

## Teacher's Reading Reminiscence Letter

Dear Class,

I can trace my memories of reading back to when I was three years old. My mom or dad would tuck me into bed and we would read as a part of my bedtime ritual. We read stories about dragons, fairies, witches, and princes. We read about a guy named Sam, who ate green eggs and ham, and about a girl with blonde hair who broke into houses and ate porridge. My favorite book of all was the *Dr. Suess Picture Dictionary*. (Maybe English teachers read dictionaries as children in preparation for their future careers!?) Each night, we would read all the words that began with the letter A, B, and so on.

My first grade teacher, Miss Ford, was one of my favorites. She taught at Sunset Mesa School in Albuquerque, New Mexico, where my family resided for five years. I thought she was the nicest teacher in the world. Miss Ford taught me how to sound out words, and from that point, I read everything from cereal boxes to billboards. The first book that I remember reading by myself was *The Cat in the Hat*, by none other than Dr. Suess. (He was one of my favorite authors.) Unfortunately, I only spent half of my school year with Miss Ford because my family moved to California that January. She gave me a book called *Young Years, Best Loved Stories and Poems for Little Children*, which I still have. I read it in the cab of the U-Haul while my dad drove. I wonder what happened to her...

I grew up with books at my disposal. My grandmother subscribed to *Ranger Rick* and my bedroom bookshelf was filled with reading material. Summers were always the best because my sister and I would ride the Nickel Bus to the Tustin Library on Wednesdays. After we made our selection, we'd have ice cream cones at Swensen's across the street.

As I grew up, I began devouring series of books from Beverly Cleary and Nancy Drew to the Oz books and the Little House set. I spent hours sprawled across my bed--just reading. I even read with a flashlight under the covers when I was supposed to be sleeping!

In part because of Miss Ford, and many other teachers along the way, and largely because of my parents, who not only read to me but were themselves readers, I am a

lifelong reader myself. My Book Club helps motivate me now. Together we select titles, and extend our repertoire of authors. I enjoy roaming the aisles of my favorite bookstores checking on potential titles or authors. I've usually got reading material stacked on my nightstand, and I get to it when I can. I love cracking the spine of a new book and settling in for a good read. Reading before I go to sleep is still part of my bedtime ritual.

Please write me back and tell me about your reading life.

- What memories of reading come to mind?
- Were you read to? By whom?
- Do you have a favorite childhood book?
- Do you have significant memories of reading at school? Of specific teachers?
- What kind of reader are you now?
- What kind of reader would you like to be?

I am anxious to read your reply.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Ritner