Reading Foundations and Language Standards:

Independent Reading: The Importance of a Volume of Reading and Sample Plans

Overview

In the Common Core era, students are challenged to read complex texts to build content knowledge, literacy skills, and academic vocabulary. Each NYS Grades 3–8 ELA module includes one or more “central” texts—complex texts that students work with in class and for homework, with support from the teacher and peers. It is important that all students have access to, and support with, reading text at the appropriate level of complexity for their grade level.

However, students also need a “volume of reading,” which means just what it sounds like it means: any ways to get students reading a lot of text (including text beyond the texts central to a module and in addition to texts that students read during school hours or with support). This volume of reading helps students build important world knowledge and acquire additional vocabulary, both of which are critical for reading comprehension.

**What Influences Expeditionary Learning’s Approach**

* The Common Core vision of what it means to be college and career ready as readers
* The research base on reading instruction
* Recognition that reading is a skill that demands ongoing practice to develop proficiency
* Understanding the importance of offering students a variety of texts and purposes for reading

**Volume of Reading**

Students need to read both complex text and a lot of text. According to Adams (2009), “To grow, our students must read lots, and more specifically they must read lots of ‘complex’ texts—texts that offer them new language, new knowledge, and new modes of thought” (p.182, cited in CCSS Appendix A). If students are to be college and career ready, which requires the ability to read complex texts, they must be saturated with language and given opportunities to practice challenging reading. According to Allen (2009), “Reading is like every other human activity in that the amount of practice really matters, especially the amount of reading done while reading proficiency is being developed” (p. 60). Unfortunately, for many students who do not experience successful reading practice, they lose their enthusiasm for reading, which in turn leads to decreased motivation to practice and ultimately develop reading proficiency. Ensuring that students are given ample opportunities to read a variety of materials in a variety of ways increases their motivation because teachers can tap into students’ interests and give students enough practice for reading proficiency to develop.

To give students the amount of reading practice necessary, we should provide reading opportunities that are varied in purpose and type of text. Reading development does not occur in a linear fashion, and students’ reading proficiency occurs at different rates (Common Core Learning Standards, n.d.). Students need opportunities to be challenged while reading, as well as opportunities to read texts that provide for easy fluent reading (CCLS, n.d.). These experiences can occur within a given topic of study (e.g., third grade Module 2A about frogs’ adaptation or seventh grade Module 1 about the Second Sudanese Civil War). They also may occur during independent reading when students choose books based on personal interest. The ELA modules’ recommended reading lists offer students a variety of options to choose from.

Overview

**Reading for Research**

According to the New York State P–12 Common Core Learning Standards (n.d.), “To be ready for college, workforce training, and life in a technological society, students need the ability to gather, comprehend, evaluate, synthesize, and report on information and ideas, to conduct original research in order to answer questions or solve problems, and to analyze and create a high volume and extensive range of print and nonprint texts in media forms old and new” (p. 2). Research skills not only are required to be successful in a technological society, but also are an excellent opportunity to engage students in reading a variety of resources. Research on a topic also develops students’ knowledge about words, which increases reading proficiency. “Every concept—simple or complex, concrete or abstract—is learned in terms of its similarities, differences, and relationships with other concepts with which we are familiar” (Adams, 2011, p. 3). Students complete several short research projects throughout the modules.

When students are engaged in “research reading,” they typically are reading many texts about the same or related subjects. This volume of reading builds students’ knowledge about a specific topic. In addition, original research reading gives students an opportunity to pursue their interests and learn in-depth information, which builds background knowledge, word knowledge, and confidence in reading. Library media specialists play a critical role in helping students to complete both assigned research projects and independent research related to students’ personal interests.

**Reading for Pleasure**

According to Clark & Rumbold (2006), “Reading for pleasure refers to reading that we do of our own free will anticipating the satisfaction that we will get from the act of reading. It also refers to reading that, having begun at someone else’s request, we continue because we are interested in it” (p. 6). The Common Core has brought about a great deal of focus to the cognitive aspects of reading: word recognition and comprehension of complex texts. It is important for us to keep in mind, however, that even if students can read, it does not mean they will choose to do so.

Reading for pleasure is not the same as reading complex text that is required reading. Both types of reading play a pivotal role in students’ literacy lives and help foster the “volume of reading” so clearly called for in the Common Core Learning Standards. Reading for pleasure is crucial to promote student engagement and achievement. It is a key strategy for building lifelong readers and allows for developing readers to learn about their own reading likes and dislikes as they construct their reading identities. Independent reading is an opportunity for students to enlarge their world and find relevance. The authors of the Common Core note that students “need the satisfaction of easy, fluent reading for which the standards allow” (Appendix A, n.d.). This of course must include additional texts on the topic of study, which are offered in the ELA modules’ recommended reading lists. The authors of the Common Core also clearly affirm and recognize the merits of allowing students to choose books on topics of their personal interest, noting that those books are likely to bridge a vast range of complexity.

Allowing students to choose texts for independent reading helps them discover what they want to read, as well as to uncover new knowledge and connect with their world. Teachers and library media specialists can play a vital role in fostering a rich reading life for all students.

Overview

Teachers often are concerned about holding students accountable for independent reading. There are endless ways to track independent reading requirements, but the most successful ways include placing the responsibility on the student. Creating a plan for launching independent reading that includes clear class routines, goal setting, and systems for accountability and student ownership creates a culture of reading in the classroom and the school that will promote students’ literacy development. For specific recommendations, see companion documents ***Launching Independent Reading in Grades 6–8: Sample Plan*** and ***Launching Independent Reading in Grades 3–5: Sample Plan***.These plans are designed to enhance and extend the strong programs many teachers and schools already have in place.

**Millennial Readers**

Research on the millennial generation indicates that our students are both technologically savvy and self-savvy. They often define the merits of activities based upon a quick cost-benefit analysis. That is the essence of the *relevance* promoted by the Common Core. Traditionally, when students are assigned independent reading projects, they are asked low-level questions that can be located through a simple search online. We need to offer students both rigor and relevance. When rigor is packaged with relevance, it increases student motivation. This can be accomplished through the questions students are asked about their independent reading text. Imagine that students have been asked to choose and independently read a biography. Below are some examples of questions that could be used to engage the millennial adolescent reader, and to increase the rigor of a task such as a biography report:

What is the everlasting footprint that your person left behind? Use evidence from the text to support your reasoning.

Would your person be a good person to nominate to a hall of fame? Use evidence from the text to support your response.

**Recommended Texts**

Each Expeditionary Learning English language arts module includes a list of recommended texts in a broad complexity range for each unit. These books can be used for independent research on a given topic, or students may choose them to read for pleasure during independent reading time at school and at home. They may also be used for small group instruction. Because these book choices have already been identified as aligned to the topic, they are a good starting place for helping students to select books and increase their volume of reading.

**Other Resources**

Your library is an amazing and often underutilized asset to promote a volume of reading. There are a number of reading programs across the country that encourage classrooms to build “libraries” for convenient student reading choices. These classroom libraries play a positive role in developing lifelong readers. Yet they sometimes have limited choices for students. To support the individuality of each student, encourage students to access the thousands of titles and choices that can be found in the local and school libraries. School librarians are also often an underutilized asset to promote a volume of reading for students. Contact your school librarian for support in this area, as he or she is often eager to help.

Sample Plans for Launching Independent Reading in Grades 3-5

The lessons in the NYS modules for grades 3-5 are designed to focus on teaching students to read, write, and speak about complex texts. The instruction outlined in the modules provides a 60-minute block of time each day to teach students reading and writing standards. However, it is assumed that teachers will provide additional time within their literacy blocks for supporting students in reading a high volume of text at the independent reading level.

The purpose of this document is to serve as a resource to elementary school English Language Arts teachers in launching and sustaining a strong independent reading program. Many teachers already have robust plans in place: Please view this document as a resource to enhance or extend your existing work.

Creating a plan for supporting your students in independent reading is context-specific and varies greatly based on a school’s schedule and staffing model. If your current routines are working, it probably makes sense to stick with them, though you may find some interesting ideas in these documents. If you do use the plans here, there are a number of choices to be made about what structures and routines will work best for you and your students.

Guiding principles:

Students need to learn the skill of selecting, evaluating and comparing books that interest them and are at an appropriate independent reading level. Teachers need to teach the skill of selecting, evaluating, and comparing texts, and then check in to see how students are doing through a structure for independent reading. This skill aligns with literature standards NYSP12 CCLS RL.9 and RL.11, but is equally important when students are selecting and evaluating informational text. Since RL.9 specifically requires students to read a volume of text at their independent reading level, this standard is best taught through a structure for independent reading.

Students need accountability for their reading, both on a weekly basis and when they finish a book. This accountability comes from reading logs as well as from conversations with teachers and peers about what they are reading.

Social interactions energize independent reading. This is the principle behind book clubs for adults, and it is equally true—if not more so—for young adolescent readers. If possible, have students select independent reading books in pairs or trios, so that they can talk about their book with another student. Also, if students begin to buzz about a particular book or series, look for that, build on it, nurture it—this will do more than anything else to get kids actually reading.

Launching a successful independent reading program takes class time—to teach it, to check in, to motivate students, and for students to actually read. Struggling readers, in particular, need time at school to read. And many students of all reading abilities may not have a quiet space at home for reading, or support from adults beyond the school community. For these lessons to be successful, find additional time in the school day (homeroom, DARE time) for students to read independently.

Sample Plans for Launching Independent Reading in Grades 3-5

Logistical Considerations

**Launching Independent Reading:** The launch of independent reading will vary by school and teacher. The plan below describes a series of lessons to launch independent reading. This plan could be implemented as a stand-alone week of English Language Arts class or could be interspersed (a day at a time) into the curriculum. The NYS curriculum “Module Overview” and “Unit Overview” documents signal to teachers the point in the module/unit by which the launch process needs to be complete. Teachers should pace and time the launch based on what works best for their students and school schedule.

NOTE: Use or adapt the Goldilocks handout (in supporting materials at the end of this document), which describes one useful way to help students learn to self-select books at an appropriate level of challenge for their interests and reading ability. Consider whether you want to extend students’ choice to include a wider range of reading materials than just “books”: magazines, newspapers, manuals, etc.

**Maintaining Independent Reading**: Within each NYS modules for grades 3-5, teachers are given suggestions for when students should review recommended texts related to the module topic and select texts for independent reading. Lessons in the modules also include time during homework for students to read these texts independently. However, since the module lessons are just for one hour of literacy instruction per day, it is assumed that teachers will provide additional time to launch and support independent reading beyond that one-hour time frame. This could be done during an extended literacy block or at some other point in the school day. It is also assumed that students may read texts related to the module topics AND other texts on topics of their choice.

NOTE: Use or adapt the Suggested Lessons for Launching Independent Reading (see below).

**Communicating with Parents about Independent Reading**: Consider how you will communicate with parents about independent reading, as their support will be important. Although it can be difficult to have students get a reading record signed every night, consider sending home completed reading logs (after four check-ins—so every two to four weeks) for parent signatures, and consider how to routinely follow up with parents whose students are not completing the assigned independent reading.

NOTE: Use or adapt the Sample Letter about Accountable Independent Reading (in supporting materials at the end of this document) to send home with students.

**Student Goal-Setting and Accountability**: You will need to decide what sorts of goals you want students to set for their reading and how often (weekly or twice weekly) you will check in with students about their reading. The launch sequence described below includes twice- weekly check-ins on progress as the independent reading routines are getting established. Based on the needs of your students, you could continue that pattern or scale back to weekly check-ins. (Some teachers wish to have students record their reading every day; you could supplement the materials below with such a record.)

NOTE: Use or adapt the Reading Log (in supporting materials at the end of this document), which has a goal-setting chart, plot/topic, and Reviewer’s Notes).

**Publishing Book Reviews for Authentic Audiences**: Students benefit from having an authentic audience (beyond their teacher) with whom to share their learning and opinions about the books they read. Peers are a great audience: Having students share reviews with one another has the additional benefit of adding to the “buzz” about books their classmates might like. Consider the various options for “publishing” reviews, and select the one that works for their situation (e.g., simple reviews on index cards to post on a bulletin board, a class book blog, goodreads, or student-prepared book talks). Having students write or deliver oral reviews of their books has the added benefit of addressing standards related to written argument (W.1) or public speaking (SL.4).

NOTE: Use or adapt the Reader’s Review (in supporting materials at the end of this document).

Sample Plans for Launching Independent Reading in Grades 3-5

**Conferring during Independent Reading**: Conferring one-on-one with students about what they are reading serves both instructional and accountability purposes: A conversation with you about reading will create more accountability for a student about her reading than a log she turns in. Conferring is a rich teaching practice and allows you to build strong relationships with your students as readers and as people. The heart of conferring is simply to ask students, “How’s it going?” “What are you learning?” and “What are you figuring out as a reader?”

While students are reading silently in class, circulate to observe and confer. Notice patterns in the types of books students are choosing, and in how well they are sustaining engagement with their chosen book. Confer with students to ensure that they are reading books that are on an appropriate reading level and to support them in making meaning of those books. Conferring can include the following:

* Asking a student to read a paragraph or two out loud, noting any miscues (if there are a lot, the book might be too hard)
* Asking a student to talk about what is happening in that excerpt, stating simply: “Tell me more!”
* Helping students use “fix-up” strategies when they get confused (e.g., rereading, visualizing, using context clues to determine unknown vocabulary)
* Asking students what they like/don’t like about a book and why (push them to cite evidence!)
* Suggesting titles that the student might find interesting and appropriate

Suggested Lessons for Launching Independent Reading

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Lesson***Note: There should be several class days between some of these lessons* | **Agenda** | **Materials**  |
| 1: Introducing Independent Reading (25 minutes) | 1. Set purpose: Reading just-right books builds reading skills; learning to choose books that you like will enrich your life.
2. Goldilocks lesson (see supporting materials): How to choose a just-right book.
	* Teacher explains.
	* Teacher gives each student two short excerpts with which to practice the Goldilocks routine.
 | Goldilocks handoutTwo short text excerpts (one easy, one hard) |
| 2: Choosing “Just Right” Books: The Goldilocks Principle (45 minutes) | 1. Book frenzy: Display lots of books for students to look at, ideally including some of the titles from the recommended reading lists for the NYS modules; consider brief teacher book talks of those titles related to the module.
2. Students have time to browse the books. Make this fun!
3. Each student selects a few titles and “test drives” them using the **Goldilocks handout**.
4. Students make selections (encourage partner selections, but each student needs his/her own copy of the text) and start reading silently. Teacher confers, focusing on students who at first glance appear to have books at inappropriate levels.
 | BooksGoldilocks handout |

Suggested Lessons for Launching Independent Reading

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| 3: Setting Goals and Learning to Use Reading Logs (45 minutes) | 1. Goal-setting lesson
	* Students read for 10 minutes and see how many pages they have read. Note that students read at different paces, which is fine. The goal is not speed but comprehension.
	* Teacher sets time expectation for reading per week (around 2 hours minimum, assuming little other ELA homework).
	* Teacher models how to complete the goal-setting section of the **Reading Log**. Students then complete their own goal-setting, with the time expectations in mind. (Eventually, goal will be set weekly or twice weekly; for now, have students set a goal you will check in a few days).
2. Teacher shows example and non-example reading log: the plot tracker and review notes parts. Ask students:
	* Which is stronger? How can you tell?
	* What should you do on this log? What should you not do?
3. 3. Students read silently. While students read, teacher continues to confer to make sure all students are reading books at the appropriate level.
4. Send **Letter about Accountable Independent Reading** (in English and Spanish) home for signature from an adult.

Homework: Students read individually and complete the reading log. | Reading logExemplar and non-exemplar reading log entriesLetter about Accountable Independent Reading (in English and Spanish) |
|  | A FEW DAYS OF CLASS GO BY |  |

Suggested Lessons for Launching Independent Reading

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| 4: Checking in on Reading Logs and Book Selections; Launching Partner Conversations (45 minutes) | 1. Check in with students:
	* Did you meet your reading goal? If so, how did you do it? If not, why not?
	* Set next goal. (Again, ultimately this will just happen weekly. But at the start, set goals for just two or three days at a time.)
	* Do something to celebrate/build class culture: Reading all-stars? Play a song?
2. Check reading logs: Teacher displays model reading logs (from Lesson 3) and list of criteria students generated. Students assess their own reading log entry:
	* What should I keep the same?
	* What should I change next time? Why?
3. Mini lesson: Can you abandon a book?
	* Teacher models when and why it makes sense to abandon a book.
	* Teacher gets a list of students who want to talk about changing books; plan to confer with these students.
4. Partner conversation about book

Model this first (invite a student volunteer to model with you in front of the class).Pair students who are reading the same book (ideal). Or pair students by some other criteria; the goal is just to get students talking with one another about what they are reading. Options:* + Each student finds a paragraph he/she likes and reads it out loud and explains it.
	+ Students share one point from their “Reviewer’s Notes” part of the reading log to share.
	+ After the first round, teacher notices and names positive pair conversations.
	+ Whole class debrief: Who learned something from their partner? Who heard about an interesting book today?
 | Reading LogExemplar Reading Log entry and list of criteria (from Lesson 3)Questions/guide posted for partner conversation |

Suggested Lessons for Launching Independent Reading

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| --- | --- | --- |
|  | A FEW MORE DAYS GO BY |  |
| 5: Weekly Check-in(20–25 minutes) | Weekly check-in:* + Did you meet your reading goal? If so, how did you do it? If not, why not?
	+ Set next goal (at this point, move to a regular schedule—so set a twice weekly or weekly goal).
	+ Partner conversation.

Looking ahead: * + Teacher briefly shares **Model Reader’s Review** so students can keep that in mind as they read.

Feedback: Teacher collects reading logs to give feedback. (Plan to return students’ logs the next day and set aside a few minutes for students to process feedback.) | Teacher-developed model reader’s review (in the form your class will use to “publish” it: index cards, blog, goodreads, or notes for book talks) |
| 6: Feedback on Reading Logs (20–25 minutes) | Teacher returns logs and gives students time to process feedback.Silent reading time: Teacher confers with any students whose logs indicate concerns.* + Need help with aspects of the reading log?
	+ Need help choosing a more appropriate book?
	+ Need help structuring in sufficient reading time?
 |  |
|  | END OF LAUNCH |  |

Maintaining Independent Reading Routines

In each NYS curriculum module, there is some point in Units 1 or 2 when students are introduced to recommended texts for independent reading. These texts are then incorporated to the homework routine of the modules. However, teachers should incorporate time for maintaining independent reading by continuing the cycle of goal setting, check-in, and feedback during their literacy blocks throughout the year; time for this is not included in the 60-minute lessons in the modules.

Within the NYS Curriculum modules, students are NOT expected to be reading a book on their own while they are also reading the central/extended whole class text for a given module. Often independent reading is launched about halfway through a module, when students are done with this central text.

**Weekly or twice weekly: Check in on reading**

1. Check in on goals/set new goals
2. Partner conversation
3. Possible additions:
	* Meet in small groups to do informal book talks (I am reading … which is about … I would/would not recommend it because …)
	* If students are mostly reading texts related to the module, have them meet in pairs or threes to make connections between their texts and the module. Share out these connections or post them somewhere in the classroom.
	* Teacher-facilitated whole group share/student-led book talks.
	* Reading days: Snacks or hot chocolate and books—an extended period of time to read in class and build stamina and community.

**End of unit/module: Reviewing time**

Note: Use professional judgment about how often students write book reviews (For every book? Once per unit? Once per module?) and whether this writing happens as homework or with support during class.

One full class period/module:

1. Teacher shares exemplar book review and talks about venue/timing of publication. (Publication venue will vary by teacher and school, but it is important that students’ reviews are published in some way for an authentic audience beyond the teacher.)
2. Students write and “publish” reviews.

This could be followed on subsequent days by some formal book talks by students (all or selected).

Teaching RL.9 Through Independent Reading: Comparing Multiple Pieces of Literature

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| **Standard RL.9 by Grade** | **What to Notice**  | **Practical Implications/Recommendations**  |
| RL.3.9. Compare and contrast the themes, settings, and plots of stories written by the same author about the same or similar characters (e.g., in books from a series). | This standard requires that students read several books with the same or similar characters, as in a series. | * Prepare students to meet this standard by ensuring that they find a character they enjoy reading about and read more than one book with this character.
* Include popular series in your classroom library or encourage students to read series in the school library.
* After students have read several texts, teach them to compare the text using the supporting material at the end of this document.
 |
| RL.4.9. Compare and contrast the treatment of similar themes and topics (e.g., opposition of good and evil) and patterns of events (e.g., the quest) in stories, myths, and traditional literature from different cultures. | This standard requires that students read several books/stories from different cultures with similar themes. | * Prepare students to meet this standard by ensuring that your classroom library has texts from various cultures.
* Compile a reading list of mythology from different cultures and require students to select several books from this list to read and compare during a cycle of independent reading.
* After students have read several texts, teach them to compare the texts using the supporting material at the end of this document.
 |
| RL.5.9. Compare and contrast stories in the same genre (e.g., mysteries and adventure stories) on their approaches to similar themes and topics. | This standard requires that students read several books in the same genre. | * Organize part of your classroom library in to genres.
* Compile a list of books divided by genre and ask students to select several books from a genre of their choice to read and compare during a cycle of independent reading.
* After students have read several texts, teach them to compare the texts using the supporting material at the end of this document.
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Choosing Books Using the Goldilocks Rule[[1]](#footnote-1)

**In order to become a better reader, you need to spend lots of time independently reading books that are NOT TOO EASY and NOT TOO HARD …just like Goldilocks.**

1. The Five Finger Rule- Are there many words you don’t know?
* Read the first two pages. Every time you come to a word that don’t know, put one finger up.
* If you get to five fingers before the end of the first page, STOP! This book is TOO HARD to read on your own. Choose another book and start this step again.
1. The Page 2 Check- Can you explain what happened to someone else?
* Read the first two pages. At the end of the second page, stop and ask yourself: Can I explain what happened so far? Does what I read make sense to me?
* If the answer is no, STOP! This book is TOO HARD to read on your own. Choose another book and start again with step one.
1. The Page 5 Check- Does the book make you think?
* Read the first five pages. At the end of the fifth page, stop and ask yourself: “Is this book making me think?” Did you reread or make a connection to help you understand what you read?
* If not… STOP! This book is TOO EASY. You should choose a more challenging book to help you become a better reader.

Choosing Books Using the Goldilocks Rule: PRACTICE!

**The 5 Finger Rule:**

1. How many words that you didn’t know were on the first 2 pages? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. The Page 2 Check: Explain what happened in the story so far:

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1. The Page 5 Check: Circle YES or NO
* Are you pausing to think as you read? YES or NO
* Did you stop to reread? YES or NO
* Did you make a connection to something else you have read or learned to help you understand the text? YES or NO

**So, is this a good book for you?**

\_\_\_\_ No, because it’s too hard.

\_\_\_\_ No, because it’s too easy.

\_\_\_\_ Yes, because it’s just right.

\_\_\_\_ No, because it’s just right—but I’m not interested!

Sample Letter about Accountable Independent Reading[[2]](#footnote-2)

Dear Parent or Guardian:

Our school values reading. Because we value reading, we require our students to read independently texts that they choose. We monitor student reading progress, make recommendations about new things students might like to try, and give students an opportunity to interact and to develop reading skills through independent reading. We both support and hold students accountable for this reading.

Accountable Independent Reading has five purposes:

1. To engage and motivate students in learning things they care about
2. To promote students’ love of reading
3. To build students’ vocabulary: reading a lot exposes students to new words and ideas
4. To build students’ knowledge about the world (through both fiction and informational text)
5. To build students’ reading “stamina”: their ability to read harder texts for longer periods of time

We encourage students to choose texts and topics that interest them. They also should choose books that are at a comfortable or challenging reading level.

Adults have a wide range of beliefs and values about what is appropriate for students to read. The books available for reading in the school often come from recommendations and library lists of good books. Some books also relate directly to the content students are studying together in class. Individual teachers choose books that they are comfortable sharing. We reserve the right to set parameters for our classrooms.

We leave the decision of choosing what is appropriate for you and your child to you. We encourage you to be aware of what your child chooses to read. Some parents or guardians may choose to read a text before they let their child read it. This can help you monitor what your child is reading, and it can be a great opportunity for discussion! You may also contact librarians for summaries and reviews or search online to learn more about a book your child is interested in. If your child is reading a text that does not fit with your family values for reading, certainly that text can be changed.

We have set up a system in which students set goals for their reading, keep a reading log (about the text and their own opinions about the book), and write reviews of the texts they are reading. Ask your student to share these documents with you. Be sure you know your child’s reading goals so you can support him/her on staying on track, celebrating successes, and problem-solving as needed (including knowing when to abandon a book and choose one that is a better fit).

Juvenile Literature Resources and Scholastic websites have great links to book lists, advice for encouraging reluctant readers, parent guides to popular novels, and other resources for parents.

We hope independent reading will be enjoyable for your student and lead to a lifetime of reading.

Sincerely,

My Reading Log

|  |
| --- |
| Name: |
| Date: |

**MY READING GOALS**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Date of next reading check-in** | **Goal: Write the book title and pages to be read.** ***\**Example: *Charlotte’s Web* pages 10-25** | **Did I meet my goal? Why or why not?** |
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Plot/Topic Tracker and Reviewer’s Notes

Please complete one entry for each reading check-in. An entry is likely to be about multiple chapters of your book. For Reviewer’s Notes: Pick one of the following to respond to:

* The most interesting/funniest/scariest scene was … because …
* A connection between this part of the book and what we are studying at school is … which helps me understand that …
* This part of the book reminds me of (other text, movie) because … which helps me understand that …
* A character I like/don’t like is … because …
* Something I learned about the world by reading this book is … which seems important because …

| **Title and pages this entry refers to** | **Plot/Topic Tracker***Briefly explain* *What happened in the book (fiction)**What topic (informational text)* | **Reviewer’s Notes***Share what you are thinking using one of the notes from above.* |
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Reader’s Review

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| --- |
| Name: |
| Date: |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Title of book/magazine etc. |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Author |  |

**Directions:** Use the prompts below to write a review of the text you have been reading independently. You can write it on this form or on a separate sheet of notebook paper. Remember that you are writing for other students, to help them decide whether or not to read this text.

1. Share the title, author, and a summary of the text. (If the text was fiction, include information about setting, plot, character, and theme. But don’t give away the end of the book. If the text was informational text, include information about the topic, main idea, and key details.)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| I read |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| by |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| This text was about |  |

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Reader’s Review

1. Share what you noticed about how the text was written (For both fiction and informational text, describe how the text is organized, and things you noticed about the author’s word choice, use of language, or writing style.)

What I noticed about how the text was written was:

|  |
| --- |
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1. Share what reading this text made you think about/wonder (Choose one or two entries from the Reviewer’s Notes section of your Reading Log to explain here.)

This text made me think about/wonder:

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1. Rate this text and explain your rating. Below circle the number of stars in how you would give this text with 1 being the lowest rating and 5 being the highest rating. Explain your rating using details from the text.

I would give this book 1/2/3/4 stars because:

|  |
| --- |
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Text Comparison

|  |
| --- |
| Name: |
| Date: |

**Directions:**

1. Identify what you will compare about the texts.
2. Record the titles and authors of the two texts you are comparing.
3. Name similarities in the middle of the diagram and differences on either side.
4. Write a paragraph explaining what similarities and differences are in your comparison.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| This is a comparison of |  | from the texts named below: |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | vs. |  |

 **First Text** (Title and Author) **Second Text** (Title and Author)

What I noticed when comparing these texts:

|  |
| --- |
|  |
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|  |

References

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Allington, R. L. (2009). *What really matters in response to intervention: Research-based designs*. Boston, MA: Pearson.

‘Clark, K., & Rumbold, K. (2006). *Reading for pleasure: A research overview* [Scholarly project]. Retrieved from Reading for pleasure: A research overview

*Common core state standards for English language arts & literacy in history/social students, science, and technical subjects: Appendix A: Research supporting key elements of the standards glossary of key terms* [Scholarly project]. (n.d.). In *Common Core State Standards Initiative*. Retrieved from http://www.corestandards.org/ela-literacy

1. Modified for elementary from a version developed by Jody Peltason while she was teaching at Cesar Chavez Public High School in Washington, D.C. Used with permission. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Based on the work of Freya Mercer and English teachers in Central Square School District, Central Square NY. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)