Jeremy Hsu shares, “Personal stories and gossip make up 65% of our conversations.” So go ahead, listen to your coworker’s long and drawn out story about their vacation, tune in to talk radio, or listen to an audio book in the car: it’s good exercise for your brain.
Have you ever felt so connected to a story that it’s as if you experienced it in real life? There’s a good reason why: your brain actually believes that you have experienced it. When we read, the brain does not make a real distinction between reading about an experience and actually living it. Whether reading or experiencing it, the same neurological regions are stimulated. Novels are able to enter into our thoughts and feelings. While you can certainly hop into a VR game at the mall and have a great time, it seems that reading is the original virtual reality experience, at least for your brain.
4. Different styles of reading can create different patterns in the brain:

Any kind of reading provides stimulation for your brain, but different types of reading give different experiences with varying benefits. Stanford University researchers have found that close literary reading in particular gives your brain a workout in multiple complex cognitive functions, while pleasure reading increases blood flow to different areas of the brain. They concluded that reading a novel closely for literary study and thinking about its value is an effective brain exercise, more effective than simple pleasure reading alone.
5. New languages can grow your brain:

Want to really give your brain a workout? Pick up a foreign language novel. Researchers at Lund University in Sweden tested students from the Swedish Armed Forces Interpreter Academy, where intensive language learning is the norm, and medicine and cognitive science students at Umea University. Both groups underwent brain scans just prior to and right after a three-month period of intensive study. Amazingly, the language students experienced brain growth in both the hippocampus and the cerebral cortex, with different levels of brain growth according to the amount of effort and learning students experienced in that period of time.
6. Your brain adapts to reading e-books in seven days:

If you’re used to reading paper books, picking up an e-reader can feel very awkward at first. But experts insist that your brain can adopt the new technology quickly, no matter your age or how long you’ve been reading on paper. In fact, the human brain adapts to new technology, including e-reading, within seven days.
7. E-books lack in spatial navigability:

Although your brain can adapt to e-books quickly, that doesn’t mean they offer the same benefits as a paperback. Specifically, they lack what’s called “spatial navigability,” physical cues like the heft of pages left to read that give us a sense of location. Evolution has shaped our minds to rely on location cues to find our way around, and without them, we can be left feeling a little lost. Some e-books offer little in the way of spatial landmarks, giving a sense of an infinite page. However, with page numbers, percentage read, and other physical cues, e-books can come close to the same physical experience as a paper book.
8. Story structure encourages our brains to think in sequence, expanding our attention spans:

Stories have a beginning, middle, and end, and that’s a good thing for your brain. With this structure, our brains are encouraged to think in sequence, linking cause and effect. The more you read, the more your brain is able to adapt to this line of thinking. Neuroscientists encourage parents to take this knowledge and use it for children, reading to kids as much as possible. In doing so, you’ll be instilling story structure in young minds while the brain has more plasticity, and the capacity to expand their attention span.
9. Reading changes your brain structure (in a good way):

Not everyone is a natural reader. Poor readers may not truly understand the joy of literature, but they can be trained to become better readers. And in this training, their brains actually change. In a six-month daily reading program from Carnegie Mellon, scientists discovered that the volume of white matter in the language area of the brain actually increased. Further, they showed that brain structure can be improved with this training, making it more important than ever to adopt a healthy love of reading.
It feels great to lose yourself in a book, and doing so can even physically change your brain. As we let go of the emotional and mental chatter found in the real world, we enjoy deep reading that allows us to feel what the characters in a story feel. And this in turn makes us more empathetic to people in real life, becoming more aware and alert to the lives of others.