

Supporting Independent Reading

to increase Stamina, Fluency, & Joy

Time

Students need time to read in class in order to create a habit of reading and set the stage for homework reading, and teachers need reading time to confer individually with students about their choices, stamina, engagement, and goals. Students need time to discuss choices with classmates, time to analyze their progress, and time to practice fluency & comprehension strategies under the direction of the teacher.

Choice

Students need to make choices in reading that reflect their interests because interest drives engagement. Teachers should encourage wide reading in all genres as well as students who pursue an author or genre study. Allow students to reread favorite books and to abandon a book that no longer interests them.

Response

Teacher conferences are the primary tool for assessing progress, encouraging goal-setting and reflection, and analyzing student needs. Students will reflect on reading in writing (themed notebooks & writing notebooks), facilitate discussions in small groups, join blogs or reading sites for discussions outside of class, and respond regularly to other readers in the room.

Vision

Daily book talks present a wide range of voices, styles of text, categories of interest, etc. and are essential for helping students develop their own 'to read next' lists. We must commit to helping students define themselves as readers who like...

Expectations

All readers will develop the stamina to read longer and with greater fluency with daily practice. A reading rate is calculated regularly and students are expected to meet a weekly goal based on the challenge of the current selected text. All readers will update book lists, set goals, and read regularly each week at home.

Challenge

Monitor reading lists & teach all students to analyze choices and increase challenge; set goals based on progress towards college expectations: 200-600 pages/week; create reading ladders that help students find books of increasing difficulty within a genre; book talk a wide variety of choices including classics and world literature.

Modeling

Use short mentor texts to increase complexity & demands on readers; model storyboarding to help students understand the craft construction in short stories & novels; model your own choices as a reader: post your reading list, share books you love; show thinking & annotations in a mentor text and model "fix-it" strategies.

Find Your Reading Rate

Find out how many pages you can read in 10 minutes by timing yourself.

$$\frac{x \text{ pages}}{10 \text{ min}}$$

×

Have some extra time this week? Stretch yourself and read an additional 30 or 60 minutes per week.

$$\frac{120 \text{ min}}{1 \text{ week}}$$

=

$$\frac{\# \text{ pages}}{\text{week}}$$



Remember that your reading rate is personalized to you and the book you're reading. Calculate a new reading rate each time you start a book.

Finished your book?

Record your book online,

Write a reflection for this week (if you haven't already), and . . .

Start reading another book!

Use this number to estimate how long it should take you to finish your book. For ex, if your reading rate is 150 pgs/wk and your book is 400 pages long, then it should take you between 2-3 weeks to finish your book.



Don't forget to think about how you will grow and challenge yourself as a reader. Pick a reading challenge to tackle.

Possible Conference Questions

Questions that Monitor a Reading Life:

What are you reading? How did you choose it?
How do you find good books?
What's on your Next list?
Which authors are your favorites?
How much did you read last year?
Do you consider yourself a reader?
Where do you read at home?

Questions that drive a Teaching Reading Strategies conference:

How is the reading going for you?
Is this an easy or a hard read for you? How do you know?
Tell me about a time when this book has confused you and what you've done to get yourself back on track in your understanding.
Tell me about these characters—who they are, what do you think of them?
What questions are at the heart of this book? What questions might the author be trying to answer through the struggles of these characters?
I see you're almost finished with the book. When you think back over the way a character has changed in this story, can you point to specific moments when something was revealed about this character? Could you make a claim about this character and support it with evidence from the text?
How is this book different from the last book you read?

Questions that drive a conference to Increase Complexity and Challenge:

What else have you read by this author?
What other books have you read that are as difficult as this one?
Which books on your next list are challenging?
Have you considered how to push yourself as a reader?
Which genres have you read this year?
Tell me about a genre you don't usually read and let's think about books that might ease the transition from what you love to what will challenge you to think differently.
Tell me about a book you've dropped this year. Why did you drop it?
How are the books you've been reading this year similar?

**Conference Script: Robert, September
Penny Kittle**

So prior to this one, when was the last book you read?

I don't know. I did not read any books last year.

And you're a senior?

Yes.

(Did you read in) 10th grade?

I read in 10th grade.

You did? What happened last year?

I didn't take an English class.

How did you get away with not taking an English class?

I took online classes. I took history and math online.

And you took English online?

I was supposed to but I never got to it.

So that's why you're in my night class.

It is.

So you don't usually read for homework. And how about this one? Not yet. Mainly (you're reading) during reading break here at school, but not elsewhere. So if I think I can transform you into a kid who wants to read when you leave school... (he laughs) The likelihood of that?

Not very.

Seriously?

Yeah. I read once in awhile at home, but..

What if it was so good that you wanted to read it?

I don't know.

Maybe?

Maybe.

That might be the book.

I don't know. I've had a couple of books like that. But even then I only read in school. When I'm not in school I don't really do much with school.

On your next list you've got *Butter* and *Thirteen Reasons Why*. Those are good books, good books for next. Cody's reading this one: right here.

And Cody said he likes it which is weird. I've never seen that kid read.

I know. So I'm going to put up there on the board under *Best Night of My Pathetic Life*, *Butter*, and put your name up there because it's going to have a waiting list. That way you'll get it.

It might take me awhile to finish this book.

It might not. You might actually want to read so much that you actually read at home.

Consider how what I say communicates my values and beliefs about this student and about reading.

What happens here that you think is significant?

How is language important in this conference? Where?