

Word Tasters



Have your parents ever told you to "chew your food!" Do you often get frustrated when you read? These questions may seem unrelated, but they do have an important connection because reading well is a lot like eating well.

Because they're impatient to finish reading something, reluctant readers often find themselves counting the number of pages they have left and think more about finishing the assignment than understanding and enjoying the reading itself.

One of the best ways to enjoy a fine meal is to eat slowly and chew the food. Similarly, one of the best ways to enjoy reading is to read slowly and "chew" the words. If you focus on the words you're currently reading, if you *savor* them, you stop thinking about finishing and instead become involved and maybe even immersed in your reading at the moment. You become a word taster, and the book has become part of a banquet.

Choose some reading material you're truly interested in. Set aside 10 minutes in a comfortable, well-lighted place. Spend these minutes reading slowly. Like Henry David Thoreau wanted to "live deliberately," you want to read deliberately. Do not decide beforehand how much you will read. You may only read a few sentences. As you slowly read, let the words make an impression on you. Respond to their sound and the word pictures they create in your mind. Re-read portions if you want. Try the same procedure with reading material which may not necessarily interest you.