

Read Me a Story

Sample Pages

# The Fun They Had

by Isaac Asimov

A Teaching Resource with Common Core State Standards Alignment



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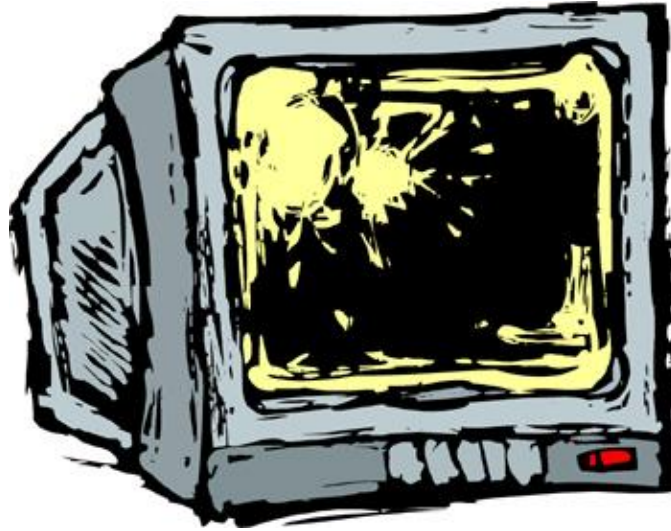
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# Read Me a Story

## *The Fun They Had*

By Isaac Asimov



One of the goals of this teaching pack is to provide teachers with ready-to-go materials for a compelling, kid-friendly short story that can double as a back-to-school activity. Isaac Asimov's **The Fun They Had** is a title that I used with my 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> graders year after year, so I know students like the story. And it's about school. It fits all the criteria.

During my teaching career, I compiled a long list of short stories that my students loved and I enjoyed teaching. I found them in old reading texts and books from my personal library. **The Fun They Had** was an all-around favorite.

Early on, I developed the habit of reading aloud to my students, though it was not common practice in other classrooms. Nevertheless, I never had a complaint. Eventually, Friday became listen-to-a-short-story day. Once, and only once, I showed up unprepared and attempted to start an alternative lesson. My students rioted! Fortunately, I always kept my short story collection on a bookcase within arm's reach. I quickly located a title and started reading!

Since then, research has reinforced what teachers have known instinctively for ages. There is great value in reading out loud to children, and it's not just the little guys—the older ones benefit as well. Today, we have the green light to take advantage of this pleasurable, fun, bonding learning experience.

I hope that's just what you'll do.

# The Story

First published in "Boys and Girls Page" *NEA Service* in December 1951  
Reprinted February 1954 in *The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction*,

Find an electronic copy here: *The Fun They Had* by Isaac Asimov ([Hyperlink removed](#))  
(This link leads to a copy of the story and interactive activities that you and your students might enjoy.)

From: *Earth is Room Enough* by Isaac Asimov  
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## Common Core State Standards

Applicable Common Core State Standards Alignments for 4<sup>th</sup>- 8<sup>th</sup> grade ELA are included in the **Answer Keys** for each question and activity.

Additional Common Core Standards will be met if students are required to listen to the story and then respond to questions. However, if the teacher chooses to use the story as an independent, partners, or small group reading assignment, the listed Common Core Standards still apply. More standards will align with written responses to prompts in **Something to Think About/Something to Write About**.

## The Activities

### Short Answer Questions:

The ten questions are factual in nature. They do not require interpretation or skill application, but they do require some specific recall.

This page is suitable as a partners' activity as well as an individual or small group assignment.

### Vocabulary:

The **Vocabulary** page presents six story words in context and challenges students to determine their meanings from surrounding clues. **Dictionary Digs** requires students to use and interpret definitions and usage of the same six words.

### Something to Think About/Something to Write About

This group of 16 prompts purposely stretches across a wide range of ability and skill levels so that teachers may pick and choose to meet the needs of their students. In some cases, the difficulty level will require that students have a copy of the story in order to respond to the prompt. Individual items may be presented orally or on paper and assigned as a whole class, group, or partner task.

### Graphic Organizer for Writing:

Item #16 from **Something to Think About/Something to Write About** has been expanded into a graphic organizer for writing. A **Grading Rubric** for this and other writing activities is included.

## Answer Keys

Full answer keys are provided, including suggested responses for open-ended questions.

## Dictionary Digs

Dig into your favorite dictionary (print or digital) to answer the following questions about 6 words from the story. Write the **letter** of the correct answer in the blank to the left.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Of the four possible answer choices, which one is **not** a correct definition for the word **superior**?
- (A) more advanced (C) of a lower quality  
(B) more skillful or intelligent (D) exceptional

- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Which of the following cartoons *best* illustrates a **dispute**?



(A)



(B)



(C)



(D)

### Short Answer Questions

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1. When and where does this story take place? What type of story is it?
2. How did Margie know that books had once existed?
3. Why did the words in the book look funny to Margie and Tommy?

### *Something to Think About/ Something to Write About*

1. Tommy is not Margie's brother. Who is he? Find story clues to support your answer.
2. Margie knew about books because of her grandfather, who had heard about them from his own grandfather. He knew there had been a time when all stories had been printed on paper. Using the notion that a generation is a span of twenty-five years, estimate the number of years that have passed since there have been books.

## Answer Keys

### Suggested and Possible Responses

#### Story Basics

(Common Core Standards: RL 4.1, RL 5.1, RL 6.1, RL7.1, RL8.1)

1. This story takes place in Margie's home on May 17, 2157. The date tells the reader right away that it's science fiction.
2. Margie's grandfather had told her. When he was a boy, his grandfather had told him that books had once been printed on paper.
3. The words in the book stood still instead of moving the way they did on a screen. And when the children turned back to the previous page, it had the same words on it that had been there when they read it the first time.

### Something to Think About/Something to Write About

#### Suggested or Possible Responses

1. Tommy is most likely Margie's neighbor and friend. We know he is not her brother because he talked about his house. When Margie's mother said it was probably time for him to go to school, he took the book and left.  
The fact that he was at Margie's house sharing the book with her suggests that they are friends. He is obviously her neighbor since he seems to come and go on foot. Also when Margie asked where he found the book, the author wrote that "He pointed without looking," suggesting that he was pointing to his house located close by, probably next door.  
(Common Core Standards: RL 4.1, RL 5.1, RL 6.1, RL7.1, RL8.1)
2. Answers will vary. Possible response: The generations mentioned in the story-- her parent, grandfather, great-grandfather, and great-great grandfather--would cover a little more than 100 years if we use 25 years as a generation and factor in Margie herself. The story says her grandfather's grandfather spoke of the time when there were books, but we don't know if he used them. Any estimate that is more than 100 years would be acceptable. At any rate, according to this story, books would have been a thing of the past by at least 2055, a year not that far away!  
(Common Core Standards: RL 4.1, RL 5.1, RL 6.1, RL7.1, RL8.1)