

READING BILL OF RIGHTS

As we begin the second decade of the 21st Century—and for Scholastic, the run up to our 100th birthday—we are looking forward rather than back, recognizing that the children who are reading our books today will be the parents and the citizens of the world in 2050.

We live in a world full of digital information and images transmitted daily that can distract young people from reading books. At the same time, reading has never been more important; for we know that, for young people, now is a time when reading is the door-opener to the 21st Century—to hold a job, to understand their world and to understand themselves.

We know that teachers around the world are better now at getting children to learn to read, to decode, to recognize words and symbols on a page. But even when children can read, they often are not motivated to read. And without frequent, extensive reading children will not read well enough to succeed in the 21st Century. That is why we must provide the great stories, the amazing facts and the astonishing presentations in books that will fuel the imagination and present information to help young people understand their inner and outer worlds.

Here is what we believe about literacy and reading in the second decade of the 21st Century. We call this our **READING BILL OF RIGHTS**:

We believe that literacy—the ability to read, write and understand—is the birthright of every child in the world as well as the pathway to succeed in school and to realize a complete life.

We believe that the massive amounts of digital information and images now transmitted daily make it even more important for a young person to know how to analyze, interpret and understand information, to separate fact from opinion, and to have deep respect for logical thinking.

We believe that literature and drama, whether on printed pages, screens, on stage or film, help young people experience the great stories of emotion and action, leading to a deeper understanding of what it means to be truly human. Without this literacy heritage, life lacks meaning, coherence and soul. We believe therefore that young people need to learn to read nonfiction for information and literature for imagination.

We believe that reading widely and reading fluently will give children the reading stamina to deal with more challenging texts they will meet in college, at work or in everyday life.

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We believe every child has a right to a “textual lineage”—a reading and writing autobiography which shows that who you are is in part developed through the stories and information you’ve experienced. This textual lineage will enable all young people to have a reading and writing identity which helps them understand who they are and how they can make their lives better.

We believe every child should have access to books, computers, e-readers, and text on phones—but access is not enough. Children need teachers who provide intentional, focused instruction to give young people the skills to read and interpret the information they will encounter throughout life.

We believe every child should have literacy confidence—the ability to read, write and speak about what they know, what they feel and who they are.

We must help every child realize the power of literacy—for information to achieve understanding of the world, for imagination to achieve self-knowledge. Reading great stories of biography and drama will bring young people greater resilience—the ability to drive their lives forward with hope and determination. We must affirm our commitment to work together to bring reading and deeper understanding to all children throughout the globe.



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