

Home. Where, *What*, Is It?

For me, home is many places. Home is in the books I read, home is words that spin wonderful yarns about far away places, places I can never go. Home smells like old books that have almost never been taken out of their shelves, musty and dusty. Home feels like smooth paper, cool and dry. Home is in the black-and white colors of words and paper. When I'm at home, the only sounds I can hear are the rustle of turning pages and my own breath, speeding up when the character is in mortal danger.

At home, I only pause for food and water. Nothing else can interrupt me. I only hear the words in my mind; only see the black type in front of me. Home can make me cry, or laugh, or both. When I leave home, I long for the time when I can return. When I'm at home, my only desire is to read more.

Home is with the character in the story, fighting dragons, overcoming obstacles, and facing challenges. When a character dies, I feel the character dying. When one laughs, I feel happy. And when one feels safe, I feel safe and cozy, too.

Home is incredible. There can be many things occurring around me, but I am unaware because I am so deeply absorbed in my home. When someone tries to talk to me, I don't hear them, so interested I am in my book.

Home is easy to get to; it doesn't take that long. But sometimes I like to prolong the anticipation. I stare at the cover, savoring the brightly colored pictures, and the fancy letters. Then, ever so slowly, I open the book. The first glimpse is the best, looking at the chapter title. Then I see the first sentence. "Once upon a time", or "It was a dark and stormy night", or "If you're looking for a book with a happy ending, don't read this". The story that then follows is probably one to compete with the best-selling books ever to be written.

I'm almost always at home; walking to classes, eating, and curling up in bed. I read in the five minutes before class starts, during dinner (if I can get away with it), and during recess. There's nothing but me and the paper, brightly lit, or so dark I have to squint to see the words. But that doesn't matter, though. Where there are books, I'm at home.

I don't glance up from my book unless it's something important. Would *you* like to be torn away from your home, away from everything safe and warm and comfortable? No. And that's because there's no place like home.