

Goodnight, Moon. Goodnight, iPad? **Real Books or E-books?**

By Ann Dudley



September 8th is International Literacy Day, and what a celebration! I believe reading real books, not electronic books (e-books), is what reading is all about!

There's something about holding a book that I can't give up--the weight, feel, and smell of the pages.

There's something about turning the pages that I can't give up.

There's something about pressing a book to my chest and thinking about it that I can't give up.

There's something about owning my favorite books and seeing them on my shelf that I can't give up.

There's something about my children's books that are comforting and bring back special memories that I can't give up.

Yes, there's something about books that really does matter to me and I can't give them up!

The Printing Press

Yes, there's something about books that really does matter to me and I can't give them up!

During my college teaching career I proclaimed Gutenberg's printing press to be the most important invention of all times. For more than 500 years it has impacted humanity more than any other invention. The printing press put reading materials in people's hands. E-books compete for the printed word, but I believe real books may outlive the digital age because there is something about a crisply

printed, bound book that I am not eager to let go of for an e-book.

I believe that e-books will remain popular with those who want to read that way, but I also believe e-books may just become a complement to reading just as audio books have become an option in libraries. Some new e-books do mimic real page turning with sound that gives the sensation of reading a real book...but I like the tactile experience that you don't have with an e-book.

The Reading Connection

During authentic reading, a process occurs between the reader and the text. The turning of the pages is real reading when the reader is thinking, predicting, imagining and comprehending. Some new e-books do mimic real page turning with sound that gives the sensation of reading a real book, but I prefer the tactile experience that you don't have with an e-book.

When reading, one uses what is before her eyes, the written word, and connects with what is behind her eyes, information in her brain. A connection occurs when a reader is truly involved in the process and good readers hopefully enjoy reading and become lifelong readers.

Therefore,

I choose books over e-readers because books impact my life.

I like to hold the book, feel it, smell it, and flip through the pages. It becomes a possession with which I can interact. Reading real books is engaging and when books become loosened by continual use, marked and scribbled on, torn, or develop a loose spine--these flaws just become endearing to me.

I choose books over e-readers because I like to share them.

This is personal and meaningful. When sharing, I often say, "It's okay if you spill coffee on it," or "Don't worry if your dog chews it." I like that used look. My friend Maggie and I share books and we leave hand-written notes for one another to ponder. This shared experience demonstrates how we each interact with the book. We enjoy this communication.

I choose books over electronic readers because I can have a tactile experience and relationship with them.

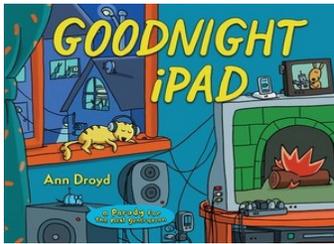
Books can be held, smelled, touched, and explored. The cover, binding, pages, weight, and feel of turning the pages all combine to make the book what it is. A book is unique. Unlike electronic books that are words on a screen, a book holds its own identity.

I choose books over electronic readers because when reading a book I can unplug, relax, and focus.

Reading a book is a personal connection between the reader and the text. It

is a single-tasking activity. An engaged reader cannot be distracted by a book. An electronic book with many multi-tasking distractions like browsing, dictionary searches, and hyperlinks draws one's attention away from the written word. Don't these distractions make actual reading insignificant? This disengagement negatively impacts a quiet reading experience.

Electronic books do not have a valid place in our modern world. They add another medium to the vast array of communications. However, I believe imparting the love of reading a real book on to future generations is imperative.



If you loved *Goodnight Moon* by Margaret Wise Brown, you will appreciate *Goodnight Ipad* by Ann Droyd (pseudonym) (Penguin Group, 2011). This story is an excellent example of the clash between the old and new forms of reading. It cleverly explores the importance of turning off the electronics and it demonstrates the quality and calmness that can happen when reading a good book in bed with your children.

Wallace Stevens says in the first 4 four verses of this poem:

The House Was Quiet and the World Was Calm

The house was quiet and the world was calm.

The reader became the book; and summer night

Was like the conscious being of the book.

The house was quiet and the world was calm.

Celebrate International Literacy Day all month while turning pages in a good book. Perhaps the time will come when I can interact better with e-books but until that day, I cannot give them up.