



7 Ways to Create a Cozy Reading Environment

What is the best way to spend cozy winter days at home? Many students look forward to participating in quintessential winter break activities like building snow forts (climate permitting), sipping hot chocolate, and having plenty of good old-fashioned fun. Is reading a part of their plans? Some students will be motivated to curl up on their own with a favorite book, while many others have not yet reached this point.

There are lots of ways to encourage reading at home this winter. One of these ways is to create a reading environment that fosters feelings of comfort and joy. Here are seven easy and effective ideas to create such an environment. Teachers can incorporate these ideas into their classrooms as well.

1. Make your reading space a physically comfortable place to spend lots of time.

When you hear the phrase, “Curl up with a good book,” what do you picture? Pillows, blankets, and fluffy rugs are a great way to cozy-up a space. Bean bags, rocking chairs, hammocks, and small sofas are also comfortable places to read. Or, help your young readers build a reading fort!

2. Keep your reading space separate from other spaces.

A reading space should be a space for just that—reading. Conversations, toys, activities, or even too much movement can interfere with a reader’s ability to focus. Even if the reading space is part of another room, dedicate a corner or a small section of the room for the sole purpose of reading.

3. Ensure your reading space has a variety of materials.

It’s important to give readers lots of options. Magazines, novels, newspapers, comics, journals, articles, biographies, poetry, encyclopedias, catalogs, dictionaries, scripts, and brochures are great additions to any reading collection.

4. Be mindful of your readers’ energy levels.

Food can be a great way to help the body stay alert. Coffee and tea are beverages that are often associated with reading time, but even just having a fresh glass of water within reach can be helpful. Gum or mints can be good options, too. If you want to go above and beyond, find a special treat to only serve during reading time. Your young readers will associate the delicious snack with the activity of reading.

5. Pay attention to background noise.

Everyone has different preferences when it comes to background noise. Some people like it quiet, while others enjoy listening to instrumental music or white noise. If there are multiple readers sharing a space, try to find a solution that works for everyone. Headphones and earplugs are great options to provide more individual choice.

6. Have a “top picks” shelf.

Get your readers invested in the reading environment by allowing them to contribute to it. Set up a space for them to display their top picks, and encourage them to write book reviews.

7. Make your reading space a device-free zone.

Smartphones are endlessly entertaining. With an unlimited number of apps and notifications, it can be hard to resist the temptation to respond to that text, play one more game, or scroll for just a few minutes on a favorite social media platform. Set all devices (don’t forget about watches!) to “Do Not Disturb” and keep them out of reach and out of sight.