

Using Book Clubs: A Process

1. Start with a Unit Plan

- **Decide on a unit/topic with specific objective and meeting CCSS standards**
- **Gather books & develop lesson plans around the unit/topic**

2. The Interactive Read Aloud

Read aloud interactively using the corresponding objectives:

- **Review key understandings of book**
- **Stop at certain points to elicit student's analysis citing textual evidence**
- **Support, assess, scaffold, and extend learning**

3. Prepare for Book Clubs

- **Introduce each Student Book Club**
- **Scaffold younger (or new to the process) readers to read and think about their books**
- **Remind older students (or experienced with the process) to prepare for club**

4. Facilitate the Book Clubs

- **Meet with each book club, one at a time**
- **Target essential vocabulary and prompt rich discussion**
- **Encourage students to build on thinking of their peers and support their own thinking through textual evidence**
- **Connect titles in unit noting key understandings as well as differences**

5. Unit Wrap-Up

- **Connect book club books to read aloud books**
- **Review essential understanding of unit of study**
- **Invite further academic investigation through collaborative unit projects**

Book Clubs

Book Clubs are small, peer-led discussion groups (3-6 per group) who have chosen to read the same story, poem, article, or book.

- While reading each group-assigned portion of the text (either in or outside of class), each member makes notes to help them contribute to the discussion
- Everyone comes to the group with ideas to share.
- Groups follow a reading and meeting schedule, holding periodic discussions throughout the book.
- When they finish a book, the circle members share highlights of their reading with the wider community

Book Clubs give readers the opportunity to take ownership of the reading process as they come together in a community to read, discuss, and share a book.

- In some models, roles are assigned to members of the group to help the group function more productively and remain focused on the chosen book or related topic.
- With or without roles, students use their experiences to create meaning, make connections, and have lively discussions about the book.
- The emphasis is on thoughtful dialogue that allows students to sharpen their communication and critical thinking skills by coming together with peers to respond to literature.

Keys to Success:

1. Students “choose” their own reading materials (different groups read different books).
2. Small, temporary groups are formed based on book choice.
3. Groups meet on a regular, predictable schedule to discuss their reading.
4. Discussion structures and strategies are modeled and practiced with students to observe what book club participation “looks like” (guided practice of strategies after read aloud models).
5. Students use notes and/or drawings to guide both their reading and discussion.
6. The teacher is a facilitator, not a group member or instructor.
7. The teacher confers with groups and individuals, taking note of progress and challenges to determine next steps needed to enhance reading skills.
8. When books are finished, readers share with their classmates before new groups form around new reading choices.

Teacher Roles:

- Select topics, books and/or members for the groups.
- Determine the roles to be used depending upon the age and ability of the students as well as the reading selections. (role sheets for initial training only)
- Assign reading to be completed by the groups inside or outside of class, including meeting dates.
- Plan and teach strategy lessons.
- Help students prepare for discussions and/or roles in their group (fishbowl).
- Act as a facilitator for the groups

Student Roles:

Many teachers using book clubs assign students specific roles to provide a degree of structure to the groups, at least at the beginning stages of group formation. These roles are rotating, with students eventually taking a turn at each role as they proceed through several books or groups.

- Discussion Director - writes questions to guide thoughtful group discussion and keeps group on task
- Connection Maker - writes own and group members' connections (Text-to-Text, Self, or World)
- Summarizer - writes a B-M-E summary, revises with group input & creates final summary
- Word Wizard - searches for unusual word choice/description *or* defines words the group may not know
- Passage Picker - selects and rereads important passages or descriptive imagery sections to the group and discusses author's style.

Assessment:

Overall success of literature discussion groups can be measured by the depth and quality of students' response to literature as seen in their written responses and their conversations about books.

There are several general categories of measures:

- Observations/anecdotal records
- Checklists
- Interviews/conferences
- Portfolios/work samples
- Performance assessment (culminating projects)
- Classroom tests

Response Journals (Readers' Notebooks):

Response logs can serve to enhance and prepare students for the work they do in groups, and also to document their progress as they become thoughtful readers. Reading response logs show evidence of student learning throughout the year and can be a major part of a student's reading and writing portfolio.

- Students record thoughts, questions, ideas, and other responses to the literature they are reading.
- Response logs can be very useful before, during, and after meeting in groups.
- While students are reading, they record thoughts or questions they want to remember to bring up during discussion with their group.
- They may jot down an important quote or excerpt that they want to point out to their group, or record a key insight that occurs to them as they read.
- During group meetings, students will refer to their response logs to jog their memory, and they might even quickly jot down an important idea that is brought up in the discussion.
- After the meeting, students can have more time to write about how the group's discussion went, what role they took on and how they think they did, and any new insights that might have come up as a result of the group's interaction.