

How to Teach a Novel

As a classroom teacher, I have the opportunity to use novels as an integral part of my Language Arts Literacy program. Listed below are the steps I would follow for planning a novel study. Depending upon your personal style, you may choose to implement these steps in a different order, or to omit steps altogether.

Please take a minute to email me at kschoch@bedminsterschool.org to let me know you've downloaded this document (or that it has been passed on to you). This will allow me to notify you when the document has been updated or in any way modified.

Shameless Personal Plugs (that will absolutely benefit you!)

Check out my How to Teach a Novel blog at <http://howtoteachanovel.wordpress.com>. There you'll find articles, resources, recommendations, related links, and tech tips that will help you teach with novels more effectively and efficiently.

You may also appreciate <http://teachwithpicturebooks.blogspot.com>, which has a focus on using picture books with the upper elementary and middle school crowd. Picture Books are an excellent compliment to novels, and are discussed in Section 5.

Your students will absolutely benefit from the online writing tools collected at www.squidoo.com/multimediamuse, and www.squidoo.com/interactivemathsites has some great math games that actually teach, not just entertain.

Step One: Choose (and Read!) a Novel

This is absolutely the most important step. Just as we choose wallpaper and furniture carefully, knowing that we'll be living with it for the next ten or fifteen years, choose your novel carefully, because you will indeed be living with it for the next three to eight weeks.

When choosing a novel, ask yourself: "Why this book? What's worth reading in it? What's worth teaching from it?" Below, I've listed just a few of the many reasons why you might choose one novel over another, and you are sure to have reasons of your own.

A novel is worth reading and teaching if it

- is a classic which continues to be relevant to today's students;
- is well written and particularly strong in a single area such as characterization, plot, point of view, dialogue, conflict;
- contains a universal theme which can be integrated into at least one other curriculum area;
- speaks to the students' interests, concerns, or social issues;
- exemplifies a desired genre or a style of writing;
- is grade and ability appropriate (or just slightly over or under the average student's independent reading level);
- supports your curriculum objectives as well as state standards.

Reading the novel sounds obvious, but you'd be surprised how many teachers have started a novel or read-aloud without having read it first themselves. Their rationale: "I want to experience it as freshly as my students." That will still happen the first time that you read it on your own. But then, as the teacher, you can use your knowledge of the novel's content to plan an engaging unit. Your reflection on the novel a week, a month, a year later will provide further insights into what the novel has to offer.

I would recommend two readings. The first should be from cover to cover, full immersion. At most, jot down question marks and exclamation marks in the margins, but nothing more. A second analytical reading would occur with pencil in hand, after Step Three.

Step Two: Align the Novel with a Universal Theme

For a novel to be compelling now and memorable later, it must work at a thematic level. That is, it must address a universal concept to which students can relate. Is the book about a dog that pulls a sled? No; it is about Determination, and Loyalty, and Overcoming Challenges. Those are ideas to which students can relate. Is it simply a tale about a pig and a spider? No; it's a story of Compassion, and Sacrifice, and Identity.

In order to make literature meaningful, teachers must find a way to help students connect it to their own lives. **Universal Themes** and their accompanying **Guiding Questions** are one way of doing this. Regardless of the novel you choose and its innate merits, you must ask yourself, "What makes this story accessible to everyone? For the kid who couldn't care less about spiders and pigs, what does this story say to him about experiences which we all share in common?" That's getting to the theme, or the universality, of the novel.

There are several major advantages to using themes:

- **Learning About Text Structure Across Selections**

In order for students to become effective constructors of meaning, they must learn to understand the differences in narrative and expository texts (Beach & Appleman, 1984; Taylor & Beach, 1984). Thematic organization makes it possible to arrange several pieces of related literature together to help students learn to use different text structures as aids to constructing meaning.

- **Strategies/Skills Evolve from the Literature**

Students learn the strategies and skills of reading and writing by reading and writing (Wells, 1990). By placing related pieces of literature with similar characteristics together, it is possible to scaffold (Ibid. page 23) instruction and gradually release the responsibility for learning to the students (Pearson, 1985). In the first selection the teacher can provide heavy support and modeling. In the next selection students can begin to take control and model what they are learning, still under the teacher's guidance or coaching. Finally, students use the last selection to model and apply what they have learned. Reading the literature provides models for the strategies and skills. By encountering several related pieces of literature, students get repeated modeling and practice with the same types of strategies and skills. This is what Walmsley and Walp (1990) call a "skills through application" approach.

- **Building Connections and Relationships**

Thematic organization helps to account for the concepts of schema theory and prior knowledge. By having related, focused literature, students are able to build connections and relationships about a given theme, which is how one develops prior knowledge and uses it to construct meaning (Anderson & Pearson, 1984).

- **Provides Models for Reading and Writing**

Children learn to read and write together (Teale & Sulzby, 1986). A thematic organization allows reading and writing to be taught and developed together as readers and writers naturally learn. By having themes with several pieces of the same type of literature, students have models to use in their writing. For example, if students are reading several well-formed stories with very strong character descriptions, their writing can focus on the writing of stories with strong character descriptions; the exact topic of the student's writing, however, should be selected by the student (Graves, 1983).

- **Efficient Use of Classroom Time**

A thematic organization also makes it possible to use classroom time more efficiently by focusing on a variety of curricular areas across the theme (Pappas, Kiefer, & Levstik, 1990; Walmsley & Walp, 1990). Teachers are constantly faced with the

dilemma of having too many things to teach and not enough time to teach them. By having a strong thematic organization, teachers are better able to provide students with learning experiences that make more efficient use of their time and match the way students actually learn.

- **Supports Constructing Meaning**

Overall, the major advantage of focused themes is that they make it possible for students to more effectively construct meaning by reading related authentic selections and building connections among them.

(http://www.eduplace.com/rdg/res/literacy/lit_ins2.html)

But which comes first: the novel or the theme? That's entirely up to you. Many teachers have strong allegiances to certain novels, so they let the novel "lead" the curriculum. Other teachers prefer to select several themes for the year (often one per marking period) and then build a collection of novels, Wisdom Books (picture books), poetry, drama, and accompanying activities around that theme.

Another consideration is how far a theme will extend into other curriculum areas. This is where **Universal Themes** (Balance, Change, Patterns) prove to be somewhat more authentic than **Topics** (Spiders, Autumn, Tall Tales). Themes more naturally tie disciplines together.

If you're crazy for a **topic**, such as **penguins**, ask yourself, "What is it about penguins that gives them universal appeal? Why would anyone care to learn about them?"

Penguins certainly live in cooperatively in groups, so **community**, **relationships**, and **collaboration** could be themes; the role of the penguins in relationship to their polar neighbors introduces the themes of **cycles**, **survival**, and **balance**; and their very unique bodies can relate to themes of **adaptation**, **identity**, and **uniqueness**.

Consider the theme of Identity, which was selected from many possible themes connecting to the novel *Because of Winn Dixie*. The penguin-free chart below illustrates how this universal theme can easily be incorporated into the four major subject areas. The Universal Themes list on the following page, while not meant to be exhaustive, provides dozens of possible themes for your consideration.

Multidisciplinary Theme Unit: Identity

Subject:	LA/Literature	Math	Science	Social Studies
Unit:	Novel Study of <i>Because of Winn Dixie</i>	Properties of Whole Numbers	Animal Life Cycles	Native Americans of New Jersey
Guiding Questions:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do we form our identities? • How does what others think about you affect how you think about yourself? • How is identity shaped by relationships and experiences? • When should an individual take a stand in opposition to another individual or larger group? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In what ways do numbers create identity in our world? • How does place value affect a digit's identity? • What are the ways that we can name numbers? • How do positive and negative signs change a number's identity? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What traits are unique to each animal family? • In what ways do traits and learned behaviors define an animal's identity? • How do adaptations change an animal's identity? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What cultural components (music, dress, food, shelter, beliefs) define the Lenape? • How did the identity of the average Lenape change after contact with European settlers? • What can you learn about yourself by studying the lives of others?

Universal Themes

This is just a sampling of themes which might be incorporated into the existing curriculum.
Some can be paired to create a juxtaposition of ideas.

Abandonment	Cycles	Influence	Power
Acceptance	Denial	Ingenuity	Prejudice
Accomplishment	Determination	Initiation	Pride
Adventure	Devotion	Innocence	Problem Solving
Anxiety	Differences	Innovation	Reciprocity
Appreciation	Dignity	Inspiration	Reflection
Appreciation of Nature	Discovery	Integrity	Relationships
Attitude	Empathy	Interdependence	Relativity
Balance	Enthusiasm	Isolation	Resourcefulness
Belonging	Environment	Justice	Respect
Brotherhood	Escape	Kindness	Responsibility
Cause and Effect	Excellence	Leadership	Self Awareness
Challenge	Exploration	Loneliness	Self Discipline
Change	Facing Fear	Loss	Self Esteem
Choices	Fairness	Love	Self Respect
Collaboration	Faith	Loyalty	Self Sacrifice
Coming of Age	Fame	Magnitude	Sensitivity
Commitment	Family	Memory	Social Change
Communication	Fear	Nature	Structure
Community	Forgiveness	New Experiences	Success
Culture	Freedom	Opportunity	Survival
Compassion	Friendship	Optimism	Sympathy
Compromise	Generations	Order vs. Chaos	Systems
Concern	Goals	Origins	Tolerance
Conflict	Gratitude	Parallelism	Tradition
Conflict	Heroism	Patience	Tragedy
Resolution	Honesty	Patriotism	Transformation
Conformity	Honor	Patterns	Uncertainty
Connections	Hope	Peace	Virtue
Consequences	Humility	Peer Pressure	Wisdom
Consideration	Humor	Perseverance	Work
Cooperation	Identity	Perspectives	
Courage	Imagination	Point of View	
	Individuality	Possibilities	

Below are several websites which may help in further investigation into themes.

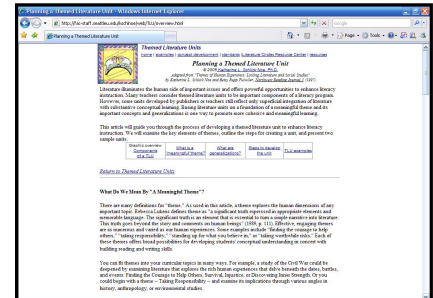
Sites on Theme

Press Ctrl button to click on live links.

Planning a Themed Literature Unit

This recommended site provides the rationale for using themed units, as well as a number of “generalizations” which can be used as themes for many novels. You can also review themed units at several grade levels, as well as the books suggested for each.

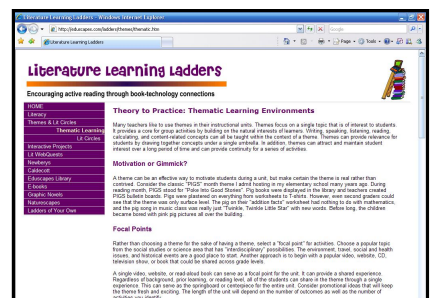
<http://fac-staff.seattleu.edu/kschlnoe/web/TLU/overview.html>



Theory to Practice: Thematic Learning Environments

This site provides information on the “why” of themed units, and then provides several possible themes as well as a short list of links.

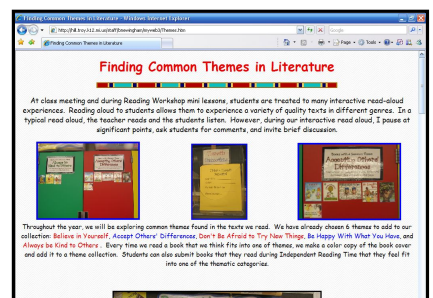
<http://eduscapes.com/ladders/themes/thematic.htm>



Finding Common Themes in Literature

One teacher’s site illustrates how themes can be utilized effectively in the classroom. This site also features many resources which can be downloaded and adapted.

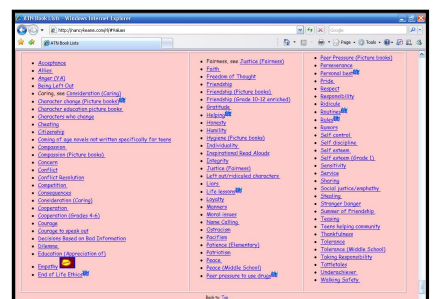
<http://hill.troy.k12.mi.us/staff/bnewingham/myweb3/Themes.htm>



All Together Now Booklists

A really extensive clickable list of themes, values, and topics.

<http://nancykeane.com/rl/#Values>



Random House Teachers

At first glance, simply a list of themes. Click on one, and it provides at least one book title. Click on that title, and you will then be provided with a summary of the book, as well as a teacher's guide with questions and suggested activities.

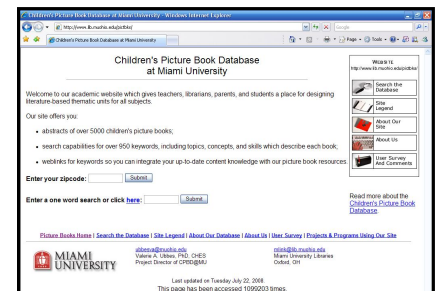
<http://www.randomhouse.com/teachers/guides/theme/>



Picture Book Database

From an online university library, search picture book summaries by title or theme.

<http://www.lib.muohio.edu/pictbks/>



eThemes Resources

Topical and thematic resources listed alphabetically or by calendar.

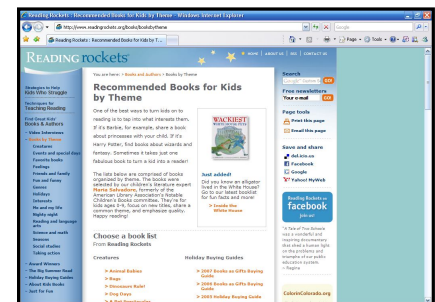
<http://www.emints.org/ethemes/resources/by-title.shtml>



Reading Rockets Books by Theme

Click on the theme to get a list of (mostly picture) books with summaries. If the link seems problematic, try simply <http://www.readingrockets.org/books/> and then find the **themes** link on that page.

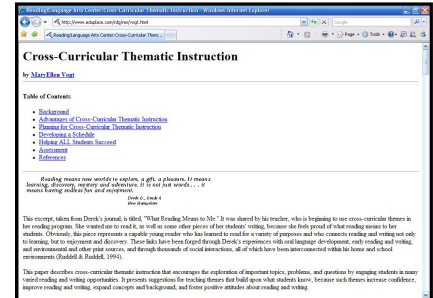
<http://www.readingrockets.org/books/booksbytheme>



Cross-Curricular Thematic Instruction

From the site: "This paper describes cross-curricular thematic instruction that encourages the exploration of important topics, problems, and questions by engaging students in many varied reading and writing opportunities. It presents suggestions for teaching themes that build upon what students know, because such themes increase confidence, improve reading and writing, expand concepts and background, and foster positive attitudes about reading and writing."

<http://www.eduplace.com/rdg/res/vogt.html>



Step Three: Develop Guiding Questions

Guiding questions, also called **essential questions**, capture the core **concepts**, **issues**, and **understandings** that are most significant in your theme. For your first theme, and especially for themes in younger grades, the teacher will develop these questions. In older grades, students can generate these questions. The questions can later be revised and used as an assessment piece for the unit.

Good guiding questions have some basic criteria in common:

- They are open-ended and resist a simple or single right answer.
- They are deliberately thought-provoking, counterintuitive, and/or controversial.
- They require students to draw upon content knowledge and personal experience.
- They can be revisited throughout the unit to engage students in evolving dialogue and debate.
- They lead to other essential questions posed by students.

(<http://www.greece.k12.ny.us/instruction/ela/6-12/Essential%20Questions/Index.htm>)

Four themes and their guiding questions are provided below. Note that each theme is accompanied by a definition which narrows the overly general theme.

Theme: Identity – Identity might be defined as uniqueness, distinctiveness, individuality, or personality. The identity of a person or group is rarely static, but instead is constantly being changed by internal and external forces.

Guiding Questions:

- How do we form our identities?
- How does what others think about you affect how you think about yourself?
- How is identity shaped by relationships and experiences?
- What can you learn about yourself by studying the lives of others?
- When should an individual take a stand in opposition to an individual or larger group?

Theme: Choices - People are faced with decisions every day, some more important than others. When an individual is faced with choices, he/she must evaluate which choices will bring desired, or at least positive, outcomes. People often forget that they can exert control over situations through the decisions they make; however, they must be willing to accept the consequences of those decisions.

Guiding Questions:

- How do we make good decisions?
- What is the relationship between decisions and consequences?
- How can a person's decisions and actions change his/her life?
- How do the decisions and actions of characters reveal their personalities (identities)?
- How do decisions, actions, and consequences vary depending on the different perspectives of the people involved?

Theme: Determination - Success is most often achieved by those individuals who demonstrate the greatest drive and commitment to attaining their goals. Determination is defined through perseverance, persistence, and courage in the face of those obstacles which stand between an individual and their dreams.

Guiding Questions:

- What types of conflict do we face in pursuit of our goals?
- Who in the past has demonstrated outstanding determination in the face of great obstacles?
- What personal qualities have aided them in their determination?
- What motivates people to be so persistent in achieving their goals?
- What problem-solving strategies can individuals use to manage conflict and change?

Theme: Perspectives - Misunderstandings arise when individuals are unable to view a situation from another person's point of view. We need to be aware of differing opinions and points of view. Acknowledging that people can have different points of view in the same situation is the first step to reaching compromise. Compromise allows good decisions to be formulated through a synthesis of divergent ideas.

Guiding Questions:

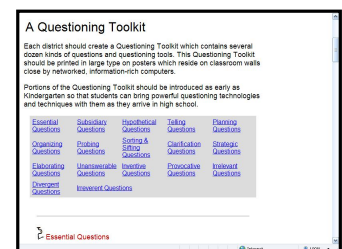
- How do our personal experiences shape our view of others?
- Why is it important to understand the perspectives of others?
- How does an individual's point of view affect the way they deal with conflict?
- How do decisions, actions, and consequences vary depending on the different perspectives of the people involved?

Sites on Essential Questions

[Questioning Toolkit](http://www.fno.org/nov97/toolkit.html)

Great resource for creating Essential Questions and understanding the different types of questions which should be used in the classroom.

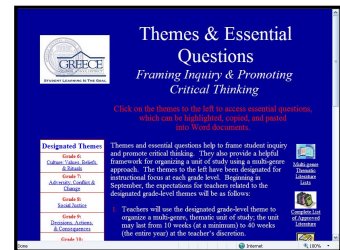
<http://www.fno.org/nov97/toolkit.html>



Themes & Essential Questions

Features a list of themes and essential questions by grade level.

<http://www.greece.k12.ny.us/instruction/ela/6-12/Essential%20Questions/Index.htm>



Step Four: “Deconstruct” the Novel

Once you have selected at least one theme, it’s time to reread the novel with that theme in mind. As you read,

- **Assign each page a title.** This will allow you to reference specific events more quickly. Critical quotes make excellent titles.
- **Form anticipatory questions for each chapter.** What thoughts might help review the previous chapter while cuing the student’s mind for this new chapter?
- **Jot down questions throughout each chapter.** Some questions may review information which is critical to unfolding events, while others may ask students to predict what will occur. It’s important to write STOP at those points where you would like students to predict or reflect; often in the “heat of the moment” we have flown past a point in the story where I had meant for students to stop and share their thoughts, or to predict what action the character might next take.
- **Underline vocabulary which is critical to understanding the story.** Will students need to understand these terms before they read, or can they later define them using context clues? Or, is the term introduced here and then later defined using the “read on” strategy? I am NOT fan of assigning students lists of vocabulary for defining before a chapter is read. That is NOT how real readers contend with new words, and that is NOT how context clue strategies are effectively built!
- **Mark any literary devices.** Which are employed by this author often? Which are central to the story’s theme or plot?
- **Continually ask yourself: “What’s worth knowing here? How can students take what is worth knowing and make it their own? How can they organize their own thinking about this novel’s contents in order to understand it better? In what ways does this relate to them? In what ways does this relate to the theme and the essential questions?”**

At this time you may also want to consult **teaching guides** for the novel you’ve selected. Many are commercially available, but you will find just as many ideas online from teachers

who have actually taught the novel and used the ideas they're presenting. That is not always true of a published unit plan! (Proteacher.net is a great online forum where teachers routinely share their thoughts, lesson plans, and reproducibles for novels and picture books. I mention this site first, since 90% of the ideas swapped there have been used at least once in the classroom laboratory).

To begin a general search for teaching guides, start with a search engine such as Google. Enter your novel title, enclosed by quotations marks. This will keep the search engine from breaking the words apart. If you wish to search only those materials which are free (versus the many commercial units which will fill the first few pages of your search), try using the Advanced Search options. In document type, try a search for only **.doc** results. This will give only links which download Word documents. Similarly, choosing **pdf** results will yield only Adobe pdf files. Either search strategy will "cut to the chase."

Other advanced searches I would suggest would include the title of your book, plus

- "teacher notes," or "teaching guide;"
- "interactive," which will yield online interactive activities related to the novel;
- "lesson plans" or "novel unit," for materials created just for teachers;
- "assessment" or "test," for assessment ideas;
- "critical analysis" or "literary analysis," for more in-depth examination of the book; and
- "learning activities" or "activities" for student-centered resources.

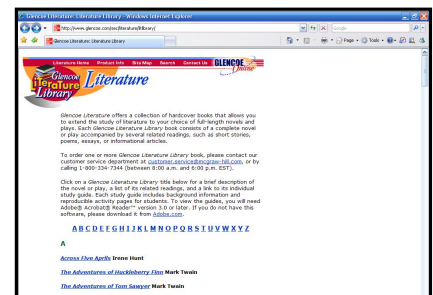
I would also recommend that you visit a search engine that clusters results. Two such engines are **Clusty.com** and **Kartoo.com**. The first is a Pittsburgh-based site that may return some sites that you won't see in Google's top 100; the latter is a visually based site, which provides search "maps" that connect key terms to sites of interest. Both sites allow you to narrow the focus of your search using key words you may not have even considered, and Kartoo even provides thumbnails of each site's homepage.

Other Sites for Researching Novel Guides

[Glencoe Literature Library](http://www.glencoe.com/sec/literature/litlibrary/)

Click on a *Glencoe Literature Library* title for a brief description of the novel or play, a list of its related readings, and a link to its individual study guide. Each study guide includes background information and reproducible activity pages for students. Free guides download as pdf files.

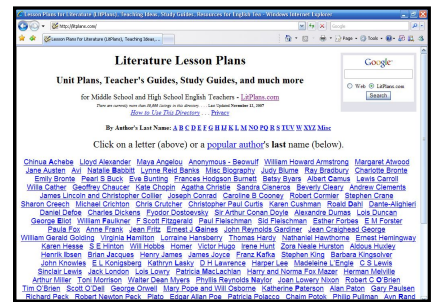
<http://www.glencoe.com/sec/literature/litlibrary/>



Searchable Lit Plans

Search by book or author name for links to online lit guides.

<http://www.litplans.com/>



Children's Literature Authors

An A-Z list of popular authors and sites where information on their books can be found.

<http://www.webenglishteacher.com/childlit1.html>



Wild Geese Guides

Tracie Vaughn Zimmer has published dozens of original teaching guides for books here, mostly novels. Not real to search, since the titles don't seem to be in order, but worth the search.

<http://wildgeeseguides.blogspot.com/>



Writing Fix

The Northern Nevada Writing Project's [Writing Fix](http://writingfix.com/) site contains a terrific section of lesson plans on [Using Chapter Book Excerpts as Mentor Texts](http://writingfix.com/).

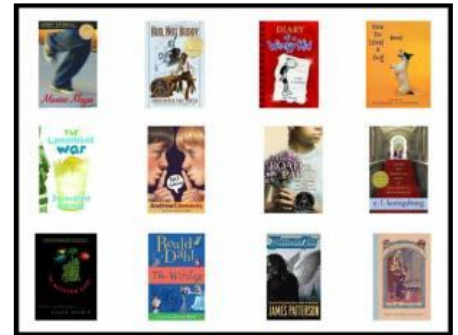
<http://writingfix.com/>



[ReadKiddoRead Ning](http://readkiddoread.ning.com/page/lesson-plans)

A resource of over 100 lesson plans for both picture books and novels.

<http://readkiddoread.ning.com/page/lesson-plans>



Step Five: Select Supplementary Resources

In addition to your novel of choice, you may also consider incorporating picture books, poetry, drama, quotes, video clips, web sites, and related articles and writing prompts into your themed unit.

These items can be used as anticipatory sets, discussion starters, response journal prompts, etc. A few examples:

- Students read that Mr. Sir in *Holes* has a rattlesnake tattoo on his arm. After brainstorming what they know about rattlesnakes, students read a short encyclopedia article on rattlesnakes. Students then respond to the prompt: “In what ways is Mr. Sir like a rattlesnake?”
- Students read the following quote on the board: “No matter how far you have gone down the wrong road, turn back” (Turkish proverb). The teacher asks, “What does that mean? How does that quote relate to the decision we saw Palmer make in the last chapter?”
- After students settle down, the teacher reads aloud the picture book *The Honest to Goodness Truth* by Patricia McKissack. After reading it, the teacher says, “I thought we agreed yesterday that ‘Honesty is the best policy.’ This book seems to say the exact opposite! So who’s right?”

Creating a Common Literary Culture Using Wisdom Books

If every child in every class had a similar “bank” of common experiences and knowledge, we would be able to focus our teaching efforts much more efficiently and effectively. If you knew, for example, that every student in the classroom had read *Sarah, Plain and Tall*, you would be able to discuss color imagery with ease. Unfortunately, it is rare that students

have extensive shared literary experiences. How can we create such a culture in our classroom?

One such way is through the use of picture books. To dignify these types of books for my fourth graders, I prefer to call them “Wisdom Books.” No matter what types of readers students may be, I recommend that they continue to experience picture books in the fourth grade and beyond. Picture books are simply books that are not divided into chapters and contain more illustrations than your typical chapter books. The fact is, picture books often contain more complex sentence structure, vocabulary, and themes than many “dumbed down” chapter books.

Wisdom Books are picture books whose themes and narratives illustrate the life skills, character traits, and attitudes which we want our own children to embrace. Universal themes such as patience, empathy, teamwork, cooperation, forgiveness, fairness, and responsibility are often praised, but how often are they modeled for students? Certain picture books capture one or more of these (and other) ideal traits in just sixteen or twenty-four pages, creating a memorable model for children who still think and generalize in very concrete terms.

For our purposes of creating a common literary culture, Wisdom Books provide an instant and complete shared experience. This shared experience can then be referenced by all students with equal understanding. The Wisdom Book may explicitly address your **theme**, or it may provide **historical or cultural background information** helpful in understanding your novel’s setting, or it may focus on a **literary device** which you wish to teach.

I also recommend Wisdom Books for the following reasons:

- **Wisdom Books are nonthreatening.** For some reluctant readers, the thought of slogging through a 200 page chapter book is daunting; shorter, simpler picture books offer reading in more digestible portions. For that reason, offer your Wisdom Book for independent rereading.
- **Wisdom Books are extremely focused.** Some readers are put off by multiple plots, or lose the focus of the book if it’s too long. By its very design, a picture book must cut to the chase immediately.
- **Wisdom Books provide excellent writing models.** When we ask our students to “write a story,” we rarely mean a story with chapters. Why then do we have students read only those types of books? Picture books provide models of ideal length and succinctness for student writing.
- **Wisdom Books activate thinking on a visual level.** Since illustrations are so often tied into the meaning of a picture book, students are required to shift their

comprehension from text to picture, and often the cleverest picture books will provide illustrations that alter the meaning of the text alone.

- **Wisdom Books can build reading comprehension.** Since Wisdom Books employ story elements (plot, character, setting, conflict) so well, a steady diet of picture books will increase a child's reading comprehension, no matter what their present stage. And consider this: are the reading passages on standardized tests in chapter form, or are they shorter passages?
- **Wisdom Books tell their stories with amazing pictures!** This is an important stepping stone to having students learn to visualize stories for themselves.

Sites on Wisdom Books (aka Picture Books)

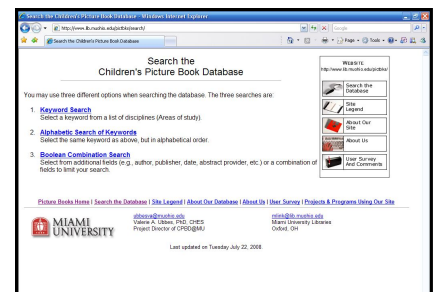
[Children's Picture Book Database](http://www.lib.muohio.edu/pictbks/search/)

Search by topic or theme for specific books or lesson plans.

<http://www.lib.muohio.edu/pictbks/search/>

Remember to check out

<http://teachwithpicturebooks.blogspot.com> for frequently updated picture book recommendations, themes, guiding questions, and cross-curricular extensions.



[Picturing Books: A Website About Picture Books](http://www.picturingbooks.com/)

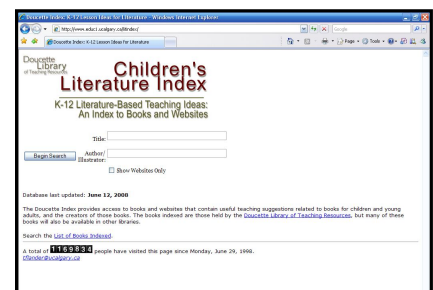
Using picture books in the classroom.

<http://www.picturingbooks.com/>



[Book Info Search via the Doucette Index](http://www.educ1.ucalgary.ca/litindex/)

Type in book by title or author to bring up related websites and activities. <http://www.educ1.ucalgary.ca/litindex/>.



The chart below is from a now-extinct site. The closest match I've found since then is to an [online Word document](#).

Literary Device	Definition	Picture Books To Help Teach
ALLITERATION	Repetition of initial consonant sounds.	<i>Chicken Little</i> Steven Kellog <i>If You Were A Writer</i> Joan Lowry Nixon <i>How the Grinch Stole Christmas</i> Dr. Seuss <i>Shrek</i> William Steig <i>Allison's Zinnia</i> Anita Lobel <i>The Voyage of Ludgate Hill</i> Nancy Willard
FLASHBACK	Interruption of the present action to insert an episode that took place in an earlier time for the purpose of giving the reader information to make the present situation understandable or to account for a character's current motivation	<i>Miss Rumphius</i> Barbara Cooney <i>Why the Chicken Crossed the Road</i> David Macaulay <i>House on Maple Street</i> Bonnie Pryor <i>One Small Bead</i> Byrd Baylor
FORESHADOWING	A device that provides clues to alert the reader about events that will occur later in the narrative. It serves to build suspense.	<i>The Incredible Painting of Felix Clousseau</i> John Agee <i>How Many Days to America?</i> Eve Bunting <i>An Early American Christmas</i> Tomie dePaola <i>Owl Moon</i> Jane Yolen <i>Grandfather's Journey</i> Allen Say <i>Encounter</i> Jane Yolen
IRONY	A contrast between expectation and reality – between what is said and what is meant, between what appears to be true and what is really true, or between	<i>Grandfather's Journey</i> Allen Say* <i>The Frog Prince Continued</i> Jon Scieszka <i>The Three Little Wolves and the Big Bad Pig</i> Trivizas Oxenbury <i>Fish and Flamingo</i> Nancy White Carlstrom

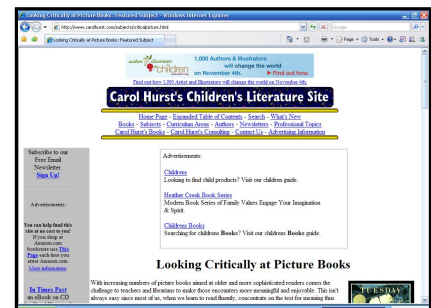
	what is expected to happen and what actually happens.	<i>The Fortune Tellers</i> Lloyd Alexander <i>The Mountain Garden</i> Peter Parnall <i>An Angel for Solomon Singer</i> Cynthia Rylant
METAPHOR	An implied comparison between two things that are essentially different.	<i>Through the Mickle Woods</i> Gregory Valiska <i>Goodbye Geese</i> Nancy White Carlston <i>The Stranger</i> Chris Van Allsberg <i>Up North at the Cabin</i> Marsha Wilson Chall <i>The Tale of the Mandrian Ducks</i> Katherine Patterson <i>Encounter</i> Jane Yolen
PARODY	A humorous, but recognizable imitation of literature, art, or music for the purpose of amusement or ridicule.	<i>Jim and the Beanstalk</i> Raymond Briggs <i>The Cowboy and the Black-eyed Pea</i> Tony Johnson <i>The True Story of the Three Little Pigs</i> Jon Scieszka <i>The House that Bob Built</i> Robert Stern <i>Somebody and the Three Bears</i> Marilyn Tolhurst <i>Princess Anne Wilsdorf</i> <i>Duffy and the Devil</i> Harve Zemach <i>Piggy Pie</i> Margie Palatini
PERSONIFICATION	A figure of speech that gives human qualities, actions, characteristics, or personality to an animal, object, natural force, or idea.	<i>The Little House</i> Virginia Lew Burton <i>Nora's Duck</i> Satomi Ichikawa <i>Sylvester and the Magic Pebble</i> William Steig
POETIC JUSTICE	An outcome in which vice is punished and virtue is rewarded, usually in a manner appropriate to the situation	<i>Why Mosquitoes Buzz in People's Ears</i> Verna Aardema <i>Strego Nona</i> Tomie de Paola <i>Duffy and the Devil</i> Harve Zemach <i>The Widow's Broom</i> Chris Van Allsburg
SATIRE	A kind of writing which	<i>The Fortune Tellers</i> Lloyd Alexander

	ridicules human weaknesses, vice, or folly in order to bring about social reform.	<i>It's So Nice to Have a Wolf Around the House</i> Harry Allard <i>The Story of Ferdinand</i> Munro Leaf <i>The Mountain</i> Peter Parnell <i>Princess Anne</i> Welsorf <i>The Happy Hockey Family</i> Lane Smith
SYMBOL	A person, place, thing, or idea that stands for both itself and something beyond itself.	<i>Petunia</i> Robert Duvaisin <i>The Girl Who Loved Wild Horses</i> Paul Goble <i>Through the Mickle Woods</i> Valeska Gregory <i>Kinda Blue</i> Ann Grifalcone <i>Tar Beach</i> Faith Ringold <i>Elyah's Story</i> Michael J. Rosen <i>An Angel for Solomon Singer</i> Cynthia Rylant <i>Grandfather's Journey</i> Allen Say

Looking Critically at Picture Books

From Carol Hurst, how to really dive into picture books.

<http://www.carolhurst.com/subjects/criticalpicture.html>



Fables

Fable Library

Here you will find a well done collection of modern “fables” by contemporary authors and illustrators which can be downloaded and played. These “telefables” include both text and illustrations and are excellent models for student writing.

<http://www.fablevision.com/place/library/index.html>



Proverbs

[Proverbs from 300 Countries](http://creativeproverbs.com/)

Great proverbs from 300 countries and cultures, with additional factual info about each.

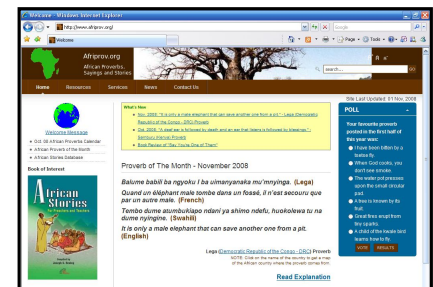
<http://creativeproverbs.com/>



[African Proverbs, Stories and Sayings - Daily African Proverbs](http://www.afriprov.org)

Hundreds of well-researched and annotated proverbs.

<http://www.afriprov.org>

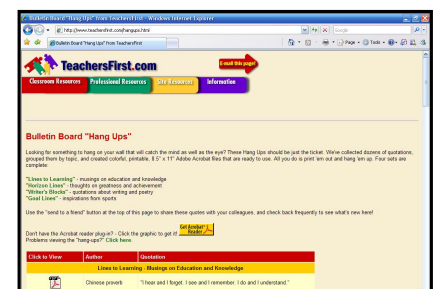


Quotations

[Bulletin Board Hang-Ups](http://www.teachersfirst.com/hangups.html)

From Teachers First website, quotes that are available as downloadable, printable pdf files.

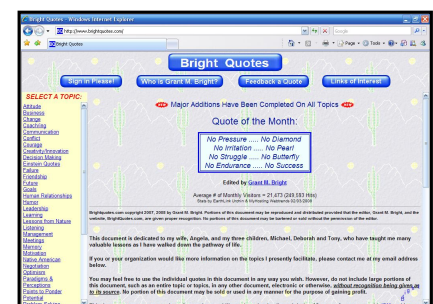
<http://www.teachersfirst.com/hangups.html>



[Bright Quotes](http://www.brightquotes.com/)

A collection of quotes categorized by theme.

<http://www.brightquotes.com/>



[GoodQuotes.com](http://www.goodquotes.com/)

Many categorized, collected quotes.

<http://www.goodquotes.com/>



[Quotations for Creative Thinking](http://creativequotations.com/)

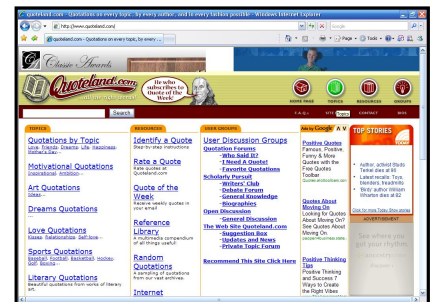
Categorized, searchable, and divided into 5 unique "concepts." <http://creativequotations.com/>



[Quoteland.com](http://www.quoteland.com/)

Huge collection searchable in several ways.

<http://www.quoteland.com/>



Step Six: Identify Literacy Targets

Your novel is worth reading, but what's worth teaching? How will this novel address the grade level curriculum as well as state standards?

Literacy targets include concepts, skills, strategies, and dispositions. Your novel and its accompanying themed unit provide a context for instruction in various literacy skills and strategies, and modeling in various dispositions. Your original reading of the novel, or your second reading, should provide you with many potential targets for instruction. Beware the urge to "hit every nail." Some authors employ so many literary devices, conventions, and motifs that you could find yourself getting bogged down in the author's craft at the expense

of the story itself. Similarly, excessive emphasis upon vocabulary or literal comprehension will strangle the life out of the plot!

Some reading skills and strategies you may wish to target:

- previewing
- predicting
- establishing a purpose for reading
- skimming
- scanning
- sequencing
- reading for details
- establishing and adjusting purposes for reading
- posing personally relevant questions about text before and during the process
- organizing thinking using a graphic organizer
- determining vocabulary meaning using context clues
- determining vocabulary meaning using prefixes and suffixes
- determining vocabulary meaning using Latin and Greek roots
- determining vocabulary meaning using reference sources
- recognizing parts of speech
- identifying sentence types (used for sentence variety)
- drawing conclusions
- comparing and contrasting
- making inferences
- adjusting reading rate according to purpose for reading
- summarizing
- choosing an appropriate organizer for a given reading task
- analyzing the author's voice
- distinguishing between fact and fantasy
- distinguishing between fact and opinion
- determining cause and effect
- determining character motive
- identifying, describing, and applying literary devices
- recognizing structure of different texts as an aid in comprehension
- identifying literary motifs
- identifying the critical attributes of a given genre in the novel being read
- demonstrating oral presentation skills
- demonstrating critical listening and viewing skills
- extending and reflecting upon reading.

Ranging from the simple to complex, writing skills might include:

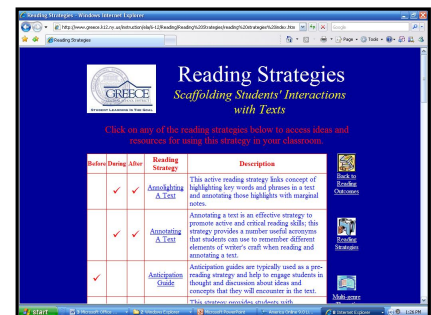
- writing cohesive sentences (using correct punctuation, capitalization, and mechanics)
- writing complete sentence responses
- combining shorter sentences in order to eliminate redundancy and increase interest
- creating sentence variety through varied length and word order
- using quotation marks to create dialogue
- writing poetry according to frames (the skeletal frame of another poem is added to, or extended, by the student)
- writing paragraphs containing a topic sentence, supporting details, and a closing sentence
- using transition words and phrases
- writing for a purpose (lists, friendly letters, business letters, etc.)
- writing for an audience (expository, narrative, persuasive, descriptive)
- writing according to a given genre (original tall tales, fables, biographies, etc.)
- responding to literature through a personal response
- responding to a writing prompt
- creating original poetry
- creating pieces of work which are focused, organized, and elaborated
- refining narrative writing skills
- developing expository writing skills
- revising and editing pieces of writing
- writing steps-by-step by following an established process .

Sites on Reading Process Skills

[Reading Strategies](http://www.greece.k12.ny.us/instruction/ela/6-12/Reading/Reading%20Strategies/reading%20strategies%20index.htm)

Excellent list of reading strategies which really encourage in-depth comprehension and overt learning.

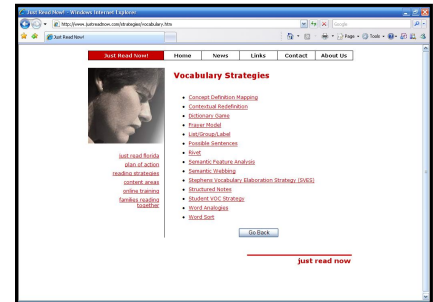
<http://www.greece.k12.ny.us/instruction/ela/6-12/Reading/Reading%20Strategies/reading%20strategies%20index.htm>



Just Read Now!

Strategies for reading comprehension, with links to strategies for discussion, vocabulary, and organization.

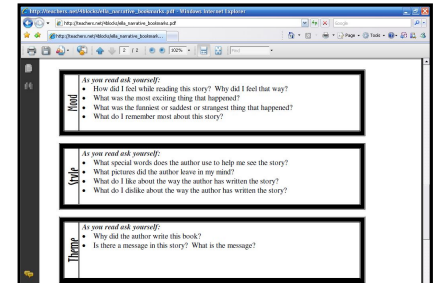
<http://www.justreadnow.com/strategies/vocabulary.htm>



Printable Bookmarks

Pdf file of literature components (setting, theme, characters, etc.) bookmarks.

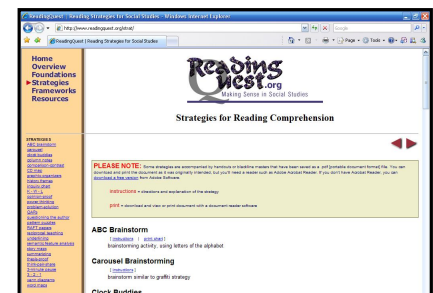
http://teachers.net/4blocks/ella_narrative_bookmarks.pdf



Reading Quest.org: Making Sense of Social Studies

Don't let the name fool you! This site features great descriptions and blackline forms of dozens of reading comprehension strategies and ideas, listed alphabetically.

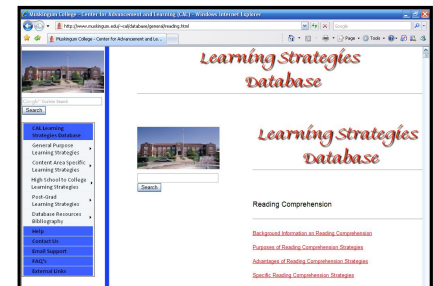
<http://www.readingquest.org/strat/>



Learning Strategies Database

Specific strategies for reading, vocabulary development, etc.

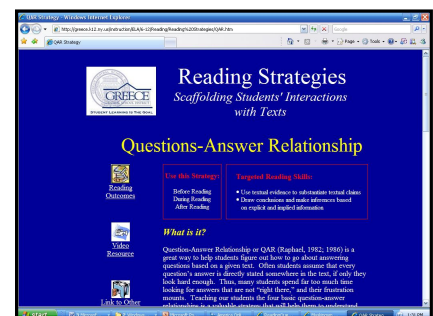
<http://www.muskingum.edu/~cal/database/general/reading.html#TextBook>



Question-Answer Relationships (and other Reading Strategies)

Understanding question-answer relationships will help students see that not every question asked about a text is a literal, "right there" question. Getting a handle on the main four types of questions will greatly reduce student frustration while increasing quality of responses. This link goes directly to a page on question-answer relationships, but you can then click on a link to the left for a list of other reading strategies.

<http://greece.k12.ny.us/instruction/ELA/6-12/Reading/Reading%20Strategies/QAR.htm>

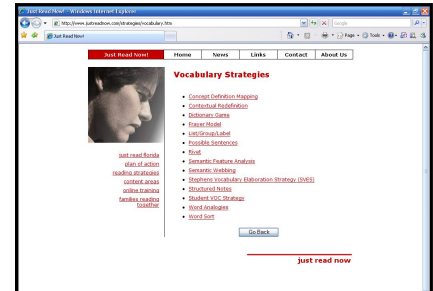


Sites on Vocabulary

Just Read Now!

Strategies for vocabulary development.

<http://www.justreadnow.com/strategies/vocabulary.htm>

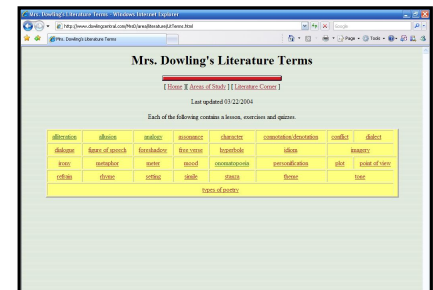


Sites on Literary Devices

Mrs. Dowling's Literature Terms

Click on any term for a definition as well as examples.

<http://www.dowlingcentral.com/MrsD/area/literature/LitTerms.htm>



Step Seven: Collect and Develop Instructional Resources

Now that you have chosen your literary targets you can begin to collect or develop the instruments which will help you to hit those targets.

Will you purchase a packaged unit plan with prewritten activities and assessments? Will you adapt materials gathered from colleagues or the Internet? Will you develop your own resources?

My personal preference is to adapt or develop my own curriculum around the theme, guiding questions, literacy targets, and state standards. By developing my own curriculum, I feel that I am truly teaching the novel my way, rather than someone else's. This feeling of ownership pays off in my personal commitment to the novel. Students can sense when a teacher is truly, personally invested in a book!

I do believe in **chapter worksheets**. I realize that admitting this may cause me to be labeled an educational dinosaur. If you feel better calling them *study guides* or *study aids* or *structured overviews* or *reader response activities*, that's up to you. I have no problem calling them worksheets. I believe that students need to be regularly assessed in the areas of reading comprehension and vocabulary development, and chapter worksheets provide an

efficient way to do this. When designing chapter worksheets, I try to mix the four main types of questions (see the link below to **Question-Answer Relationships**), and I do provide page numbers when necessary (more for the parents than the students).

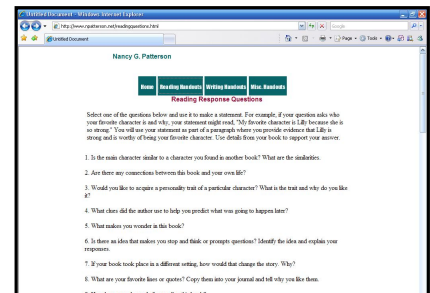
Another ongoing aid to student understanding is an appropriate **graphic organizer** which can be used to organize data concerning characters, conflicts, plot, etc. One single well-chosen organizer can raise the average student to a new level of understanding. Teaching students how to choose an appropriate organizer for a task should be one of your literacy targets.

Step Seven would also be the time to page back through your marked teacher's copy of the novel to see what ideas you jotted down for writing prompts and learning activities. Are these ideas still feasible, and if so, when will they be put into play?

Sites on Responses to Reading

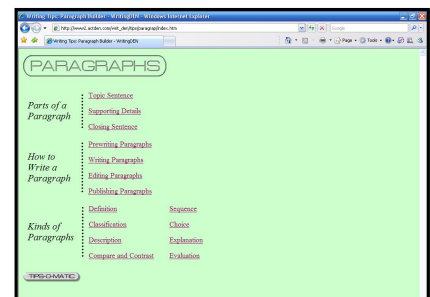
[Reading Response Questions](http://www.npatterson.net/readingquestions.html)

This page is one of the many available on the Internet that features a list of Reading Response Questions. (Also find a link at the bottom of this page for other reading handouts).
<http://www.npatterson.net/readingquestions.html>



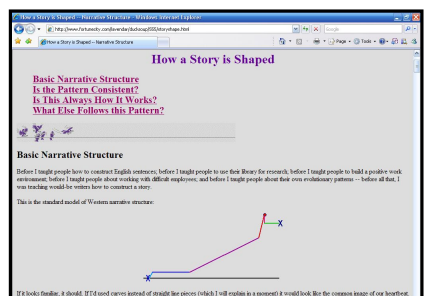
[Paragraph Writing](http://www2.actden.com/writ_den/tips/paragrap/index.htm)

Explains the components of good paragraphs, and provides examples of different kinds of paragraphs.
http://www2.actden.com/writ_den/tips/paragrap/index.htm



[How a Story is Shaped](http://www.fortunecity.com/lavendar/ducksoup/555/storyshape.html)

A pretty detailed account of how narrative is shaped; reviews many literary terms which should become a part of every classroom's daily dialogue. Good background for the teacher!
<http://www.fortunecity.com/lavendar/ducksoup/555/storyshape.html>

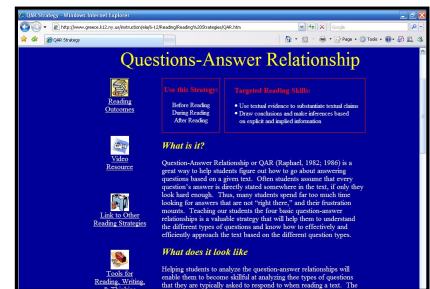


Sites on Question-Answer Relationship

Question-Answer Relationship

Question-Answer Relationship is a great way to help students figure out how to go about answering questions based on a given text. Often students assume that every question's answer is directly stated somewhere in the text, if only they look hard enough. Thus, many students spend far too much time looking for answers that are not "right there," and their frustration mounts. Teaching our students the four basic question-answer relationships is a valuable strategy that will help them to understand the different types of questions.

<http://www.greece.k12.ny.us/instruction/ela/6-12/Reading/Reading%20Strategies/QAR.htm>



Thin or Thick Questions?

Some print-outs for helping students understand the difference between thin and thick questions.

http://hill.troy.k12.mi.us/staff/bnewingham/myweb3/thick_or_thin.htm

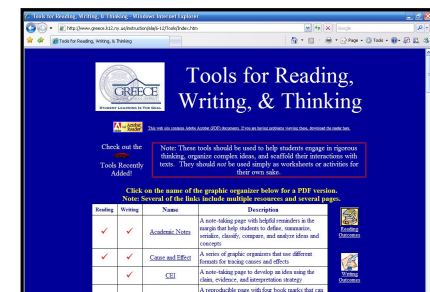


Sites on Graphic Organizers

Tools for Reading, Writing, & Thinking

A number of organizers.

<http://www.greece.k12.ny.us/instruction/ela/6-12/Tools/Index.htm>



Graphic Organizers

Extensive excellent list from Region 15 school district in Connecticut; available in Word or pdf formats.

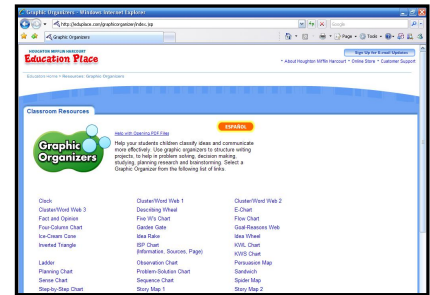
<http://www.region15.org/curriculum/graphicorg.html>



Graphic Organizers in pdf Format

From Houghton Mifflin Education Place, download from a list of about thirty graphic organizers.

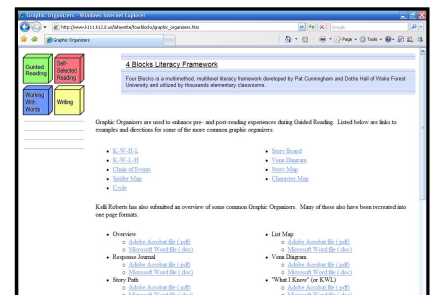
<http://eduplace.com/graphicorganizer/index.html>



Graphic Orgs for Literacy

Graphic organizers for literature offered from a Four Blocks site.

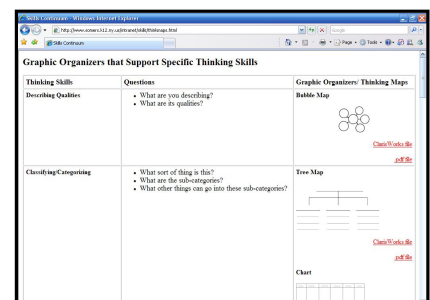
http://www.k111.k12.il.us/lafayette/fourblocks/graphic_organizers.htm



Skills Continuum

Different organizers, categorized in a matrix by thinking skill and related questions.

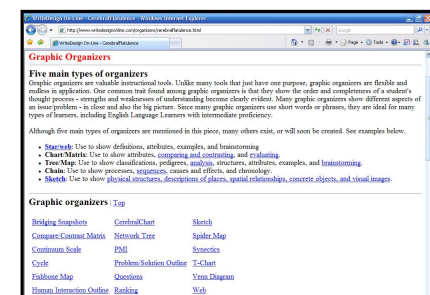
<http://www.somers.k12.ny.us/intranet/skills/thinkmaps.htm>



WriteDesign On-Line

Graphic organizers sorted by their critical thinking skills.

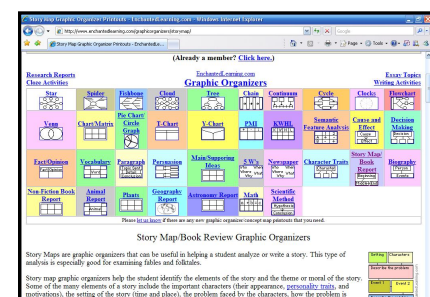
<http://www.writedesigonline.com/organizers/cerebralflatulence.html>



Enchanted Learning Organizers (and Suggestions for Uses)

A thumbnail collection of organizers available from Enchanted Learning. Each organizer also features discussion of possible uses and variations. Membership to this extensive learning site is inexpensive, tax deductible, and well worth it.

<http://www.enchantedlearning.com/graphicorganizers/storymap/>



Step Eight: Identify Assessments

In what ways will students be held accountable for their learning? Now that you've established targets for learning, how will you be able to tell if students are hitting them?

Diagnostic evaluations would include pretests of any kind. These could be implemented if you wanted to collect baseline data on student knowledge of concepts and skills, or to determine preconceptions or misconceptions about a topic. More often, however, you will be concerned with **formative** and **summative evaluations**. **Formative evaluations** are administered to assess student learning midcourse and to adjust, refocus, or change the pacing of instruction accordingly. **Summative evaluations** are given to measure final outcomes; these are the "tests" of what was truly learned. A weekly Spelling test or Math end-of-chapter test are two examples of summative evaluations. The chart below points out the major differences between these two measures:

Assessment	Formative	Summative
Frequency	Very frequent, as many as two or three weekly	Infrequent (one per unit)
Format	Short response, multiple choice, true/false, sequencing from 1 to 10; perhaps a written response from a prompt	Open-ended answers, probing questions, essay responses, multi-step answers, or a unit test incorporating several sections of varying format
Grade Point Value	Minimal grade weight	Heavy Grade Weight
Purpose (for Students)	to measure comprehension of, or competence with, recently introduced skills and concepts	to measure overall acquisition of content, skills, and attitudes
Purpose (for Teacher)	to adapt, refine, or revise lessons, methods, or content	to plan for additional instruction if needed, or to plan changes in future instruction
Examples	short answer or cloze (fill in the blank) responses, vocabulary quizzes, reading comprehension responses to reading selections	End-of-Unit written test, writing extension, project
Preparation	these assessments are often given immediately following a lesson	Announced in advance, prep time and suggested means of review, including study guides, are provided beforehand

I am a huge believer in creating the test before teaching the unit. This is certainly a way of teaching with the end in mind. Without fail, however, I revisit that original test and change its content or format depending upon the shared experiences of the class. I am a firm believer in task analysis. If I expect students to write a cohesive essay on the final test, it is crucial that I assess their abilities in this area before that test, and address any weaknesses or discrepancies in learning beforehand.

Apart from formal testing, understanding can be measured through research and writing projects. Learning styles and differentiated abilities should be kept in mind. In all cases, however, a major focus of the assessment should be upon the learner's understanding and application of the theme and its correlating essential questions.

Some other indicators of student progress may include:

- chapter comprehension sheets;
- written responses to picture and poem prompts;
- oral or written retellings of story elements including character, problems, setting, and main events;
- written responses (personal connections) to reading selections;
- activities involving etymologies of selected vocabulary;
- graphic organizers appropriate to task;
- original poems based upon story events or theme;
- character perspective or trait charts;
- written summaries and morals (wisdoms) of picture books;
- a product based upon the novel: Advertisement, Animated Movie, Annotated Bibliography, Art Gallery, Block Picture Story, Bulletin Board, Bumper Sticker, Chart, Choral Reading, Clay Sculpture, Code, Collage, Collection, Comic Strip, Computer Program, Costumes, Crossword Puzzle, Database, Debate, Demonstration, Detailed Illustration, Diorama, Diary, Display, Edibles, Editorial Essay, Fairy Tale, Family Tree, Fiction Story, Film, Filmstrip, Flip Book, Game, Graph, Hidden Picture, Illustrated Story, Interview, Jingle, Journal, Labeled Diagram, Learning Center, Letter to the Editor, Map with Legend, Mazes, Museum Exhibit, Musical Instruments, Newspaper Story, Non-Fiction, Oral Report, Painting, Pamphlet, Papier Mache, Petition, Photo Essay, Pictures, Picture Story for Children, Plaster of Paris Model, Play, Poetry, Political Cartoon, Pop-Up Book, Postage Stamp, Power Point, Press Conference, Project Cube, Prototype, Puppet, Puppet Show, Puzzle, Rap, Radio Program, Rebus Story, Recipe, Riddle, Role Play, Science Fiction Story, Sculpture, Skit, Slogan, Soliloquy, Song, Story Telling, Survey, Tapes–Audio–Video, Television Program, Timeline, Travel Brochure, Venn Diagram, Web Home Page. (see [100 Things to Do with Books](#) below for additional product ideas)

Active Participation Strategies for Formative Assessments

The following 20 strategies were compiled by Juli Kendall for the MiddleWeb Reading/Writing Workshop discussion group at www.middleweb.com. Use these strategies to get kids engaged with reading and writing. You might want to write each strategy on a separate card for convenience and ease of use.

1. 12 word Summary

In 12 words or less, summarize the most important aspects from today's lesson.

2. Evidence Bag

Your ticket out the door is to write down two ideas you learned from today's lesson.

3. Numbered Heads

- Students number off in teams, one through four.
- Teacher asks a series of questions, one at a time
- Students discuss possible answers to each question, for a set amount of time (30-90 seconds).
- Teacher calls a number (1-4) and all students with that number raise their hand, ready to respond.
- Teacher randomly calls on students with the specified number to answer on behalf of their team.
- Teacher continues asking questions until the brainstorming or review session is finished.

4. Spectrum

Use a spectrum when asking for student opinion on a topic or question.

- Place a line on the chalkboard or masking tape on the floor in front of the room.
- Label one end of the line "Strongly Agree" and the other end "Strongly Disagree."
- Students line up according to their opinion on the topic.
- Other label ideas: Most Important/Least Important, Greatest Effect/Least Effect

5. A-B Partner Teach

Partner A turn to Partner B. Tell your partner the two most important things you have learned so far about...

6. Idea Wave

- Each student lists 3 to 5 ideas about the assigned topic.
- A volunteer begins the "idea wave" by sharing one idea.

- The student to the right of the volunteer shares one idea; the next student to the right shares one idea.
- The teacher directs the flow of the "idea wave" until several different ideas have been shared.
- At the end of the formal "idea wave," a few volunteers who were not included can contribute an idea.

7. Think-Pair-Share

- Take a minute to first silently and independently think about your own answer to the question(s).
- At the signal, turn and face your partner so you can discuss your answers face to face.
- Explain clearly to your partner your own answer and your reasons for making this decision.
- Listen carefully to your partner's answers, and pay attention to similarities and differences in your answers.
- Ask your partner to explain more if you don't understand or agree with his or her answer.
- At the signal, be prepared to share your opinions with the class.

8. Learning from A to Z

- The objective of this activity is to provide words, phrases, or sentences that are related to the topic that is being studied.
- The teacher gives the student the topic they need to brainstorm.
- The teacher establishes a timeframe to complete the activity.
- Students work individually or together in pairs or groups, to brainstorm words related to the topic that begin with each letter of the alphabet.
- When the time limit expires, the teacher guides the students through discussion of their entries for each letter. Answers can be recorded on an overhead transparency.
- Students use Learning From A to Z as a study guide.

9. Quick write

Use a quick write to activate background knowledge, clarify issues, facilitate making connections, and allow for reflection. Students write for a short, specific amount of time, perhaps several minutes, about a designated topic related to...

10. Socratic Seminar

Use a Socratic Seminar to help students facilitate their own discussion and arrive at a new understanding in which they learn to formulate questions and address issues in lieu

of just stating their opinions. Students engage in a focused discussion in which they ask questions of each other on a selected topic; questions initiate the conversation, which continues with a series of responses and further questions.

11. Graphic Organizers

This strategy provides an alternate system for organizing and beginning a piece of writing. These are visual tools that help students to organize their thoughts and ideas.

- Circle Map
- Venn Diagram
- Flow Chart
- Tree Map
- Multi-Flow Map
- Double Bubble
- Cause/Effect
- Compare/Contrast
- Cluster Map, etc.

12. S O A P S

Speaker - Occasion - Audience - Purpose - Subject

- SOAPS helps students use the analytical process to understand the author's craft.
- SOAPS describes a process for analyzing text by discussing and identifying the SOAPS!

13. Exit Slip

1. What made learning easy for you today?
2. What made learning difficult for you today?
3. What do you still need to know before we move on?
4. What did you learn today?
5. What should our next steps be?

Students can answer self-selected questions/s or teacher selected questions/s.

14. Fishbowl

This strategy provides students an opportunity to engage in formal discussion and to experience roles both as participant and as active listener; students also have the responsibility of supporting their opinions and response using specific textual evidence.

- Students are asked to engage in a group discussion about a specific topic - there will be two circles:
- Inner circle students will model appropriate discussion techniques...while the
- Outer circle students will listen, respond and evaluate.

15. K-W-W-L chart

What I Know - Where I learned It - What I Want to Know - What I Learned

This strategy helps students organize, access, and reflect on learning which increases comprehension and engagement.

- To activate prior knowledge ask, "What do I know?"
- To acknowledge source ask, "Where did I find the information?"
- To set purpose ask, "What do I want to know?"
- To reflect on a new learning ask, "What did I learn?"

16. Talking Chips

Pose a question for students to discuss.

- Each member is given a "chip" (small square of construction paper or a "real chip")
- Each student takes turns "talking" by placing their CHIP into the center of the table.
- The first person to talk may only talk at that time - and may not speak again until all in the group members have placed their "chip" in the middle.
- Repeat process...

17. Four Corners

The teacher posts questions, quotations, photos, etc, in each of the corners of the room.

The teacher assigns each student to a corner...or students choose.

- Once in the corner, the students discuss the focus of the lesson in relation to the question, quote, etc.
- At this time, students may report out or move to another corner and repeat the process.
- After students have moved, as a writing assignment, they should be encouraged to reflect on changes in opinion or new learning.

18. Jigsaw

Students read different passages from the same text or selection from several texts.

- After reading the passage, they take on the role of an expert with the specified text.
- The "experts" then share the information from their specific reading with a specific group or the entire class.
- Students can read different sections of a chapter, short story, newspaper article, diary/journal, biography, etc.

19. Gallery Walk

- Select several "quotable quotes," important passages, or concepts from a text.
- Place each quote or passage on a separate piece of butcher or chart paper and hang them throughout the room.
- Ask students to quietly take a "gallery walk" reading each poster carefully and talking to no one.
- Have each student select one that interests or intrigues them - one that they would like to talk more about.
- Ask the students to return to their seats and free-write about the selected quote or passage for five minutes.
- Then ask students to take their free writing and to stand by the quote or passage they have selected.

20. Give One and Get One

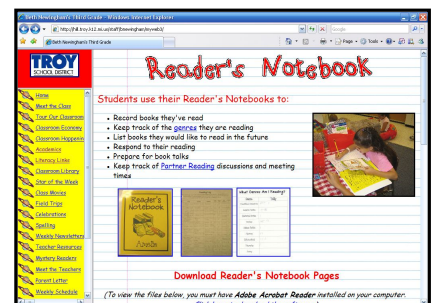
- Write your name legibly at the top of a piece of paper. List 3 to 5 ideas about the assigned topic.
- Draw a line after your last idea to separate your ideas from those you select from your classmates' lists.
- Get up and interact with one classmate at a time. Exchange papers, read your partner's list, and then ask questions about new or confusing ideas.

Sites on Assessing Student Learning

[Reader's Notebook](http://hill.troy.k12.mi.us/staff/bnewingham/myweb3/) (from Mrs. Newingham's Third Grade Site)

This is just one page of a really awesome site designed by a Third Grade teacher. She has provided many excellent resources and ideas which can be adapted to almost any grade level, and many of her available downloads are quite handy and time-saving.

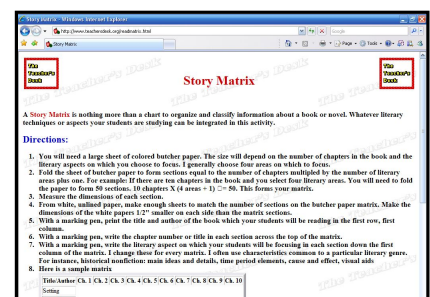
<http://hill.troy.k12.mi.us/staff/bnewingham/myweb3/> (click on Academics, and then Reading to access the page shown)



Story Matrix

This single page features direction on creating a story matrix which can help students organize novel elements as they work through the unit. Clicking back to the homepage of this site will yield other ideas for ongoing assessment of student understanding.

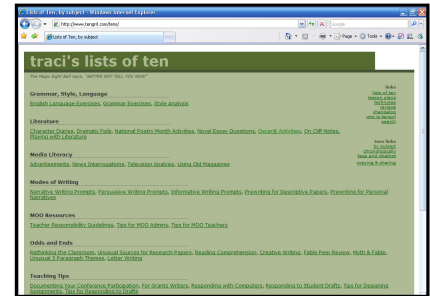
<http://www.teachersdesk.org/readmatrix.html>



Traci's Lists of Ten

Writing Ideas in lists of ten; these are more appropriate for grades 6 and above, although some can be adapted.

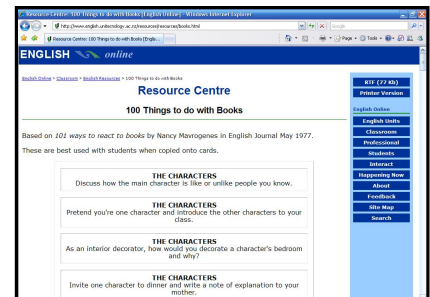
<http://www.tengrrl.com/tens/>



100 Things to Do with Books

This site features 100 things to do with books; suggestions are categorized by plot, setting, characters, etc. The site creator recommends that the ideas be printed onto cards for easier use.

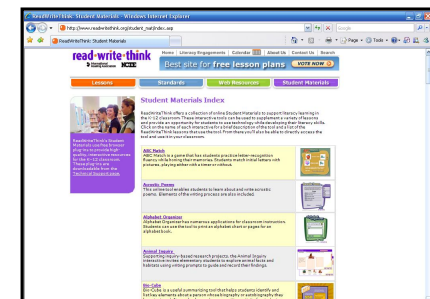
<http://www.english.unitecology.ac.nz/resources/resources/books.html>



ReadWriteThink: Student Materials

ReadWriteThink offers a collection of online Student Materials to support literacy learning in the K-12 classroom. These interactive tools can be used to supplement a variety of lessons and provide an opportunity for students to use technology while developing their literacy skills. At this site, click on the name of each interactive for a brief description of the tool and a list of the ReadWriteThink lessons that use the tool. From there you'll also be able to directly access the tool and use it in your classroom.

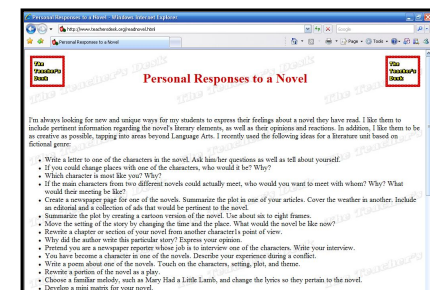
http://www.readwritethink.org/student_mat/index.asp



Personal Responses to a Novel

Some extension ideas for novels.

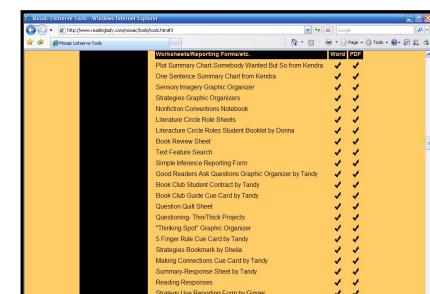
<http://www.teachersdesk.org/readnovel.html>



Mosaic Listserve Tools

Awesome tools for diving into literature: rubrics, checklists, more.

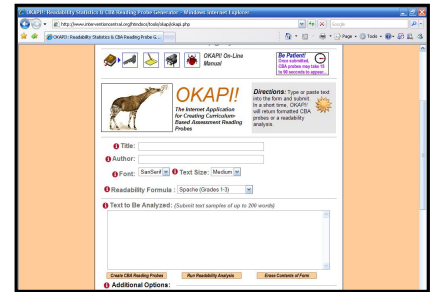
<http://www.readinglady.com/mosaic/tools/tools.htm#3>



Readability Tool

Enter text from a book or student's writing, and this site equates it to a grade level reading ability.

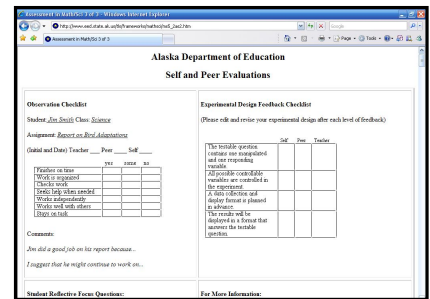
<http://www.interventioncentral.org/html/docs/tools/okapi/okapi.php>



Assessment Models

Many assorted assessment models.

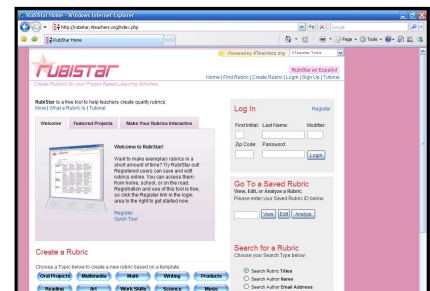
http://www.eed.state.ak.us/tls/frameworks/mathsci/ms5_2as2.htm



Rubistar

Create rubrics according to type of project or product; many examples exist that can be customized.

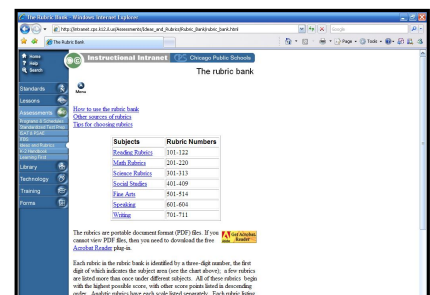
<http://rubistar.4teachers.org/>



Rubric Bank

Lots of rubrics, plus other links to Teacher tools in Chicago Instructional Intranet. Temporarily off-limits!

<http://intranet.cps.k12.il.us/Assessments/Ideas and Rubrics/Rubric Bank/rubric bank.html>



Step Nine: Map Your Unit

Your mental map has been forming since Step One; if you haven't set it down on paper yet, now is the time! This map is for you alone, and may change daily as the unit takes on a life of its own, and students bring their own enthusiasm and ideas to the process. But creating a thorough plan for your unit is critical if you truly wish to maximize instructional time.

Below is a suggested format for planning a theme study, adapted from http://www.messiah.edu/boyer_center/basic_school/articles_core.html.

Theme Matrix	
Theme	Choose one theme to guide your unit.
Theme Definition	Create a working definition. Older students may have the ability to do this themselves.
Guiding Questions	Write 3-5 questions about the theme. The questions at this time will be general enough that they could be applied to any book which addresses the theme. These same questions may later be used for assessment.
Core Novels	Choose one or two, depending upon the permissible time frame. A class engaged in Literature Circles may choose to have a different book for each group, all from the same theme.
Supplementary Picture Books (Wisdom Books)	Consider the many ways in which these can be used, and include at least three.
Supplemental Poetry	Again, consider the possible uses: discussion starters, writing prompts, scene setters. The novel may allude to poetry, or contain traditional symbolism which appears in poems.
Supplementary Drama	Many reader's theatre scripts are available online, or students themselves can write screen plays for events in the books.
Time Frame	

Instructional Planning Matrix		
Theme	From the chart above.	
Skills:		NJCCCS:
Critical Thinking Skills	These would be skills which would have transfer across the disciplines. Some examples: Predicting, Considering Alternatives, Determining Cause and Effect, Making Inferences, Recognizing Relevancy, Generalizing, Summarizing, and Drawing Conclusions	
LA/Literacy Skills	See the list above.	
Other	This section would include related writing, art, math, science, social studies, and tech connections.	
Learning Activities and Guaranteed Experiences	Ongoing or special projects which will be used as assessment pieces should be listed here, as well as field trips, performances, class projects, service projects, visitors, and family participation pieces.	
Assessments	Diagnostic, formative, and summative assessments should be listed here. Apart from a final project or test, what periodic assessments will measure student understanding of vocabulary, concepts, and skills?	
Culminating Activity	See below.	

Below is a theme matrix for an identity unit based upon one of three novels (see grade levels indicated).

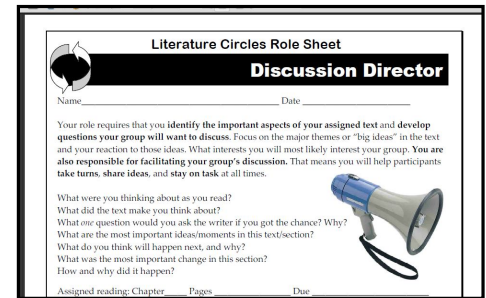
Theme Matrix	
Theme	Identity
Theme Definition	Identity might be defined as uniqueness, distinctiveness, individuality, or personality. The identity of a person or group is rarely static, but instead is constantly being changed by internal and external forces.
Guiding Questions	How do we form our identities? How does what others think about you affect how you think about yourself? How is identity shaped by relationships and experiences? What can you learn about yourself by studying the lives of others? When should an individual take a stand in opposition to another individual or larger group?
Core Novels	<i>Holes</i> by Louis Sachar (Grades 4-6) <i>Because of Winn Dixie</i> by Kate DiCamillo (Grades 3-4) <i>Gooney Bird Green</i> by Lois Lowry (Grades 2-3)
Supplementary Picture Books (Wisdom Books)	<i>The Stranger</i> by Chris Van Allsburg <i>Ruby the Copycat</i> by Peggy Rathmann <i>Weslandia</i> by Paul Fleischman <i>The Sneetches and Other Stories</i> by Dr. Seuss <i>My Name is Yoon</i> by Helen Recorvits
Supplemental Poetry	<i>When I Grow Up</i> by William Wise <i>Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening</i> by Robert Frost
Supplementary Drama	<i>The Chinese Cinderella</i> by Lowell Swortzell <i>Pushing Up the Sky</i> by Joseph Bruchac
Time Frame	

In mapping out your unit, a key consideration will be the “method of delivery.”

- Will your classes consist primarily of teacher-led, direct instruction and discussion, or Literature Circles?
- Will students be expected to read the majority of the novel outside of class in preparation for the next day’s discussion and assessment, or will the reading be done whole class, or groups, or trios?
- Will students respond to the reading to you or to each other?

Although I personally prefer direct instruction for fourth graders, I do train them in Literature Circles during the second half of the year. By then they have learned many skills and attitudes of serious readers and are able to take on the awesome responsibilities of self-direction. They also have a much better understanding of the intensity required to break down a novel and discuss it for all it’s worth.

For use with our Lit Circles, I developed my own role sheets although there are certainly many others out there which you may prefer. My role sheets can be found at <http://www.bedminsterschool.org/70321082912391733/blank/browse.asp?a=383&BMDRN=2000&BCOB=0&c=55418&70321082912391733Nav=|380|381|&NodeID=463>.



Sites on Literature Circles

Literary Lessons

A highly recommended resource for learning about, starting, and managing lit circles.

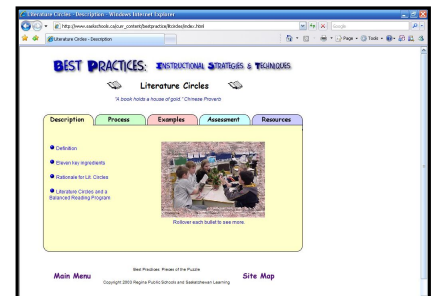
<http://www.lcandler.web.aplus.net/>



Literature Circles - Description

Another highly recommended, well organized and user friendly intro to lit circles, with downloadable resources. A great place to send parents who want more info, as well.

http://www.saskschools.ca/curr_content/bestpractice/litcircle/index.html



Literature Circles Jobs

From a classroom website, printable job sheets.

<http://www.mrcoley.com/litcircles.htm>



LiteratureCircles.org

How-tos, examples, printable forms.

<http://www.litcircles.org/>



Step Ten: Create a Culminating Activity

The meaning that you give an event is the event.

Deepak Chopra

We do not remember days, we remember moments.

Cesare Pavese

Just as we carefully plan how to begin and how to proceed, we should plan how to end. Will it be only with a test? Is that any way to honor this glorious novel which you held so closely to your heart these past four, five, six weeks?

I would recommend that you plan a culminating activity to celebrate the closing of your novel unit. In its simplest form, the culminating activity might be:

- a film version of the book
- a theatrical version of the book
- a reader's theater production of scenes from the book
- individual or group art, writing, or cooking projects
- presentations of writing and other projects based upon the novel
- a theme-based party.

The culminating activity could also involve a combination of these. Following a unit on *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, we had planned a private showing of the theatrical release of that movie. Talk about great timing! But as we viewed "sneak peeks" on the Internet, I saw that my students were mesmerized by the costumes and armor of the four main characters. We therefore launched into an art/research/tech project creating family shields complete with heraldic symbols which reflected each student's personal traits and preferences as well as those of their families. The bulletin board display of these shields later appeared on the website of Walden Media, a coproducer of the movie.

If you choose to throw a theme based party, I suggest you focus on the five senses. Below are two charts illustrating culminating events which my class has celebrated in the past.

Novel or Genre	<i>Because of Winn Dixie</i>
Theme	Identity
Party Overview	This is a gathering of new friends, based upon the party which Opal and Gloria throw at the end of the novel. In the novel, the gathering takes place in Gloria's overgrown backyard, and the food and drinks are an interesting orchestration of many hands.
Look	Since the book's party was held at night, all lights in the classroom were off. Each desk contained a brown bag filled partway with sand, containing one battery operated candle. These were in place of the luminaria which Opal created. Some white Christmas lights were also hung. Several students printed out or collected dog pictures which they posted around the room, just as Sweetie Pie Thomas had at the party.
Sound	Taped recordings of crickets played throughout the party. Later, a thunder soundtrack was added to create the approaching rainstorm. The music teacher played guitar and led us in a few songs, just as Otis did at the party.
Taste	"Dump punch," pickles, and egg salad sandwiches were on the menu, just as they were at Opal's party. Since the students made the sandwiches themselves, they were much more willing to try them!
Smell	A spring scented air freshener was placed on the vents. It made the whole room smell like a Southern garden. It had never been used before in the class, and was never used again, which made that smell unique.
Feel	In keeping with the "new friends" theme of the party, we brought in another class to share the theme. The closeness of that many people in that setting we created made the party truly memorable.

Novel or Genre	<i>Tall Tales</i>
Theme	Larger Than Life
Party Overview	This is an old fashioned, lumber-jack type breakfast.
Look	The students ate at one long table, which was set up in a glassed-in foyer on a snowy day in January. Red and white checked table cloths and old-fashioned lanterns lit with candles set the scene. Also, students were dressed as their favorite tall tale characters.
Sound	In the background was a recording of traditional American folksongs played on fiddles and banjos.
Taste	Students enjoyed a Paul Bunyan sized meal of pancakes and bacon, washed down with hot chocolate. Twenty students (and some parent helpers) ate over 80 pancakes and 80 pieces of bacon!
Smell	The food was cooked there, in that room, from pancake batter that students made from scratch. The smell of pancakes and sizzling bacon combined with pine shavings which were sprinkled on the ground to give it that "woody" smell.
Feel	The blustery cold day visible through the windows, contrasted with the warm food inside, made for a safe, comfortable gathering.

Keith Schoch

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Keith Schoch is a 6th grade teacher in Bedminster, New Jersey. During his 20+ years in teaching he earned a Masters in Instruction and Curriculum, served on the New Jersey Department of Education ESPA Mathematics Item Review Committee, piloted tests for Educational Testing Service, assessed candidates for The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, and was named a Governor's Teacher of the Year.

In addition to his teaching responsibilities, Keith provides professional development for organizations such as the New Jersey Education Association (NJEA), the New Jersey Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development (NJASCD), the New York State Reading Association (NYSRA), and The New England League of Middle Schools (NELMS).

He also shares his expertise with colleagues through three highly acclaimed blogs: [Teaching that Sticks](http://teachingthatsticks.blogspot.com) (<http://teachingthatsticks.blogspot.com>), [Teach with Picture Books](http://teachwithpicturebooks.blogspot.com) (<http://teachwithpicturebooks.blogspot.com>), and [How to Teach a Novel](http://howtoteachanovel.wordpress.com) (<http://howtoteachanovel.wordpress.com>).

How to Teach a Novel

Grades 3-8, 90 minutes

Through the use of novels, we seek to create student interaction with “real literature.” How can a teacher best approach the teaching of a novel? This workshop will break it down step by step, from the abstract notion of “What’s worth teaching in this novel?” to the concrete concerns of “How will students be held accountable for their understanding of this book? In what ways will I assess progress? How will students demonstrate their understandings of story theme, character development, plot, vocabulary, and other story elements?” This workshop includes sample materials, online resources, and a time for sharing ideas. Using ideas from this workshop, teachers will ensure that:

- Students will gain insights into story elements (vocabulary, character development, cause and effect, literary devices, etc.);
- Students will practice critical thinking skills;
- Students will be assessed more accurately and in a more timely fashion through formative and summative assessments.

Picture Books Across the Middle Grades

Grades 3-6, 90 minutes

In just sixteen to twenty-four pages, picture books provide a concise model for children who still think and generalize in very concrete terms. This workshop will cover the many ways that picture books can be used to introduce and extend themes and topics across the curriculum. The presenter will discuss recommended titles and their applications for all subject areas. Using ideas from this workshop, teachers will be able to:

- Select picture books which introduce, supplement, and extend any theme or topic;
- Access numerous online resources providing book lists and teaching ideas;
- Incorporate picture books into existing curriculum;
- Use picture books as models and prompts for student discussion and writing.

Teaching that Sticks!

Grades 2-12, 90 minutes

Based on the bestseller *Made to Stick*, this workshop addresses why some learning lasts while other is forgotten. Participants will identify how teachers can use “stickiness” to enhance retention by examining classroom-based examples of the six methods described in *Made to Stick*. As a result of attending this presentation, participants will be able to

- Access student schema in order to create “hooks” for hanging new learning;
- Increase student motivation by creating “learning gaps”;
- Reflect upon existing practices in order to improve instruction by using simplicity, unexpectedness, concreteness, credibility, emotions and stories;
- Locate resources for creating a repertoire of sticky strategies, structures, and stories.

Internet Sites for NJ ASK Preparation

Grades 3-4, 90 minutes (Internet Access Required)

The New Jersey Assessment of Skills and Knowledge in Language Arts Literacy and Mathematics is administered annually to all third- and fourth-grade students. Scores from these tests fall into three categories: Advanced Proficient, Proficient, and Partially Proficient. A single incorrect response can mean the difference between two of those achievement levels. With so much at stake, it is important that every student be well prepared! At this hands-on workshop, teachers and parents will have the opportunity to explore sites which offer:

- Interactive practice in math and reading skills;
- Released test items and scored responses from New Jersey as well as other states;
- Customized assessments, which allow you to construct authentic, standards-based tests customized to the needs of your students.

Divide and Conquer: Structures and Strategies for Behavior Management

Grades 2-6, 90 minutes

Research proves it: just 1-5% of your students create *at least* 50% of your problems. But equally true and compelling is that the majority of behavior problems can be avoided through **clear expectations**, **structured environments**, and **effective interventions**. How can an understanding of **goals** and **triggers** further reduce inappropriate behaviors? Using ideas from this workshop, teachers will be able to:

- Identify four external conditions which support and encourage appropriate behavior;
- Identify four internal conditions which increase self-esteem and reduce inappropriate behaviors;
- Identify the most common behavioral triggers;
- Implement positive interventions in their classrooms the very next day.

Multi-Media Muses: Using Interactive Writing Sites *(Internet Access Suggested)*

Grades 2-8, 90 minutes

Inspire even the most reluctant writers using online, interactive writing sites! Participants will learn how interactive writing tools can be used at every stage of the writing process. They will have the chance to observe each site's strengths in the areas of brainstorming, organizing information, drafting, revising and editing, and publishing. As a result of attending this presentation, participants will be able to

- Identify sites appropriate to the differing needs of students writers;
- Increase student motivation through meaningful and authentic tasks;
- Reflect upon existing practice in order to integrate the power of these technologies;
- Locate resources that will assist in moving toward multi-media expressions.

Teaching for a Whole New Mind: From a Digital to a Conceptual World

Grades 2-6, 90 minutes

Based on the bestseller *A Whole New Mind*, this workshop identifies six right-brain "senses" needed to compete as learning moves from the digital age to the conceptual age.

Participants will learn to incorporate the "six senses" (design, story, symphony, empathy, play, and meaning) into everyday critical thinking and problem solving by examining classroom-based examples. Participants will be able to

- Describe ways to tap into each right brain area;
- Increase student motivation through meaningful and authentic tasks;
- Reflect upon existing practice in order to improve instruction by using design, story, symphony, empathy, play, and meaning in context of their present curriculum;
- Locate resources for creating a repertoire of "six senses" strategies and structures.