

I Learned the Truth from Dr. Seuss - Reading is Fun!



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Dr. Stanley's *Help Your Child Make the Grade* and the *Reading Calendar* are a monthly feature of the Department of Childhood Education, University of North Florida, 4567 Saint Johns Bluff Road, South, Jacksonville, FL 32224, nstanley@unf.edu, 904-620-2611

By Nile Stanley

Think left and think right and think low and think high. Oh, the things you can think up if only you try! Oh! The Things You Can Think! 1975

I learned the truth from Dr. Seuss! Spending time reading out loud opens doors to new information, a richer vocabulary, and better comprehension. Unfortunately, a lot of children do not like reading because they find it boring. That's why fifty years ago this month Theodor Seuss Geisel wrote the *Cat and the Hat* (1957), now acknowledged as one of our greatest literary treasures. Some 48 books later the formula the good doctor created still works. If you want to raise readers you need to make it fun and use what I call the poet's "3 R's" – rhyme, rhythm, and repetition. The delightful language and colorful characters of Dr. Seuss books are ideal for developing fluency and a love of reading.

If you never did you should. These things are fun and fun is good. One Fish, Two Fish, Red Fish, Blue Fish, 1960

So don't act like *How the Grinch who Stole Christmas* (1957) because making reading fun is a cinch. You don't need to drive a Coupe Deville to get to Seussville. Don't sit and whine, just get on line at <http://www.seussville.com>

Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot, nothing is going to get better. It's not. The Lorax, 1992

So send the nifty, fifty CAT a Birthday wish and get on board with the Read Across America campaign at <http://www.nea.org/readacross/index.html> and help support literacy.



- Join educators, parents, and families nationwide to recognize the 50th birthday of *The Cat in the Hat*, and read aloud at 2:36 p.m. ET, on March 2nd.
- Get carded and go to the library and check out lots of books and show that reading is fun and important. Dr. Seuss books, especially the ones with the "I can Read" label are great for building oral fluency with beginning readers.
- Have a "crazy hat" day at your school. Tell and write stories about your crazy hat.
- Write, illustrate, sing, dance and star in your own Seussical.
- Ask your teacher, "Can we have a lesson on that other CAT? besides that FCAT? (See the *Cat in the Hat* activities at edHelper.com and teachers.net)
- Have a reading contest and a campaign to design a billboard to promote literacy in the community.
- Read literally "across America" by reading 50 books – one for each state. <http://curry.edschool.virginia.edu/elementary/projects/ReadAcrossAmerica/FrontPage/Untitled-1.htm>

The more that you read, the more things you will know. The more that you learn the more places you'll go. *Oh, the Places You'll Go, 1991*