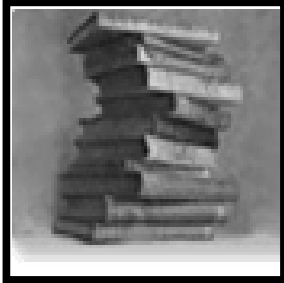


BOOKS



To my left appear to be some old books of who knows what. Books have been around a long, long time and continue to serve as a standard medium for information from the paperback at the news stand to the most eloquent bound volumes of classic literature or other prized text. Books are a gateway to adventure by providing access to distant places and times, to newfound characters and events, and to a new understanding of a subject.

Books may be received as gifts or purchased as necessary for classes. Books may be highly valued and traded accordingly; or books may be considered threatening and burned or destroyed in mass. Sitting on a shelf, a book is worthless; in the hands of the reader, a book may be priceless. Books are a common and reliable means for learning, entertaining, and stimulating for mind, heart and soul. Why books can even affect the body if the content pertains to exercise and nutrition.

More than paper and texts, a book is a combination of words formed by the writer and bound by the publisher. Available for all ages, books can captivate the mind by invoking and exercising the imagination. Television and videos are only passive forms of entertainment when it comes to the imagination.

What are your favorite books? One of my favorite is *The Count of Monty Cristo*: a great adventure of courage, the will to survive the pursuit of revenge; and ultimately, the discovery that losses incurred by the acts of jealousy cannot be recovered or replaced by justice.

Today, someone referred me to a book they recently read entitled, *The Book of Ruth*, by Jane Hamilton. From the person's description and a book review on the Internet, the story involves a girl who is able to cope with a difficult home life by, you guessed it, reading books.

In a

WORD