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What is the importance of short stories?

Short stories have many benefits that make them a great read in the digital times. Here are the most important ones.

Nowadays, short stories have one certain benefit: they are short. And “short” doesn’t only mean the number of words or characters. It also means the fast pace, the single-minded plot, and the concise form. However, someone may say a short story is a substitute for a novel.

Let’s face it: digital reality is switching our lives. And when it comes to reading, the balance is switched to the benefit of short-form fiction.

In times of traditional publishing, a 25-page short story was not serious enough to bear the cost of printing and distributing it as a separate publication.

Nowadays, authors can publish any piece of writing in a digital form, no matter how long – or short – it is.

It’s not justified to say that we face the revival of short stories. But short stories may turn out to be the most effective tool of a revival of reading in digital times.

8 benefits of reading short stories

1. A certainty you’ll read the entire piece

Many people who don’t read books share a common attitude: This novel sounds interesting, but I won’t have time to read it, so why start at all?

Having no time to read is one of the major reasons people stop reading books. Sometimes it’s just an excuse – every time we are checking social networks.

But there is one essential difference between reading a book and exploring a social network. The end of the latter is when you decide so. The end of a book is fixed.

In a novel, the last line is hours, days, or weeks away. It depends on how long your reading sessions are and how often find time for books.

In a short story, it may be in the next 15 minutes. Sure, it may take longer, but the time range is short. Short enough to imagine when you'll finish reading and in which circumstances.

You may find it hard to finish the entire novel. But you may also try very hard not to finish the entire short story.

2. A pleasure of finishing a story

Why is finishing a book so important? Because when you give up reading before the end, you feel discouraged.

You may try one or two more times and, eventually, come to the conclusion that you don't have time for reading.

What happens when you finish a story? No matter whether it's a novel, a novella, an essay, or a flash fiction piece, you expect a wonderful feeling to come. It's a feeling of accomplishment.

Moving forward by accomplishing goals one by another. It's what life is about, isn't it?

There is one more thing. Reading fiction is about visiting unknown, exciting worlds, full of characters you'd love to meet in person. Reading a book is like going on a journey. The feelings and dynamics are the same: from expectations to excitement, to doubts, to fulfillment, to nostalgia.

Imagine you can fly to one of these unknown worlds and come back safely before you finish drinking a cup of coffee.

3. An incentive to reach for the next read

People who are stuck reading several books rarely reach for the new one. They are right thinking it's not right to leave behind something that's not finished.

It's after finishing the last sentence when you are fully justified to evaluate the book.

When you conclude the read was great, you'll try to find something similar: from the same author, genre, or something that deals with the same topic.

When the story hasn't met your expectations, you will be more open to trying something completely different.

4. A convenient way to try new genres and authors

It's where short stories come extremely handy.

What do you do when you are not satisfied with your last read? You are thinking about how to refresh your reading list. Why not trying titles, authors or genres you never knew would ever get interested.

A common way to get acquainted with a new genre or author is to buy its most prominent work. But why buy the book if you'll not like it in the end?

Obviously, with digital books on board, you can always download a free sample. Well, free samples are not quite suited for exploring literature, because they often end before the author introduces the main character or starts a leading plot.

Any other ideas? Check out the short stories or short story collections from genres or authors you plan to read.

Short stories with their right-to-the-point plot and concise form are a convenient way to learn about the style and characteristics of the literary work you are about to discover.

5. A great read between the novels

It's true that as an activity reading is more demanding than other daily pleasures, such as watching TV.

Sometimes, after finishing a long, fascinating, and deeply involving novel, it's good to make a break.

Having a break from a novel doesn't mean you have to make a break from reading. You can reach for an easier and less challenging read – a short story.

Refreshing the mind is all about changing conditions, and leaving the path.

You can read one short story and make one short and intensive step aside. Or you can read a short story collection and dive into unexplored lands for just a bit longer.

When you are finally back on tracks, you'll eagerly reach for the next novel of your favorite author, or the next volume in a book saga you're reading.

6. A way to bring back the habit of daily reading

Take a look around. Having a minute of spare time, people take out their smartphones and check out their Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

It's an example of a highly effective use of time. Why not give the book a try? And it doesn't mean you have to keep the book in your purse or backpack. You can download a free book reading app and place its icon next to Facebook's.

Now, it's all about what you expect. When you open Facebook, scrolling through a couple of latest status messages makes it already a finished activity, no matter when you decide to stop.

When you open a book app, you imagine the time you spend reading – five minutes or half an hour – is a tiny little percent of what is left.

Short stories are suitable to be read in short chunks. A single chunk may be a substantial part of the entire story.

Even when you read a short story for five minutes, you see the progress – and this is encouraging to reach for it the soonest you'll have the next few spare minutes.

Download a short story collection to your book reading app. Reading one story might take less time than going back home from work on a subway.

7. Vocabulary and Spelling Differences

There are also slight differences in vocabulary among American, British, Canadian, and Australian English speakers.

For example, Americans call the device that helps move you between floors of a tall building an "elevator" while the British call it a "lift."

There are also differences in spelling, such as the American "color" and the British "colour".

Reading different short stories, you can also add your vocabulary.

8. Culture and Customs

Short stories help people learn about the culture, customs, and traditions of the country they're interested in.

There are many English-speaking countries, so you will want to make sure that you select short story collections that reflect the values of the country you're currently interested in.

A story written about Australia will showcase actions and speech that are different from those of the characters in a story written about the United States.

Conclusion

Maybe, for avid readers, short stories will never become a serious kind of read. But for occasional readers, they can be a serious chance to find some space for reading books among other daily activities. As for me, I prefer the short stories, because it is interesting and I can read five stories in a day, whereas one novel would take three or four days.

List of references

1. 6 REASONS WHY YOU SHOULD START READING SHORT STORIES [text] - <https://ebookfriendly.com/benefits-short-stories-list/>
2. The Importance of Short Fiction for English Learners [text] - <https://www.really-learn-english.com/esl-stories.html>