

Are You a Passive Magazine Reader?

INTRODUCTION

Wherever you go, you might find magazines sitting around, just waiting to help you pass the time.

But in that sense, magazines are being underutilized and even wasted.

Magazines can provide you with a wealth of information if only you move beyond the passive reading that so many of us tend to do. We tend to flip through the pages as we wait for our flight or appointment, not really reading all the text in these high quality publications.

At the same time, we continue to buy magazines as though we are getting more from them.

This contradiction of actions and intentions seems to indicate there is more to our casual page flipping than we realize. We need to learn, instead, how to fully utilize the contents of the pages, much in the same way we can learn how to get the most out of books and television programs.

In learning how to fully appreciate and to understand all that magazines have to offer, we can not only make full use of our subscriptions, but we can also begin to better ourselves as people, but also as readers.

Reading is far from becoming a lost art, but it is becoming something we enjoy only in snippets and headlines.

Instead of losing the luxury of reading to the Internet headlines, you can begin to take back your method of taking in information by looking to magazine as your starting point.

So, before you put down that magazine, let's look at new ways to uncover the nuggets of information in the pages.

IT'S NOT ABOUT THE PICTURES

It's easy to think magazines are only about the pictures they include, after all, other publications don't use as many pictures as magazines do.

Most of us will just flip through the pages and look for things that immediately catch our eye. And if nothing catches our eye instantly, we turn the page or put the magazine down altogether.

Instead, you need to take some time to look at all the magazines include:

- **Articles**
The majority of content in magazines are short articles about a variety of topics and subjects. These articles can contain advice for you or simply include stories that will entertain you, if only you take the time to read them. Most magazines will contain at least two feature articles, while also including smaller articles which are easy to read and to digest in terms of the information they include.
- **Tips and tricks**
What many people are starting to realize is that magazines also include great sets of tips and tricks which will help them learn more about their lives or about the way they can do certain things. In health magazines, for example, you can learn more about how to increase your health or how to perform certain exercises in the most effective and efficient ways. These sections are easy to read and easy to save for future reference,
- **Columns**
In some magazines, you will also find regular columns by notable writers. These columns will be included in every magazine and may revolve around one subject or market. When you read these articles regularly, you can see how the perspective of the author changes depending on the subject matter, and you can come back to their ideas and insights to see how yours relate.
- **Features**
The larger feature stories in a magazine are what generally take up the headlines on the cover. These are stories that are reflective of the state of the world and the worries readers will typically have. These stories might also be exposes or stories that contain sensational details about a celebrity or a public figure. These stories are designed

to pull the reader in and make them want to read not only that story, but also the others that surround it.

- **Shopping details**

When you see certain items in a magazine, the magazine will list where you can find that item in order to purchase it. You might also find a wealth of advertisements and listings in the back of the magazine as a reference.

- **Advertisements**

When you look at the pages of a magazine, you will generally see a number of ads as well. These advertisements help to keep the magazine in business, while also helping those advertised businesses reach another market. You can also look at these advertisements to get a sense of the magazine's direction and affiliates.

- **The pictures**

Of course, you can't completely discount the pictures as a major part of a magazine. The pictures grab the interest of the reader and make them want to keep flipping the pages to find out more. But the articles that go along with the pictures are also important to read.

You will also find things like:

- **Letters to the editor**

These letters can simply be responses to past articles in the magazine, or they can be letters that ask questions and offer suggestions for future issues.

- **Advice columns**

When a magazine is devoted to educating a reader, they will include advice columns to continue to answer the questions of their readers.

- **Product reviews**

If the magazine is devoted to talking about certain technologies or products, you will find regular pages of reviews of these items for readers to read as they make their own buying decisions.

No matter what you find in magazines, there is plenty to learn and to read beyond just flipping the pages to see what picture comes next.

FRONT TO BACK – HOW TO READ A MAGAZINE

It might seem like common sense as to how you would want to read a magazine, but you would be surprised at how this isn't second nature to make readers.

Reading a magazine isn't the same as reading a newspaper or a book because they're not generally laid out in the same fashion every single time.

And even if they do follow a certain structure, the variations in the contents can make the reading experience different each time. With so many readers, it makes sense that different readers want to read the magazine in different ways, according to their tastes.

Here are some tips on how you can learn to read your magazine the way you like it:

- 1. Start with the table of contents**

Just as you can't find where you're going in a foreign country without a map, you won't know what a magazine contains until you read the contents section. You can also look to the cover to find out what articles are included, but the cover can't tell you everything that's in the issue. Take the time to carefully read the contents pages first.

- 2. Choose articles that matter most**

Once you've determined which articles sound like the most important to your needs and your interests, start by reading those. This way, if you don't get to reading the rest of the magazine, at least you will have read the items that will influence your life most.

- 3. Then front to back**

Once you have finished reading the articles that pertain most to you, you should then go back to the first page of the magazine and read from the beginning to the end as you have time. This will help you to see what other articles may also pertain to you or to someone else in your life with whom you can share the information.

- 4. Go back**

To truly get the most out of a magazine, you also want to go back one more time to reread the articles and to examine the information as it

is presented. Again, this will help you retain the knowledge more easily, while also helping you find anything else which you may have missed.

For some people, they only read a magazine once and then they get rid of it, but this isn't going to help you get the most out of each issue.

By taking the time to read and reread your magazine the correct way, you can stop being passive and start being active in your gathering of knowledge and information.

LEARNING FROM MAGAZINES

However, you probably realize that just reading a magazine isn't the same as learning from it. In school, you could read that algebra book again and again without learning a thing, after all.

In order to become more knowledgeable when reading magazines, it's actually helpful to think of these publications as learning tools – like those you had in school.

Yes, you need to read, but you can do more.

- **Ask questions**

Whenever you read a magazine, you might be likely to assume that all you read is true and legitimate, but this should not be your default reading position. You should be asking questions as you read an article: does this make sense? What does the evidence suggest? Do I agree with this logic? What else do I need to know? When you continue to ask questions, you will continue to process the information in the article and solidify what you have learned as a result.

- **Share with others**

Talking with others about articles you've read can help you get a new perspective on the ideas you've been exposed to. In addition, you will be able to hear about other resources of information you might want to pursue as a result of your discussions. You will also be able to see holes in the logic of articles as well as share what you have read and what you think about a particular topic.

- **Do online research**
Since you have questions, why not do more research on the articles you have read by using the Internet? An invaluable tool, you will be able to expand the parameters of the article by delving into particular details to see if they are valid and by finding new ideas that complement the article content.
- **Review past issues**
If you look at past issues of the magazine, you will be able to see what the magazine has said in the past to see how it relates to the content now. Often, you will see that the magazine takes particular stances on certain subjects, which may or may not influence the way you see the current issue's content.
- **Send questions to the author**
Most magazines will also provide you with a way to contact the staff writers to see if you can get certain points clarified or to tell the author about an inconsistency you found in the article.
- **Go to the website**
Since so many magazines offer websites as well, you might want to head online too in order to see what kind of information is available there. In addition, you will also find discussion boards that are allowing readers from all over the world the chance to discuss their opinions.
- **Follow the links and tips**
If an article gives you advice or further resources to check out, make sure you do so. This will help you see if the author is correct in their writing and it will also help you to see if the information makes sense to you and if it will work for you too.

Magazine reading should be an active experience in which you begin to question what you read and see if you can learn more than the article states. This is not meant to assume that articles have flaws, but rather that articles can always be expanded into a larger knowledge base than you might find in the magazine itself.

There's only so much space in an issue, after all.

SHOPPING WITH MAGAZINES

In addition, to learning how to read and how to question magazines in order to become a more active learner, you also want to learn how to use a magazine in the real world.

Style and fashion magazines, for example, are a great tool when you want to go shopping, but if you don't know how to use them, how can you ever fully incorporate them and their information into your life?

It can all start by doing a few different things:

- **Rip and clip the pages**
When you take the time to pull out the pages and the pictures you want to use in your shopping trip, this will help you have an immediate reference point for your shopping excursion. You might also want to create a folder or a notebook in which you place these clippings to help you organize your ideas.
- **Mark the pages**
You can find tab stickers or just use sticky notes to mark the magazine pages you want to remember as you shop. This way, you can easily access the information you need.

Magazines provide a great starting point for your shopping adventures.

First of all, magazines allow you to do some bargain hunting so that you don't have to pay full price for anything that you don't want to.

Most magazines are already including bargain sections that make it easy to find items for lower prices, but if there's an item you really like that you don't want to spend full price on, you can also take the following steps:

- **Get online**
Shopping online is the easiest way to find great deals, and with ideas from the magazine in front of you, things only get easier. Choose a search engine you like and you're ready to get started.
- **Type in the name of the item you're looking for**
You should be as specific as possible to make sure you match up with the right item.

- **Look through the list of results**

You will then see a list of results of places where you can find the item in question. You can then go through all of these links to see who's offering the best deals.

Easy enough, isn't it?

In taking these simple steps, you will be able to do price comparisons on anything you might find in magazines. And using the magazine as the starting point will ensure you find exactly what you want.

You can also take the names of products you find online and look for them in auction websites to find the best deals.

In addition, if you can't find a certain item online, you can contact the magazine itself to see if they can give you any other related research options.

FIND YOUR STYLE

Since we are a society that thrives on looking great and having our own unique styles, it's no wonder why so many people are turning to magazines to help them out.

We can find the answers to many of our style quandaries by reading magazines.

Here are some of the biggest ways that magazines can help us find ourselves and our style.

- **Haircuts and colors**

If you've been thinking about changing your hair, magazines are a great place to start looking for ideas. There are hairstyle magazines as well as celebrity magazines which can give you great pictures of prospective styles. Then you can take these magazine pictures to your hairdresser and show them exactly what you want.

- **Clothing**

Obviously, the clothing that's featured in magazines will help you when you're shopping, but the pictures can also help you see how to put certain outfits together in order to look modern and trend friendly.

- **Home decorating**
If you're looking to create a new home style, you will want to turn to decorating and real estate magazines to help you get started. In these magazines, you will find high quality pictures that you can take to an interior designer or that you can copy on your own. By subscribing to these types of magazines, you can watch as trends and fads change too.
- **Cars**
For those who want to make a great impression with their cars, car magazines can help them see what's new and what's exciting in the world of automobiles. You can also learn how to make your car more stylish or more appealing.
- **Technology**
Since the latest gadgets and gizmos are now a part of your style and style consciousness, it's no wonder that magazines that talk about gadgets on the horizon – cell phones, computers, mp3 players, etc. – are as hot as the items they describe.

When you want to find your own personal sense of style, magazines can be a helpful ally in the process.

By exposing you to the latest and greatest ideas and innovations, you can begin to see the world in a new and more stylish way. And the world can see you as someone who is in the know too.

NEW PLACES TO READ MAGAZINES

Yes, we all know that magazines are typically read before doctor appointments and when you're standing in line at the grocery store, but why limit your experience in this way?

There are plenty of other ways to use magazines and places to read magazines so that you are always in the know about the latest news stories and styles.

- **In the workplace**
When you want to keep up to date with the latest trends in your industry, magazines are the place to turn. Not only can you subscribe to a variety of magazines that address particular needs in your workplace, but you can also use competing industry magazines to learn how to shift around your own strategies and your direction in your own work. You might read these magazines as a part of downtime you have in your office or as a part of your daily morning routine to help with brainstorming.
- **In the gym**
If you're on the treadmill or you're on a bike, why not use magazines to help pass the time? By bringing magazines that don't always require a lot of concentration, you will be able to learn as well as get fit at the same time. You can also use workout routines in magazines at your gym to help provide yourself with a personal trainer that doesn't bark orders at you.
- **On your cell phone**
Since more magazines are becoming available on the Internet, you can access these magazines on your cell phone as well. This way, you're never without something to do while you're waiting in line or waiting for a phone call.
- **Online**
Of course, you can also head to your computer to read the latest issues of your favorite magazines. Or you can simply go to the website to find out more about articles you've already read.
- **At the bookstore**
When you need a cheap date idea, take your partner to the nicest local bookstore and go to the magazine section. There, you can pick out magazines of interest to the both of you, find comfortable chairs and sit there reading what you have found. After a few hours, you can put the magazines back and then have something to talk about over coffee.

You can find numerous places to enjoy magazines and to get more out of them than you might at home or on the plane ride to your next business trip.

CONCLUSION

Magazines are everywhere, but they're not utilized as much as they could be.

In learning how to better use magazines in your life for knowledge, ideas, and inspiration, you can not only improve your own life, but you can get ahead in any field.

It's time to stop thinking of magazines as fluff reading and as simply glossy collections of pictures with a few words placed in the inside.

Magazines give you the ability to learn and to grow – but it's up to you to take them seriously.