



Literacy Activities for Schools, Classrooms, and Libraries



Children's Literacy Foundation (CLiF)

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1,000 Books Before Kindergarten



Materials: Free downloads available online.

Grades: Ages 0-5

Instructions: 1,000 Books Before Kindergarten is an initiative to encourage parents to read aloud to young children. Started in Bremen, IN by Sandy Krost, this initiative is a popular library program but can be applied anywhere. Visit the website below for more information, free printables, and program ideas. Many libraries post their success stories online – visit Pinterest for links to other libraries that have implemented this program and to see the materials they used, bulletin boards they created, and what incentives were successful for them. Team up with the local librarian and daycare centers to encourage parents to read to their young children.

Why It Works: It only takes one book a day for three years to reach the 1,000 book goal! This program helps parents see what a difference reading can make and breaks it down to small, manageable steps.

Resource: <http://1000booksbeforekindergarten.org/>

Alphabet Archeologists



Materials: Magnetic letters, cookie sheet, flour/sand, blush brush/paint brush

Grades: Preschool

Prep Time: Low

Instructions: The perfect accompaniment to a dinosaur-themed unit, this activity allows students to practice letter recognition while playing “archeologist.” Drop a few magnetic letters onto a cookie sheet, writing the letters you chose on a piece of paper for your students to use as a key. Cover the letters in flour/sand, and give the kids a makeup brush to carefully “search the site” for hidden letters. When they find one, they must match it to their paper key before continuing the hunt.

Why It Works: Encourages word and letter recognition in preschool-age children, as well as promoting imaginative play-time.

Cost: Minimal

Resource: [How Wee Learn](#)

Alphabetical Autobiography



<http://spreadsheetpro.net/how-to-get-letter-in-alphabet-based-on-number-in-excel-and-google-spreadsheet/>

Materials: writing/drawing paper; art supplies (as needed)

Grades: K-8

Prep Time: Low - High

Instructions: Ask students to write the 26 letters of the alphabet down the left-hand side of a sheet of writing paper. Then have them think of a word or phrase that expresses something important in their lives – an event, a person, a skill, a favorite something, a word that describes them. Younger students might select or be assigned 2 or 3 letters to plan, write and illustrate. Combine all students' efforts to create an A-to-Z bulletin board display. Upper elementary and older students might plan to create A-to-Z books in which each letter stands for a word or phrase about them. They might write a sentence or a paragraph to explain the importance of each word/phrase that was chosen. They might include photos, artifacts, or drawings to bring the pages of their books to life. If students create personal ABC books, you might have each student design an original cover page and come up with a title.

Resources: www.educationworld.com/a_tsl/archives/05-1/lessons017.shtml

Alphabet Museum



<https://www.parents.com/fun/games/educational/alphabet-museum/>

Materials: small boxes (such as cereal or cracker), colorful card stock, glue, scissors, binder clips, household/classroom items

Grades: PK-1st

Prep Time: Moderate

Instructions: Cut a front or side panel from each box. Print letters on card stock and trim to fit inside boxes; secure with glue. Arrange as desired and fasten together with binder clips. Play the game in one of three ways:

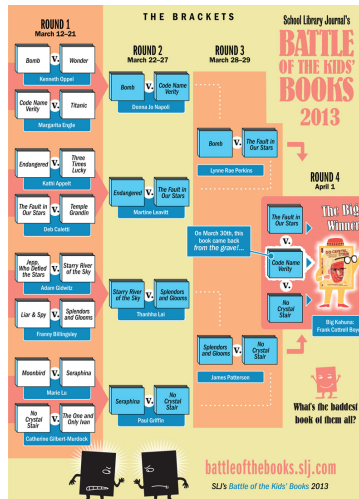
ABC Hunt – Ask children to look for classroom objects that begin with each letter of the alphabet. It's good to play this game first, as it outfits the museum.

Fetch Me a D – Remove an assortment of objects from the museum and hide them around the room. Call out "Fetch me..." and name a letter. Players have to find and retrieve the item that starts with that letter. Repeat for the other letters' missing objects.

Museum-a-grams – If children are ready to try spelling, line up a series of objects. Ask children to write the first letter of each object, then see if they can sound out the rest of the word.

Resource: <https://www.parents.com/fun/games/educational/alphabet-museum/>

Battle of the Books



Materials: Multiple copies of books in the battle, ballots for voting, bracket poster, bulletin board to post and update brackets

Grades: 4-8

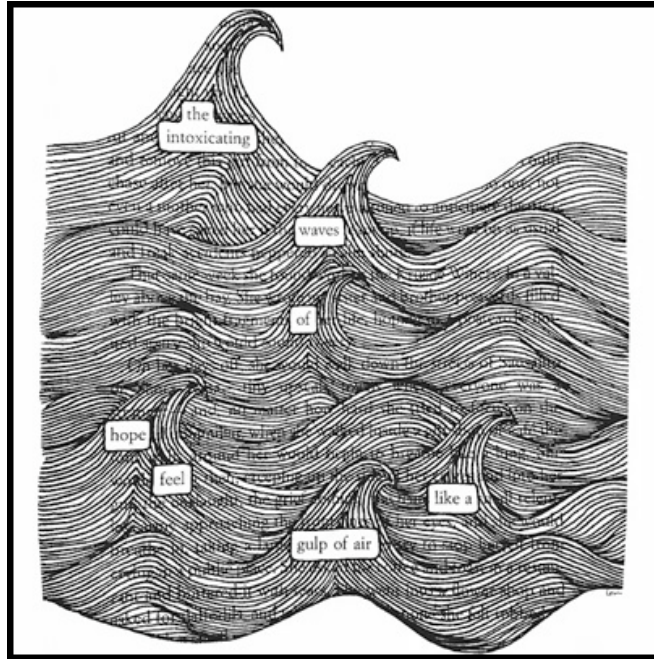
Prep Time: High

Instructions: Create a tournament-style bracket (think NCAA March Madness) and pick multiple sets of books to battle one another. A group of students reads each of the two books that are battling and then votes on their favorite of the two. The winner moves on to battle the winner of another group of two books that went head to head. For example, Group A reads *Bridge to Terabithia* and *Big Nate*. They then vote on their favorite—*Big Nate* wins. Meanwhile, Group B has read *Hoot* and *Surviving the Applewhites* and voted *Hoot* as the winner. Now, all members of Group A must read *Hoot* while all members of Group B must read *Big Nate*, and the two groups will vote on their favorite. The NCAA bracket begins with sixteen teams. Battle of the Books can include as many pairs of books as makes sense for the students to read in the allotted timeframe of the battle. The Battle can take place over the course of the year to allow students time to read all the books.

Why It Works: Helps students think critically about books, great for book discussions, builds excitement reading, encourages students to read books they may not have otherwise, and it can even include staff, community members, and parents.

Resource: <http://battleofthebooks.slj.com/about-2/>

Blackout Poetry



<https://www.cincinnatiareview.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Colette-Waves-of-Hope.jpg>

Materials: discarded library/classroom books or newspaper/magazine articles, sharpie pens or drawing supplies

Grades: 3-8

Prep Time: Low

Instructions: Give or have students choose their own book or article. Instruct them to scan their text looking for anchor words, words that stand out to them and help them imagine themes for their poems. Next, students read the text in its entirety using a pencil to lightly circle any words that resonate and might connect to the anchor word. Try to avoid circling more than three words in a row. List all circled words, in order, on a separate sheet of paper then piece words together (in the order they appear in the original text) to create the lines of a poem. Eliminate parts of words, especially endings, if it helps to keep the meaning of the poem clear. When finished, return to the original text and circle only the words selected for the final poem. Erase circles around any words not used. Blackout all text not selected, or add an illustration or design.

Resources: <https://www.scholastic.com/teachers/blog-posts/john-depasquale/blackout-poetry/>

Book Tasting



<http://www.sassysavvysimpleteaching.com/category/planning/>

Materials: books, table decorations, place settings, “reflection napkins”, serving trays, genre signs with definitions, pencils, snacks (optional)

Grades: 2-8

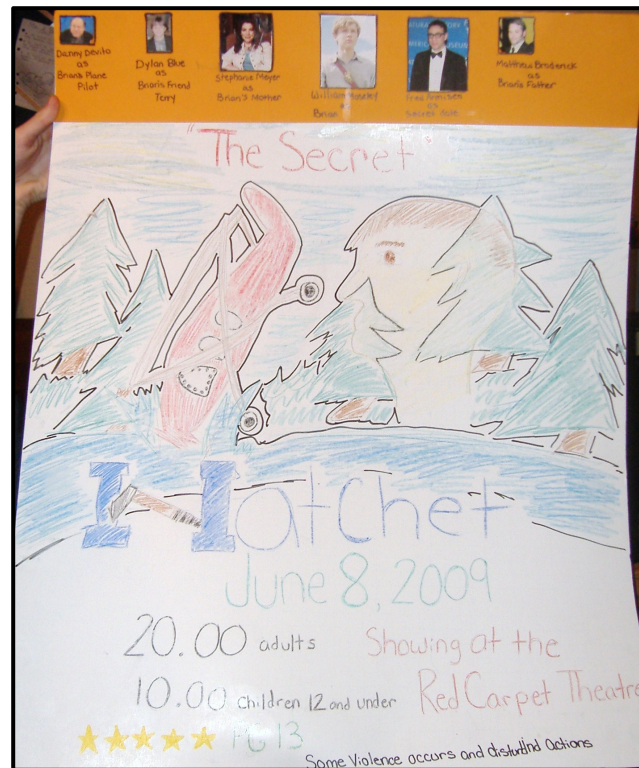
Prep Time: High (could be a classroom activity or evening event with parents)

Instructions: Choose 6-10 titles each from a number of genres and types of books. Set one table per genre. Place a book at each setting and extras on serving trays. Seat students and give them a few minutes to “taste” their books (read front and back covers, and one or two pages) then jot first impressions on their “reflection napkins.” Trade with another student at the table and repeat. Then all parties reset their tables and move to the next genre to sample and switch again and again as time allows. Reserve time at the end so students may check out books, if desired.

Why it Works: Introduces students to new genres and book choices. Helps get less popular genres/titles off shelves and into students’ hands. Helps create reading lists.

Resources: <https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/Book-Tasting-Introduce-Your-Students-to-New-Books-2741616>
<http://musingsfromthemiddleschool.blogspot.com/2017/01/host-book-tasting-in-your-classroom.html>
<http://www.teachingwithamountainview.com/2016/08/host-classroom-book-tasting.html?m=1>

Book Trailer Posters



Materials: Large paper/poster board, drawing utensils, bulletin board

Grades: 4-8

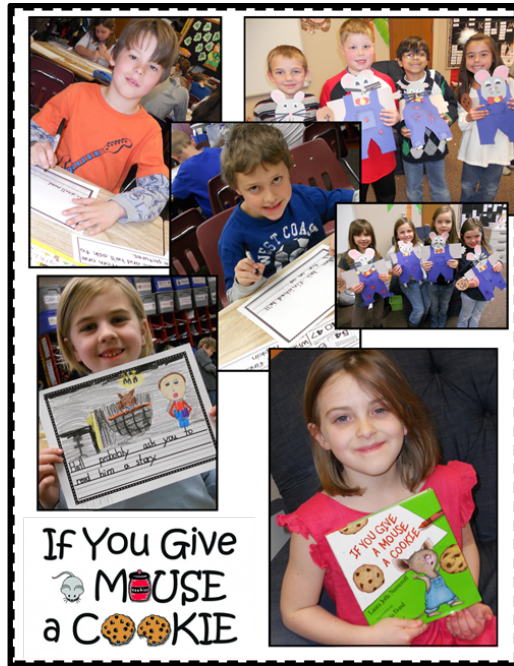
Prep Time: Low

Instructions: Students create book trailer posters for their favorite books, much the way movie trailer posters would look, which are hung on a bulletin board visible to all students.

Why It Works: Builds excitement for books other students are reading, encourages kids to read books they may not have picked up on their own, helps students practice summarizing a book, and provides an opportunity for artistic expression.

Resource: www.dentonisd.org/page/17209

Circle Story



Materials: Paper, pencils, crayons, rings or strings to bind books

Grades 1-3

Prep Time: Medium

Instructions: Each classroom teacher chooses a book for his/her class. Within the class, each student is assigned one sentence from that book. He or she needs to write the sentence and illustrate it. The class then works together to sequence the events and puts the pages together to make a class book. These books can then be shared with other classes, put on display during a parent night, photocopied to allow each child to keep a copy, or kept in the classroom to be read again and again.

Why It Works: Incorporates reading and writing, encourages collaboration while also giving each student a chance to display his/her talents in drawing and/or writing, teaches sequencing of events, and is a fun activity for the children.

Resource: <http://mrsbumgardners1stgradeclass.blogspot.ca/2011/03/circle-story-week.html>

Coming Attractions



Materials: Bulletin board, poster board, markers

Grades: All

Prep Time: Medium

Instructions: Decorate the bulletin board outside the school library to advertise Coming Attractions, as would be done with movies. Try to create excitement with each title named, and allow the children to sign up for a waiting list for the books before they even arrive.

Why It Works: Builds excitement for books that will be arriving and gets students excited about reading specific titles before they are even available. With the waiting list, books will be leaving the library before they even hit the shelves.

Resource: <http://comsewogueteens.blogspot.com/2012/07/new-book-trailer-display.html>

Community of Readers



Photo credit: <http://new.wcpss.net/blog/category/school-stories/>

Materials: Questionnaire, bulletin board to hang answers

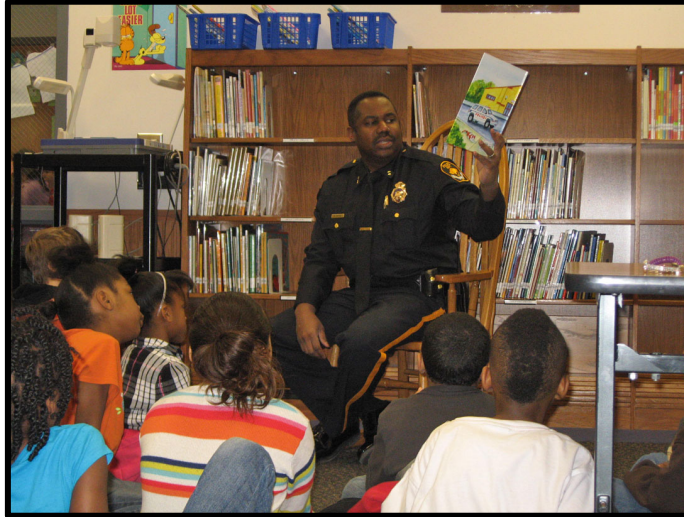
Grades: 4-8

Prep Time: Medium

Instructions: Ask teachers, administrators, local police, firefighters, doctors, public librarian, mayor, and other community members about their reading habits. This information can be collected via a questionnaire (what types of books do you enjoy most, what's your favorite book, what book are you currently reading, why do you love reading, where do you like to read, etc.) Post the answers on a bulletin board, perhaps even with photos of each person holding up his/her favorite book.

Why It Works: Shows the children that teachers and other adults read, that reading is important no matter what you do "when you grow up", and helps them see that it doesn't matter what you like to read or where you read it, as long as you are reading.

Community Reading Day



Materials: Coordination of volunteers, books

Grades: All

Prep Time: Medium

Instructions: This can work in two different ways. The overarching goal is to connect students with members of the community through storytelling. Either volunteers from the community come into the school and read to various classrooms (firemen, mayor, local celebrities, doctors, community members working in various careers), or the students take a field trip throughout town, stopping in at different businesses and town offices, where a story is read to them.

Why It Works: Shows the children that adults read, that reading is important no matter what you do “when you grow up”, and helps connect community members to the school.

Resources:

<http://www.ops.org/district/CENTRALOFFICES/DistrictCommunications/OPSNewsReleases/tabid/1647/articleType/ArticleView/articleId/318/OPS-Celebrates-Read-Across-America-Day-2011.aspx>

<http://www.greatershepparton.com.au/residents/family/newbeststart/communityliteracy/readingday/>

<http://www.curry.edu/about-curry/news-and-events/recent-news/news-index/cunningham-elementary.html>

Dress Up Day



Materials: None

Grades: All

Prep Time: Low

Instructions: Pick one day when students, teachers, and administrators are asked to dress up like their favorite characters. There could be prizes (books) for the best costumes and/or an all-school assembly where kids get a chance to talk about their characters. This could be used in combination with other ideas, such as the Facebook Profiles of favorite characters, where exploring and discussing favorite characters is a week- or month-long activity, culminating in Dress Up Day or as a finale to an all-school read, where all the students have read the same book, so they come as their favorite character in the common book and can compare costumes, see what characters their friends chose, etc.

Why It Works: Lets children have fun with reading, encourages them to stand in someone else's, allows students to share their favorite books and characters with others, shows that teachers read too, and fosters a school-wide interest in books.

Resource: <http://firstgradeledfordvaillette.blogspot.com/2012/01/book-character-dress-up-day.html>

Drop Everything and Read



Photo credit: <http://photographic-energy.tumblr.com/post/4470980486/classicvinyl-note-to-self-by-k4rly>

Materials: Books

Ages: All

Prep Time: Low

Instructions: For 20 minutes at the beginning or end of a day, have the entire school drop everything they are doing, pick up a book, and read it for 20 minutes. After the 20 minutes is up, everyone goes back to his or her daily business. This could be an on-going daily activity or a special weeklong or month-long activity with teacher and administrative involvement and perhaps even be shared with community members who can try to incorporate it into their own day and share photos with the kids.

Why It Works: Ensures that children read 20 minutes everyday, helps get them in the habit of daily reading, and shows the children that teachers and other community members read too.

Resource: www.dropeverythingandread.com

Fairy Tale Fridge Magnets



<http://nurturestore.co.uk/fairytale-fridge-magnets>

Materials: card stock, small magnets, drawing/painting tools, scissors, strong glue

Grades: K-3

Prep Time: Low

Instructions: Ask students to draw and color characters and cut them out, or provide character cutouts for younger kids to color. Glue a magnet on the back of each figure. Use well-known stories or allow kids to create their own. Send the magnets home to encourage family involvement and sustain literacy efforts at home!

Why it Works: Telling and retelling stories helps children practice language and encourages creativity as they adapt the story and give it their own personal twists.

Resources: <http://nurturestore.co.uk/fairytale-fridge-magnets>

Found Object Poem Project



<http://laurashovan.com/2016/01/announcing-2016-found-object-poem-project/>

Materials: Found objects or photos of the objects

Grades: 2-8

Prep Time: Medium

Instructions: Once a week for one month ask students to compose short works of poetry in response to teacher-supplied found objects, or photos of found objects. Photos should lack context and objects should be something out of the ordinary. Prompts to help students get started could include:

- What is the object's backstory?
- Where might this object be found?
- What does the object look, feel, smell, sound and taste like to you?
- Write a persona poem in the voice of the object.

Why It Works: Stimulates imagination and encourages students to practice writing and thinking creatively about a variety of topics.

Resources: <http://readingyear.blogspot.com/>
<http://laurashovan.com/2016/01/announcing-2016-found-object-poem-project/>

Get Caught Reading



Materials: Camera, bulletin board/wall space

Grades: All

Instructions: Let all the students, teachers, and staff know that at any point during the school year (or a smaller, defined amount of time, like a specific month), if they are “caught reading”, they will be photographed and have their name and photo added to an “I Got Caught Reading” wall. This could also involve incentives, like a raffle into which anyone who was “caught” is entered.

Why It Works: Encourages students to read during their free time, allows them to see that many other students, teachers, and staff read too, and lets them see what books others are reading.

Resource: www.rakisradresources.com/2013/02/language-literacy-week-recap.html

Get Out!



<http://greatkids.outdoors.org/2012/09/keeping-nature-journal-sketchbook-or.html>

Materials: Pens/pencils and journals for students (optional).

Grades: 2-8

Prep Time: Medium

Instructions: Kids tend to spend a lot of time indoors and in front of screens. Even when they do get outside, they are often busy socializing, playing sports, etc. Set up a reflective walk for students, where they are encouraged to be mindful of their surroundings, look at the scenery, and reflect on its meaning. This can be a specific directive (such as, write five sentences to describe this tree) or a general instruction to be observant and to later reflect on what they saw through writing. Encourage teachers to set aside 15-20 minutes each week for a reflective walk with their students during which they are encouraged to talk less and listen more, to notice things they normally wouldn't see, and later to capture their reactions in writing. If the whole school engages in these reflective walks, find creative ways to share students' writing, such as a bulletin board or a literary magazine.

Why it works: Gives students a healthy, active way to take a break from the classroom while encouraging them to be more cognizant of their surroundings, stimulates ideas for writing and reflecting on their own lives, and is applicable to students of all ages.

Resource: <http://www.edutopia.org/student-motivation-writing-outdoors>

Grab-a-Word



Materials: Index cards, pens or markers

Grades: 1-3

Prep Time: Low

Instructions: Have students pair off or form small groups and write words on index cards, making sure to include nouns, adjectives, verbs and some silly words, too (squishy, hippopotamus, gargle, sashay...). Vocabulary and spelling words make great choices. One student tosses the cards into the air and challenges the other to pick up words as quickly as possible, read them, and use them to form a sentence. Once one student has formed a few sentences, switch places and let her toss the cards.

Why it Works: Helps build vocabulary and boosts understanding of sentence structure words in context.

Resource: <http://www.scholastic.com/parents/resources/article/writing-activities/grab-word>

Guess the Reader



Materials: Camera, photo printing, bulletin board

Grades: 4-8

Prep Time: Low

Instructions: Take pictures of staff holding their favorite books in front of their faces and post on a wall or bulletin board. Students must guess which teacher is reading which book. This can also be done within the classroom, with a picture of each student reading his/her favorite book, and classmates must guess which of their peers is reading which book.

Why It Works: Builds excitement for books and shows that teachers read too.

Resource: <http://schoollibrarydisplays.blogspot.com/2011/11/cathy-fischbuch-from-g.html>

Kindness Notes



Materials: Slip of paper/bookmark, pencils, markers, pens

Grades: Pre-4th

Prep Time: Low

Instructions: Write out a few kind notes to put inside books in random pages, so that when a friend reads through the book they are surprised with a kind message! Additionally, students can use their own notes or the notes of others as bookmarks to keep track of (and perhaps inspire) their reading.

Why It Works: Encourages the students to read, as well as to develop their positive communication skills with both themselves and one another.

Cost: Low

Resource: CLiF

Local Pen Pals



Photo credit: <http://www.cta.org/en/Professional-Development/Publications/2013/02/February-2013/Dear-Pen-Pal.aspx>

Materials: Paper, envelopes, stamps (or volunteer to deliver letters between schools).

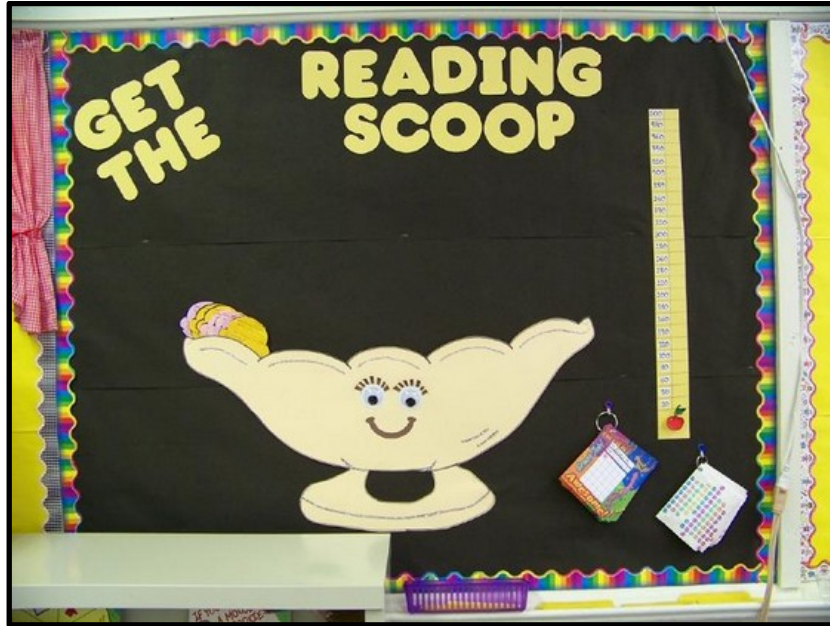
Grades: All

Instructions: Partner with a local school to create a pen pal program. Match children of the same grade level and have them write letters to one another on a regular basis throughout the year. At the end of the school year, bring the students together for a celebration where they meet their pen pals in person, have a picnic, read stories, and even visit the local library together.

Why It Works: Encourages writing, forms new friendships with children outside your community, is easy and cheap to implement.

Resource: <http://k6educators.about.com/od/languagearts/l/aa090201.htm>
http://k6educators.about.com/od/languageart1/a/pen_pals.htm

Meet the Goal



Materials: Large paper/poster board, drawing utensils, bulletin board

Grades: 2-8

Prep Time: Medium

Instructions: Create a bulletin board with an image to fill in as students work towards a goal of reading a certain number of books or minutes. For example, have an ice cream cone on the bulletin board, and each time a student reads a book or reads for a certain time frame, a scoop of ice cream is placed on the cone. Another idea: make a tree, and each time the reading is completed a leaf is placed on the tree. This can be done per classroom and be made into a competition, where the first classroom to reach a goal gets a prize, like a pizza party, or taping the principal to a wall. Or to minimize the competition with only one winner, it can be a challenge where any classes to reach a certain goal get an ice cream party at the end of the year.

Why It Works: Encourages school-wide reading and shows that every student can make a difference, no matter their reading level.

Resource: <http://www.superteacherideas.com/bb3-scoop.html>

Musical Books



Materials: Books, chairs, music/player

Grades: 1-3

Prep Time: Low

Instructions: Arrange chairs in a circle or back-to-back in a straight line, one for each child. Place a book under each chair. Every child then sits on a chair. The children march around the chairs while the teacher plays the music. When the music stops the children sit down and begin to read the book under their chair. After a few minutes, start the music again.

After the game has ended, place the books in a special box marked “Musical Books” so that children may later read the rest of the story.

Why it Works: Provides an opportunity to learn more about a particular character or story and encourages readers to come back for more. Children are encouraged to read books they may not have chosen for themselves.

Resources: http://www.educationworld.com/a_lesson/lesson/lesson035.shtml

Novel Study: Matchbook Chapter Summaries



<http://www.gottoteach.com/2015/04/matchbook-chapter-summaries-for-novel.html?m=1>

Materials: legal-size file folders, “matchbook paper” (white construction paper cut into pieces approximately 3.5” x 6” and folded), zip-top baggies

Grades: 3-8

Prep Time: Moderate

Instructions: Give students one “matchbook paper” for each chapter completed. Students draw and color their favorite scene from the chapter on the outside of the matchbook. Inside they write a 5-7 sentence summary of the chapter. Matchbooks may be stored in baggies for safe keeping until all summaries are complete, then glue them into the file folder. Decorate the cover of the folder for the finishing touch.

Why it Works: Helps students learn to identify important plot points in each chapter, and the main themes of the book as a whole.

Resources: <http://www.gottoteach.com/2015/04/matchbook-chapter-summaries-for-novel.html?m=1>
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B-oQX-cCsTGOV3lPaDdjd3VPb28/view> (*grading rubric*)

One School, One Book



Materials: Copies of the book to send home to all students, materials for related activities.

Grades: All

Prep Time: High

Instructions: The program is designed to create a shared reading experience among all students. Choose a chapter book, give every student a copy, and every family reads that book at home over the course of a single month. Each month send the next chapter home with the students. The best titles for the program are books that can be understood by early readers and yet still interest experienced readers. For example, E.B. White's *The Trumpet of the Swan* or Lynne Reid Banks' *The Indian in the Cupboard*. Schools participating in the program can do a variety of things at school to heighten and promote interest in and discussion of the book, from school-wide assemblies to school-wide art and writing contests. Most schools rely on a daily trivia question, usually read by the principal to the whole school in the morning. The book can also be read in each classroom, rather than at home or older students can volunteer to read the book to younger students.

Why it works: The program encourages reading together at home by enabling every family and by inspiring them with a shared experience, develops students' attention and listening skills, and allows all students to feel united by the material.

Resource: <http://readtothem.org/our-programs/one-school-one-book/>

Photography and Writing



Materials: Cameras, photo printing/developing capabilities, collaboration with local businesses

Ages: Grades 3-8

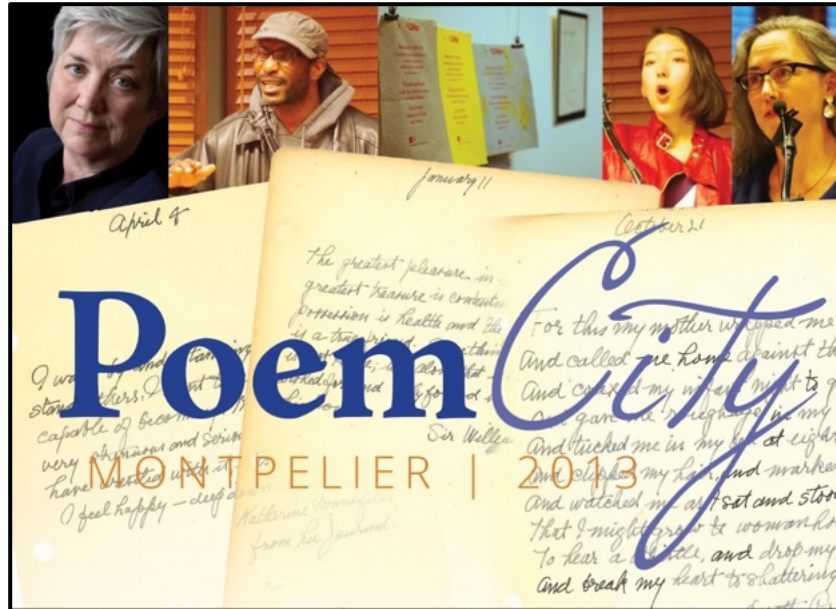
Prep Time: High

Instructions: Have your students take pictures around town, develop/print the pictures (or get them developed/printed), and have students choose their favorite picture and write a story about it. These stories can follow a theme, such as writing about the town's history; fall into a specific genre like poetry; and they can be fiction or nonfiction. You can also keep it open and leave the details up to the students. The photos and corresponding stories can then be hung in the windows and lobbies of local businesses/organizations so townspeople can read the opinions, poems, and stories students have written about the place where they all live.

Why It Works: Fosters community involvement, gives students a creative writing prompt, engages students with their community, allows for several levels of creativity in photography and writing, and integrates well with other school subjects.

Resource: www.readwritethink.org and type photo writing in the search bar. There are several writing activities using photos as the prompt.

Poem City



Materials: Poetry submissions, flyers, markers to write on shop windows/cardstock and other materials to print and display poetry.

Grades: All

Prep Time: High

Instructions: Solicit students, teachers, local writers, and community members to submit a poem. During National Poetry Month (April), post the poems all over town – at school, written on shop windows, on the walls of local stores, doctors' offices, community centers, the post office, and any other building in town. Publish a book of poems for students, host a poetry slam at school or the local library, recite a poem before school each day, and find other creative ways to celebrate poetry all month. The message to convey to students and community members is that everyone can get involved – everyone is a poet.

Why it works: Encourages all students and community members to get involved to write and share their poetry, engages local businesses, parents, and poets of all ages and fosters a sense of community.

Resource: <http://poemcityvt.wordpress.com/about/>

Read in 100 Places



<https://www.brainscape.com/blog/2011/10/reading-out-loud-remember/>

Materials: checklist of people and places to read; books from home, school or library; prizes (optional)

Grades: PK – 4

Prep Time: Medium

Instructions: Make an old challenge less daunting. Rather than asking students to read a certain number of books, ask them to read in as many different PLACES and to as many different PEOPLE as possible. Use a pre-determined checklist or make it a classroom activity to construct a lineup of possibilities. But don't hold students to the list – bonus points for creativity!

Award points or prizes for most boxes checked, most unique location, oldest/youngest/hairiest listeners, etc.

Resources: <https://www.themeasuredmom.com/summer-reading-challenge-can-you-read-100-books-with-printable-checklist/>

<https://www.themeasuredmom.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/SummRdCh.pdf> (checklist)

“Read to Me!” Banners and Calendar



<http://www.familyreading.org/our-programs/read-to-me-banners-and-calendar/>

Materials: Outreach to artists and area businesses; enlarge artwork for display; create calendars

Grades: K-4

Prep Time: High

Instructions:

Invite local artists (or children) to produce artwork with images of reading together. Encourage them to illustrate reading in different settings and to show a variety of combinations of people – or animals.

At the same time, recruit local businesses to “host” a banner for the year. Original artwork can be digitally enlarged and reprinted for display and later auctioned to generate funds for the project.

Use the artwork to create calendars, perhaps with sponsorship from an area merchant, which could send them into the homes of low-income families for free. Calendars could also be sold locally to help support this and other programs.

Why It Works: Unites the community in a movement to read to children and increases awareness of the importance of reading together. Helps to encourage the establishment of a tradition of reading together.

Resource: <http://www.familyreading.org/our-programs/read-to-me-banners-and-calendar/>

Readathon



Materials: Posters/fliers for advertising Readathon; sponsorship cards.

Grades: K-8

Prep Time: Medium

Instructions: Set up a Readathon for the entire school. Pick a theme if applicable, and a timeframe for the Readathon to take place, ask students to make a list of the books they will read and/or set a goal of how many books/hours they will read, and encourage them to find sponsors. The Readathon can be aimed at reading for a certain length of time or on reading a set number of books in a given timeframe. Students can be asked to read at home or invited to a “campout” at school, where they will join their classmates for reading, food, and even fun activities. The key is to allow students to choose their own books and to have fun. Students solicit pledges from family and community members, and funds raised can support buying books for their classrooms or school library or can be donated to a nonprofit organization.

Why it works: Motivates students to read books and other materials they enjoy outside of the classroom; involves the entire school and even community members in push for reading for pleasure; the incentive to raise money for their school or other kids in need motivates students to set and attain goals.

Resource: <http://www.readathon.org/how-readathon-works/>

Reading BINGO



Materials: Classroom/library books or books from home, BINGO cards, prizes

Grades: K-5

Prep Time: Low

Instructions: Populate BINGO card and distribute to participating readers (game may be used as an optional reading incentive program). Instruct students to write the title and author's name in the corresponding square each time they read a book fulfilling one of the category requirements. When the entire card has been filled out a parent or guardian should sign and the students may return it. Each time the student completes a card he or she is awarded a prize and advanced to the next level. (See links below for detailed directions, explanation of levels and prize giving.)

Why it Works: Motivates and rewards students for reading a variety of books. Lots of opportunity to customize both bingo cards and reading lists for grade/reading level. Students may select their own books and there is a range titles from which to choose when fulfilling individual square requirements.

Resources: <http://www.readerpants.net/2013/07/reading-incentive-idea-reading-bingo.html>
<https://docs.google.com/a/clifonline.org/file/d/0B4xNnptHqMusMTBwa0dBOHpILW8/edit> (**detailed directions**)
<https://drive.google.com/a/clifonline.org/file/d/0B4xNnptHqMusTGV2bVJiWWY5V1k/edit> (**link to customizable BINGO card**)
<https://docs.google.com/a/clifonline.org/file/d/0B4f2PADir3HsekdORXROV3kySHM/edit> (**ideas for BINGO squares**)

Reading Buddies with Seniors



Materials: Coordination of volunteers, books

Grades: 2-6

Prep Time: Medium

Instructions: Children partner with senior citizens in town and they read together once a month. Senior citizens can be invited to volunteer to come to the school, or the school can visit a local retirement home/senior center.

Why It Works: Helps children see that people of all ages enjoy reading, gives the kids a chance to practice reading aloud, and forms more partnerships with community members.

Resource: <http://westhartfordnews.blogspot.com/2013/02/literacy-focus-for-community-volunteers.html>

Reading Passport



Photo credit: <http://librariesandtransliteracy.wordpress.com/2011/06/02/transliteracy-in-your-summer-reading-program/>

Materials: Small books of paper or passport printables (see below for resource; others available via web search)

Grades: 3-8

Prep Time: High

Instructions: At the beginning of the school year, students each receive (or make) a passport to use throughout the school year. Each time they read a book, they receive a stamp (from the teacher or the librarian) in their passport. The passports can be themed, and they try to get a stamp on each page - e.g. each page is a different genre, so they must read a book from each genre to get a stamp on every page or each page is a different continent, so they try to read a book based on each continent. This could be a school-wide collaboration and when a child gets a stamp on each page, he/she gets his/her name put on a bulletin board or wins a small prize.

Why It Works: Helps get students excited about reading each page's theme/genre, introduces them to other themes/genres while still allowing them to choose their own books, helps them learn the different sections of the library and different nonfiction sections as well, and lasts year long – each student works at his/her own pace.

Resource: <http://classroommagic.blogspot.com/2012/07/genre-passport-freebie.html>

Reading Sticker Wall



Materials: Blank wall or bulletin board, stickers, paper to cover the wall before stickers are applied

Ages: All (K-2 for picture book theme)

Prep Time: Low

Instructions: Clear a wall in a visible space. Every time a child reads a book, he/she gets to put a sticker on the wall. This can be made into an exciting action for the children, as they get to choose any spot on the wall and could climb on chairs or be hoisted over the teacher's head to place a sticker high above their heads. Soon enough, the wall fills up with stickers. This can be done during a specific time frame or on a theme, such as National Picture Book Month, so that each time a picture book is read throughout that month, a sticker goes on the wall and kids can try to cover the wall by the end of the month.

Why It Works: There is no pressure on the children as to which books or how many to read, since their names are not attached to the stickers- it's anonymous. Inspires the kids to read and shows them that many of their peers are doing so as well.

Reading Together



Materials: Books

Grades: All

Prep Time: Medium

Instructions: Pair older students with younger students to form mentorships or reading partners. The older students read books with the younger students, and, if they are comfortable, help the younger students read books to them. This could be a one-time event or an ongoing activity that is done weekly or monthly throughout the year.

Why It Works: Gives the older students an opportunity to practice reading aloud in a less intimidating environment, gives them responsibility in working with younger students, helps forge relationships between students and classrooms, encourages the younger students to read by showing them that older kids read too, and gives the younger kids someone to help them choose books and practice their reading.

Resource: <https://www.madison.k12.wi.us/node/9896>

Rock 'n' Read



Materials: Rocking chair, sign-up sheet

Grades: All

Instructions: Place a rocking chair in a quiet space in the school. This could be in the library or in a quiet but visible nook. Encourage students and teachers to sign up to sit in the chair and read. If the program is very popular, consider adding more chairs. The key is to create a low pressure but engaging way for kids and staff to take a few quiet moments and read for pleasure.

Why It Works: Invites students to relax and enjoy reading for pleasure. Creates a system where teachers and other students are modeling reading for pleasure.

Resource: Many thanks to Susan Vera from Brighton Elementary School for sharing this idea and photos of the kids enjoying the rocking chair.

Silly Sentence Snowball Fight



Materials: Scrap paper, pencil

Grades: 2-5

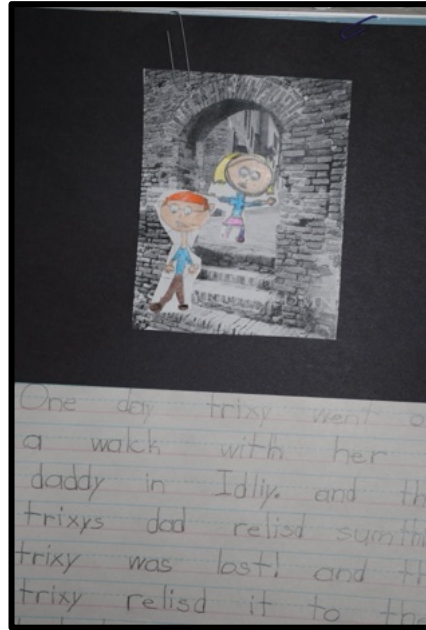
Prep Time: Minimal

Instructions: On pieces of scrap paper, write 10 nouns, 10 adjectives and 10 verbs. Ball up each word. Give two children 30 seconds to choose 15 “snowballs” each. After they open their snowballs, have them make as many silly sentences as they can. Level of difficulty/word choice can vary with different age groups.

Why It Works: This is a low-pressure “competition” to display strength in sentence-building and also just to be silly!

Resource: www.rif.org/sites/default/files/Support_Materials/Chillin-Activites-For-A-Winter_English.pdf

Step into the Book



Materials: Paper, paint or other art media, source to print photos.

Grades: All

Instructions: Partner with the art teacher to create a school-wide art project where kids become a part of their favorite books. Take photos of the students and ask them to recreate illustrations from their favorite picture books with their photo by painting, drawing, or making a collage of the illustration. Alternately, students can create a large image from a book so that passersby can become part of the illustration or make cartoon cutouts of themselves that they place into the scene of a book (see above). Students can work alone, in groups, in the classroom, or at home to let themselves step into their favorite illustrations. Post the paintings, drawings, and collages throughout the school and/or community.

Why It Works: Invites students to tap into other creative outlets to make connections with reading and books, can tie into other events surrounding favorite books, as well as art curriculum.

Resource: <http://carlisleartclass.blogspot.com/2012/11/alice-in-wonderland.html>
<http://firstgraderatlast.blogspot.com.au/2011/05/its-all-about-pigeon-i-love-mo-2nd.html>

Book: *When My Baby Dreams*

Story Titles by Chance



<https://wallscover.com/images/dice-wallpaper-4.jpg>

Materials: dice, numbered story starters, writing supplies/computer

Grades: 2-8

Prep Time: Low

Instructions: First create a set of numbered story possibilities as in the link below.

To play the game students throw a set of two dice twice to determine their story assignments. For example: the first roll of the dice adds up to 4, which corresponds to “an old shoe,” and the second roll adds up to 7, which corresponds to “problem.” The story title becomes, “An Old Shoe’s Problem” and the student writes a short story detailing the shoe’s problem and the resolution.

Resources: https://www.learningsuccess.com/ten_sample_writing_games.htm

Storytime at the Farmer's Market



<http://www.lansdalefarmersmarket.org/lfm-kids/kids-calendar/>

Materials: Emails or flyers for communicating event information; volunteers to lead storytelling; books/crafts for each week's storytime.

Grades: K-4

Prep Time: Low

Instructions: Go where the kids are: set up a storytime at the local farmer's market, grocery store, park, or other location where many students will be over the weekend and/or summer. Find a local teacher, librarian, or volunteer who would like to lead a weekly storytime or create a rotating schedule of volunteers to facilitate storytime. Encourage the facilitators to choose books that are appropriate for a variety of ages to help draw listeners of all ages. Ask your local librarian for suggestions of books to read and tips for keeping kids engaged. The storytime can involve books, spoken stories, songs, crafts, and even a book swap.

Why it works: Invites students to enjoy books in a new way, involves parents and caregivers in encouraging the students to read for pleasure, and builds enthusiasm around sharing books as a community.

Resource: <http://certifiedfarmersmarket.org/profiles/blogs/2811948:BlogPost:22770>
http://www.randomhousekids.com/media/activities/SAW_SophiesSquash_IdeaSheet.pdf

StoryWalk®



Materials: Children's book(s), cardstock, lamination, wooden stakes.

Grades: All

Prep Time: Medium

Instructions: Mount the pages of a children's book on cardstock, laminate them, attach them to wooden stakes, and install stakes along an outdoor path. As readers stroll down the trail, they'll be directed to the next page in the story. A StoryWalk can be a one-time event (e.g., during a town festival), a permanent structure outside the school or library, or something for which the book and/or location changes each month. Think creatively about placement – a local park, the town forest, recreation fields, the library, around town buildings, or anywhere else children and their families will be enticed to follow the trail. A StoryWalk can also be a project assigned to older students – allow them to choose the books and location, set up the StoryWalk, and help guide younger students on the walk. Invite daycare centers, home-schoolers, and other community members to come visit the StoryWalk too.

Why it works: Encourages children and their families to enjoy books and get exercise in a new setting. Gives community members a chance to get engaged, includes younger children not yet in school, and can easily be updated regularly.

Resource: <http://www.vtbikeped.org/vbpc-article-archive/83-the-storywalk-project-faq-.html>

Take Home Literacy Kits



Materials: Bags, books, flash cards, small toys, notebook or paper to make journals with instructions

Grades: Pre-K-2

Prep Time: High

Instructions: Create Take Home Literacy Kits for students to bring home over the weekend and use with parents/caregivers. Make as many kits as time and money allow so students can explore many topics throughout the school year. Each kit has a unique theme and includes 2-3 books (both fiction and nonfiction), manipulatives, suggestions of activities related to the theme, instructions on what to do with the kit, and a journal for the students and parents to write about the experience.

Why It Works: Helps enrich the curriculum, gives parents encouragement to engage and communicate with their children, and helps make reading and writing fun.

Resource: For ideas on themes and how to create the kits on a budget, visit: <http://littleilluminations.blogspot.com/2010/02/take-home-literacy-kits-for.html>

The Best Part of Me



Materials: Book: *The Best Part of Me*, camera for photos, decorative paper and other art materials to hang statements.

Grades: All

Instructions: Use the book, *The Best Part of Me*, as inspiration. Read it to each class and ask the students to think about what they find to be unique or special about themselves. Take photos of what each student finds unique about him- or herself and have the students write a paragraph to accompany the photo. Hang photos and writing around the school. Teachers and staff can join in as well.

Why It Works: Helps students celebrate what makes them unique and appreciate that all of their peers are special in their own way. Encourages writing and reflection.

Resource: <http://missradka.blogspot.com/2011/02/best-part-of-me.html>

The Creature in Me



<https://hdqwalls.com/download/2560x1440/horse-dragon>

Materials: writing/drawing paper, writing drawing instruments, old magazines or books

Grades: 1-5

Prep Time: Low

Instructions: First ask students to write their full names (the more the better!) on their papers. Then instruct them to use the letters of their names to spell the names of as many common animals as possible.

Take the game a step further and invite students to dream up names for entirely new, previously unknown creatures – still using the letters of their own names. What do these critters look like? Where do they live? What do they eat? How do they play, sleep, communicate? Students can imagine they are describing their discoveries for a zoological journal or a prestigious science publication. Or the National Enquirer.

Ask students to sketch their discoveries or create composites using pictures from old magazines and books. Turn these into a classroom bulletin board or book.

Resources: <http://www.timwynne-jones.com/pages/writinggames.html>

Themed Family Night



Materials: Emails or flyers for communicating event information; volunteers to lead storytelling, books for each theme, decorations for each theme (optional).

Grades: K-8

Prep Time: High

Instructions: Host an evening of storytelling at school and invite all students and their families to attend. Pick a variety of themes that students will enjoy, and designate a different classroom for each theme. Have teachers or parent volunteers reading stories in each themed room. Invite attendees to dress up, bring props, and share food related to the theme of their choice. Alternately, one overarching theme works well too. For example, make it a camping theme and bring the outside in with fake rocks, twinkling lights, and campfires; sing campfire songs; eat s'mores; and divide the different age groups to read books about camping and the outdoors in smaller groups.

Why it works: Invites students to enjoy books in a new way, involves parents and caregivers in encouraging the students to read for pleasure, and builds enthusiasm around sharing books as a community.

Resource: <http://www.ptotoday.com/sfn/family-reading-night>
http://pilotmountainnews.com/view/full_story/21245652/article-Campout-themed-Family-Reading-Night-held-at-Westfield-Elementary
<http://www.scholastic.com/teachers/top-teaching/2013/01/family-reading-night-%E2%80%94lets-go-camping>

Week of Readers



Materials: Bulletin board, template for information, camera/printer

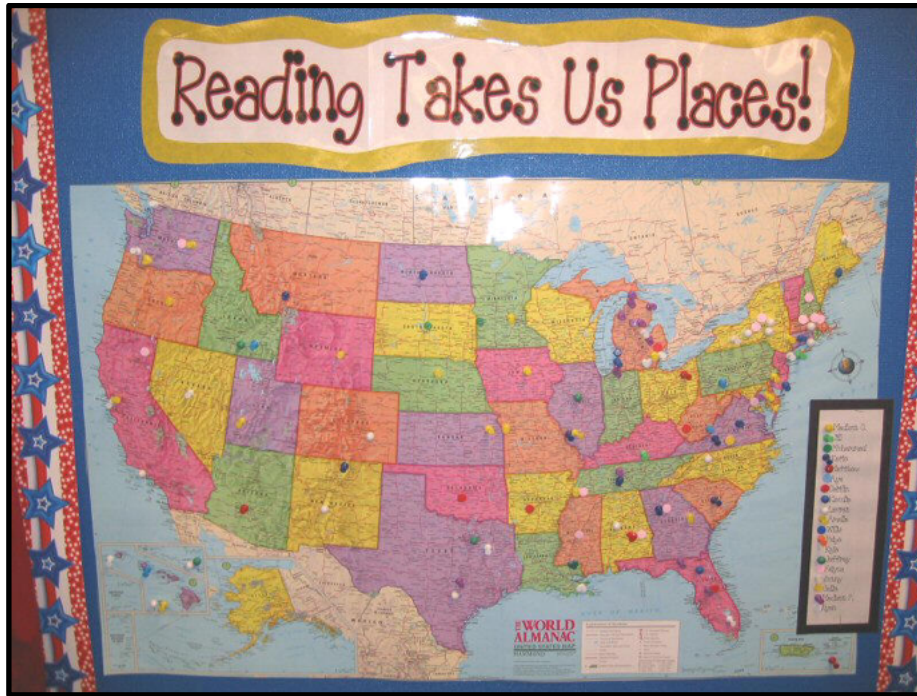
Grades: 2-8

Prep Time: High

Instructions: Each week choose a small number of students to have their picture taken with their favorite book and fill out a form to tell why they like reading, what they are currently reading, and what the book is about. At the beginning of each week, change the students on the bulletin board. Then put the old photos/forms up on the walls in the lobby so that by the end of the year, all students will have their picture hanging in the lobby telling why they like reading. (Teachers can be included too!)

Why It Works: Includes all students, allows children to share books they like, provides books recommendations from friends, and creates a visual community of readers in the school.

Where Have You Been



Materials: Large map or poster board to draw on, pins, bulletin board

Grades: 4-8

Prep Time: Low

Instructions: Place a large map on a bulletin board and ask students to place a pin where they've "been" by book. The pins can be color-coded by student or grade, but this can also be an anonymous activity. Challenge the school to "visit" a certain number of countries by the end of the school year. Teachers can participate too.

Why It Works: Helps show students that they can "travel" by book, allows them to work together to reach a goal (pins on each continent, certain number of countries by end of the year), and includes children of all reading levels.

Resource: <http://hil.troy.k12.mi.us/staff/bnewingham/myweb3/reading%20bulletin%20boards.htm>