Book Clubs

Book clubs are groups of readers who get together regularly to discuss books. Book clubs can offer a positive, social, reading experience for students, which can increase motivation for reading.

How-To Steps

1. Decide how often the group should meet. It might be weekly, especially for young students reading short books. Older students might choose a number of chapters to read each week, and meet weekly to discuss them, or they might agree to meet monthly and finish the book before the meeting.
2. Provide a variety of titles for children to choose from. Because it's unlikely that the whole group will always agree on the same book, you may need to have the group narrow the decision down to two or three books and rotate the final decision among group members.
3. Have students lead a book discussion. Provide questions to jump start the discussions:
    - What was your favorite part and why?
    - How would you feel if you were…?
    - What words would you use to describe…?
    - Did you expect the book to end differently? If so, how?
    - Which character did you find most interesting?
    - What surprised you as you read?
    - What questions do you have after finishing this book?
    - What did you learn about?
4. Have students keep track of the books they've read.

Tips for Implementing Book Club

- Book club should not feel like school. Don't assign questions or worksheets to complete. Children should simply read an agreed-upon book and be ready to talk about it with peers.
- When it is time to select a book, offer choices that vary by interest, genre and difficulty.
- Small groups of three to six students work well because they result in more students being involved in engaging discussion. This may happen naturally as students gravitate to different books to read.

Extensions to Book Discussions

- **Act it out.** Have everyone choose a favorite character and act out a scene from the chapter they are reading.
- **Write it out**. Have everyone choose two characters from the story and write a scene that could take place between those characters. After writing, they might act out the scenes.
- **Illustrate it.** Have everyone choose a scene to draw using the art supplies.
- **Review it.** Have students write a book review and rate each book using a star system. Create a chart for them keep track of the books they like best. Show them models of book reviews from newspapers or online book lists.

Resources/Links

- Planet Book Club. This website explains the methodology of book clubs, offers examples of book club materials and has interactive components for students and teachers.
- Literature Circles Resource Center. This site has links to many sources for book lists, book reviews and instruction with children's literature.

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