

Reading Novels Using Literature Circles

Purpose :

Students adopt varied roles in reading and analyzing novels and stories. It allows them to use Higher Order Thinking Skills in comprehending text.

Roles : Use attached sheets for information on each role.

- 1) Discussion Director
- 2) Connector
- 3) Literary Luminary
- 4) Illustrator

Activity

Before:

- 1) Teach each role to the class. The best way is to teach one role at a time to the whole class using short stories. Make sure there is a lot of opportunity for modeling and practicing the roles as a class.

During:

- 1) Divide the class into groups of four. (Sometimes you might have to be creative in order to make up the groups with the given number of students)
- 2) Assign each student in the group one of the four roles. This would mean that in any given group you would have a Discussion Director, Connector, Literary Luminary and Word Finder.
- 3) Assign the class a novel to read. The other variation would be to assign one novel to each group.
- 4) Preview the number of chapters and divide the number by four. For example, if a novel has 24 chapters, that would be 6. Each student will be responsible for reading the 6 assigned chapters (or however many you come up with) and recording their role responses in a Reading Journal. This can be assigned as home-work or for students needing extra help, can be a class activity.

- 5) Have group discussions at least once a week. (It may be daily or weekly or in any other way you choose.) This allows the students to share their written responses with their group and helps them see how the other person interprets the same story. They should write these responses in their reading journals. .
- 6) After the 6 (or whatever the number is) chapters have been read, change the roles. Do this after every 6 or so chapters. This allows each student to experience the various roles and does not increase the burden on any one individual.

After :

- 1) At the end of the novel, have the students make a presentation to the rest of the class. They can choose to
 - * enact their favorite scene or the whole story
 - * create a rap
 - * make a poster
 - * write a book report
 - * create an advertisement for the book
 - * partners discuss it as book reviewers

See starred items in bibliography for novel suggestions.

Literature Circles

Who: All students regardless of ability level

What: Student book groups using articles, novels, etc.

When: Teacher choice (I do it once week - 108 min.)

Where: In all content areas

- : Student accountability to peers at end of period
- : Fosters student centered classroom

Positives: Everyone is a leader with their job
: Enhances group work opportunities

Considerations: Different speed readers in group
Finish book at different rates
One person in group does most of work
One person doesn't participate

Connector

Your job is to find connections between the book your group is reading and the world outside. This means connecting the reading to your own life, to happenings at school or in the community, to similar events at other times and places, to other people or problems that you are reminded of. You might also see connections between this book and other writings on the same topic, or by the same author. There are no right answers here - whatever the reading connects with is worth sharing.

Some connections I found between this reading and other people, places, events, authors . . .

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Adopted from Harvey Daniels

Discussion Director

Your job is to develop a list of-questions that your group might want to discuss about this part of the book. Don't worry about the small details: your task is to help people talk over the big ideas in the reading and share their reactions. Usually the best discussion questions come from your own thoughts, feelings, and concerns as you read, which you can list below, during or after your reading.

Possible discussion questions or topics for today:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Sample Questions:

- What was going through your mind as you read this?
- How did you feel while reading this part of the book?
- What real-life experiences did today's reading bring to mind?
- What questions did you have when you finished this section
- Did anything in this section of the book surprise you?
- What are the one or two most important ideas?
- Can you predict some things that might happen next?

Adopted from Harvey Daniels

Illustrator

Your job is to draw some kind of picture related to the reading. It can be a sketch, cartoon, diagram, flow chart, or stick-figure scene. You can draw a picture of something that's discussed specifically in your book, or something that the reading reminded you of, or a picture that conveys any idea or feeling you got from the reading. Any kind of drawing or graphic is okay-you can even label things with words if that helps.

Presentation plan: When the discussion director invites your participation, you may show your picture without comment to the others in the group. One time, they get to speculate what your picture means, to connect the drawing to their own ideas about the reading. After everyone has had a say, you get the last word: tell them what your picture means, where it came from, and what it represents to you.

Adopted from Harvey Daniels

Literary Luminary

Your job is to locate a few special sections of the text that your group would like to hear read aloud. The idea is to help people remember some interesting, powerful, funny, puzzling, or important sections of the text. You decide which passages or paragraphs are worth hearing, and then jot plans for how they should be shared. You can read passages aloud yourself, ask someone else to read them, or have people read them silently and then discuss.

<u>Location</u>	<u>Plan for reading</u>	<u>Reason for Picking</u>
1. Page _____	_____	_____
2. Page _____	_____	_____
3. Page _____	_____	_____
4. Page _____	_____	_____
5. Page _____	_____	_____

Possible reasons for picking a passage to be shared:

- Important
- Surprising
- Funny
- Confusing
- Thought-provoking
- Informative

Adopted from Harvey Daniels