

How to Read a Book

Chapter 1 Discussion Questions

1. What do the authors mean when they refer to "readers?" (p. 3)
2. Adler and Van Doren wrote this book in 1972 (the first edition was in fact written by Adler in 1940 and then Adler, along with Van Doren, updated and published this second edition). At this time, television and radio were seen as taking over many functions of print. What would be our modern equivalent? (p. 3)
3. Discuss the relationship between knowledge and understanding. Is knowledge a prerequisite for understanding? Is there such a thing as too much knowledge, to the detriment of understanding? (p. 4)
4. Is there really such a thing as "passive reading?" Describe the relationship between writing and reading (p. 5)
5. Discuss reading for understanding versus reading for information. Under what conditions does "reading for understanding" take place? (p. 7-9)
6. What do the others have to say about reading for entertainment? (p. 10)
7. What is the difference between being informed and being enlightened? (p. 11)
8. What is meant by the terms "bookful blockheads," "ignorantly read," or "sophomores?" (p. 11)
9. Discuss the difference between discovery and instruction - or what the authors refer to as 'aided' and 'unaided' discovery. (p. 12)

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