Chapter 1 – Why Read?
Children’s Literature, Briefly

1. **The Rewards of Reading**
   - A number of benefits come our way: expanded vocabulary, increased word knowledge, improved reading skills, better communication skills, strengthened knowledge of language, new insights, power to compete in an information-driven age, and perhaps a certain amount of additional confidence.
   - Real reading offers us two rewards.
     1. The first is immediate as we travel through images and ideas as we read the words.
     2. The second reward is long term- we add knowledge, experience, and insight add up to our becoming an educated person. (There’s a list of benefits of reading in your text.)

2. **Unengaged and Engaged Reading**
   - Reading tends to fall into two categories: unengaged and engaged. Unengaged reading is the reading of necessity, the reading required by others or forced on us.
   - Unengaged readers, the ones who can read but don’t, are sometimes called alliterate. The alliterate person has all the necessary know-how to unlock the meaning in print, but chooses not to pick up books. “The person who can read but doesn’t is no better off than the one who can’t read.”
   - Those who engage in personal reading know the satisfying feeling of finding pleasure in print and find their reward in two areas: locating information and gaining experience.
   - People who want certain information seek it out.
   - “Esthetic” reading – the goal is not the acquiring of information, but participation in the experience. Readers focus on what they are experiencing as their eyes pass over the words.
   - For reading to make a difference, it has to be personal. When engaged in reading factual books, it is not the information that rivets us, but the thoughts and insights that come as we read.
   - The act of reading can’t serve two masters. We read either for ourselves or for some other purpose. How many of us have covered several pages of assigned reading in a textbook, only to discover that we have not registered one morsel of meaning? Yet we also have experienced being so consumed by a novel or biography that we do not notice when the chapters begin or end.
   - Some readers have spent so many years reading for others that they have difficulty identifying their own responses to a book.
   - How to determine if a reader is engaged or unengaged? An engaged reader is not aware of the reading process; don’t even see words after the first sentence or two at the beginning; they see scenes, people action.
   - So, why do we read? For personal and immediate reward. We read what already interests us. We learn new interests through reading a skillfully written account that takes us places we have never before been.