

Sharp Ideas for UNPLUG & Read

Here are a few “sharp” ideas to make a special night of reading fun for your family or organization. We hope you’ll be inspired to pick a night (or many nights) to “unplug” from your TV, computer and other electronic entertainment devices and be entertained through reading.

For Businesses:

- Advertise UNPLUG & Read on your signs or marquees, and in your “staff rooms.”
- Host a theme day and have employees come dressed as a favorite book character.
- Host a book swap in the employee break room.
- Give employees an extra “reading” break during the day.
- Challenge employees to read the One Book/Community Read Selection: The Soloist by Steve Lopez.
- Promote UNPLUG week to your customers/clients.
- Offer a book as a promotional give away/incentive.
- Start an “in-house” book club to meet monthly during lunch hour.

Group/Organization Activities:

- Game/Trivia Night: Pick your favorite book/story and create fun trivia questions, play charades or jeopardy type games to test everyone’s literacy knowledge.
- Shared readings: host an “open mic” night and allow individuals to read aloud their own creations or a favorite selection of poetry or other readings.
- Drama night/play reading: get a group together and do an impromptu dramatization of a favorite play—or write your own.
- Host a Progressive Reading Party: Pick a favorite story or author—go from house to house and have food and festivities related to a story from the author or theme from a book.
- Reading on the Square: get Mayors and local politicians to have “readings” at the courthouse.
- Host a Pajama Mama party—get all your girlfriends together, set out the coffee and pastries and have a book party in your PJ’s.
- Host a book club or reading party at your apartment or subdivision complex—a great way to get to know your neighbors. Consider featuring *Animal*, *Vegetable*, *Miracle*.
- Plan special book club events during UNPLUG week.

Schools:

- Create posters to advertise UNPLUG & Read and post around school.

- Have a book swap in classroom, or at Boys & Girls Club, ESP, or YMCA's Fun Company or other places where children stay after school.
- Have book discussion in classrooms.
- Ask merchants to provide coupons to give as incentives for reading.
- Plan a Family Reading Night. Event could be planned around a theme.
- "UNPLUG" a portion of the school day and spend the time reading.
- Recruit volunteer readers to read to classes.
- Provide incentive/extra credit/homework pass to children who read at home.
- Afterschool events: Let children read original stories at Boys & Girls Club, ESP, or YMCA's Fun Company or other places where children stay after school.
- Play Book Bingo using book titles instead of letters and numbers.
- Let students design new book jackets for their favorite books.
- Let various school staff members read a favorite book over the intercom during morning announcements.
- Use puppets for story retelling.

For Teens:

- Use teens (perhaps Youth Rutherford or service groups at high school) to read at Boys & Girls Club, ESP, or YMCA's Fun Company or other places where children stay after school.
- Host an "open mic" for teen groups for readings of original works.
- Initiate a teen book group. Select a title popular with teens. Go to www.teenreads.com for ideas.
- Start a reading blog about your favorite books. Set up a blog hosting account using Blogger, Moveable Type, MySpace, Bebo or the trusted networking site you use.
- Read on-line at Penguin's [Spinebreakers website](http://spinebreakers.com) is written by teenagers for teenagers with competitions, alternative endings, reviews, design posters, videos and more.

For Families:

- Have a family book swap or family book discussion.
- Movie night without the movie: pop the popcorn and have fun reading aloud.
- Kitchen closed night: order-in your favorite take out and spend the free time reading.
- Take turns reading poetry (try Shel Silverstein) out loud to each other. Be dramatic!
- Get your family cozy in one room and have a mini read-a-thon. Remember hot cocoa.
- Read aloud: each family member picks out his/her favorite story or poem and reads aloud to others.
- Reading Tent: grab the sheets, blankets and flashlight to create a family reading tent, everyone crawl in and have fun reading!

- Theme night: create a theme night based on your child's favorite book, make something yummy related to the story (i.e. Green eggs and ham), decorate and/or dress in costumes.
- Alphabet night: each person picks a book to read that begins with the first letter of their name.
- Library night: Haven't been to the public library in a while? Don't have a library card? Pack the family in the car and take a trip to the local library.
- Community events: Check out community calendars and the Read To Succeed website to find out about special reading events in the community and plan to take the family to one.
- Word collage: Gather the family around the kitchen table with old newspapers, magazines and some glue and blank paper. Cut out words from the magazine and newspapers and glue onto sheets of paper to create your own family story.
- Bi-lingual night: Find a book that is in English and another language, read together and learn some new words in a different language. Create a theme night and try foods and learn more about the culture and country.
- Have a picnic without the ants in your living room. After eating, stretch out on the floor and read your favorite books.
- Have Zoo Night by reading books about animals that could be found in a zoo. Discuss whether the animals are carnivores, herbivores, or omnivores. Plan a meal similar to foods and discuss which animals might eat the different parts of the meal.
- Read a recipe with your child and then cook together.

Community Service:

- Record people reading books aloud and use that with book to make kits for the Literacy Center or to provide for learners.
- Plan a literature night for Hispanic families
- Create and provide age appropriate recommended reading lists.
- Read at a nursing home or assisted living facility.

We want to hear from you!
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