

onlineliteracy: Strategies for Dealing with Online Distractions While Reading (Jackie Chomic)

I'm So Distracted!!!!

When reading a book, students have many distractions:

- people walking in and out of the classroom
- phone calls to the teacher
- a buzz from the heater
- other students passing notes...

A student with ADHD has many more distractions:

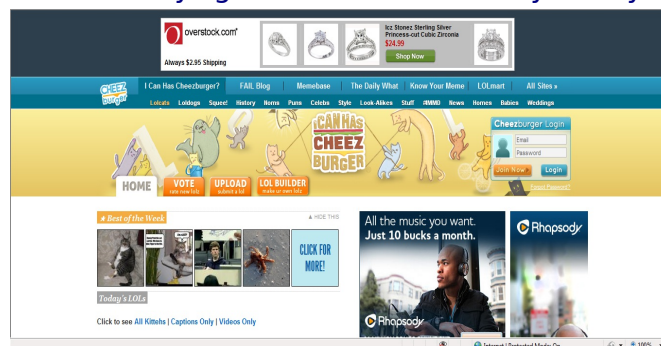
- people walking in and out of the classroom
- phone calls to the teacher
- a buzz from the heater
- other students passing notes
- decoding the question asked
- decoding the answer to the question
- the slight blinking of a light
- the tapping of someone's foot
- the buzz of a bug
- the way the jeans are tight on his legs...

Dealing with all these distractions in a typical classroom on a typical day while reading a book can be exhausting. According to the [CDC](#), approximately 9.5% or 5.4 million children 4-17 years old have been diagnosed with ADHD, as of 2007 ("Attention deficit hyperactivity, 2010").

Today, teachers are pushing students to use computers and the Internet in their daily learning along with the learning styles of reading traditional texts. 85% of classrooms have at least one computer in its room for students to learn from (Coley). This is a great learning device, except for the extra distractions. Internet sites now have

- blinking advertisements
- multiple text colors
- audio that starts playing once on the webpage
- and other non-relevant text and images surrounding the important information.

A typical student has enough trouble staying focused on what they are trying to read.



A screen cast of a distracting website <http://icanhascheezburger.com/>

A student with ADHD (or many other disabilities) has five times the trouble. Go to this screen cast to understand more of what I'm saying: [Online Distractions](#)

What does a student do in order to focus on what she is reading, and hide the distractions? On this page, you will find many different strategies, ideas and techniques to help a student tune out the distractions while trying to read online.

One point that needs to be understood is that when talking about online distractions, I am talking about the times that getting off task while online is a negative thing. I am someone who understands that there are times that students need to surround themselves in the subject they are trying to learn about. The Internet is the greatest and most open tool that allows students to "get lost" in the Internet and find new ideas and information about whatever topic they are interested in. [Here](#) is an interesting article that talks about the benefits of being off task when it is an appropriate time. The strategies on this page are to help students when they don't want to get "off task" and want to make sure they can focus on the information they are trying to read and understand in front of themselves.

Old vs. New Outlook

As talked about before, there are many good reasons to have students using the Internet to read and search for information. Just a few years ago, many educators were hesitant to try new technology and add computers, SMARTBoards, iPads, clickers, and any other technology that will add stress to a classroom. However, in recent years, many educators are opening their minds to using new tools to teach students because of all the great advances and eases that these tools are bringing to the classroom. As discussed previously in this web page, with these new technologies come distractions and problems. However, if we calm down, take a deep breath, and look for ways to overcome these minor setbacks, we will get the benefits of new technology. Below are a few ideas to help overcome distractions with online reading.

Old Outlook	New Outlook
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• distracting• stressful• new problems• additional time	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• adds adventure• fun and exciting• brings immediate gradification• great incentive and resource• convenience and ease

Strategies and Links

*When reading this webpage, you will notice that it is very plain and simple. This is meant to keep the distractions to a minimum. Adding many different font colors and pictures to a page distracts readers more than helps them. I have added a few links in order to allow readers to understand more the concepts and strategies talked about on this page.