



More Literacy Activity Ideas

Here, sorted by school level, are more ideas for literacy activities to do with your students. Some have literacy embedded and others present literacy explicitly. *Explicit activities* focus primarily on direct teaching of concepts and skills. *Embedded activities* provide opportunities to practice literacy skills or concepts in the context of another academic activity, academic enrichment activity or routine.

Elementary Activities

Storybook Circle: Each day, break students into small groups and read a book to them. As reading skills improve throughout the year, have students take the lead and ask them to practice reading with emotion and focus on developing fluency. Hold a brief book discussion after each session.

Activity Type: Explicit

WebQuest: Each week, develop an online “scavenger hunt” where students explore a topic of interest (e.g., something they are learning about during the school day) and decipher clues, follow directions, and conduct research to learn more about the topic. Emphasize appropriate research skills, digital literacy and safety, and reading along the way. Have students create a visual display to present their findings.

Activity Type: Embedded

Sight Word Memory: Using sight word memory cards, have students in pairs or groups of three play a game of “memory” or “concentration” by trying to find a match. Students should say each word out loud when flipping over the cards. Assign groups by skill level.

Activity Type: Explicit

Find a “Just Right” Book: Model for students how to choose a “just right” book using the five-finger method demonstrated [here](#). Have students use this method to choose books for independent reading time.

Activity Type: Explicit

Weekend Update: On Monday or Friday afternoons, ask a few students to talk about their weekend activities — either what they did or will do. Have students who won’t share out loud write a few sentences or draw a quick picture of their answer.

Activity Type: Embedded





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Middle School Activities

Family Reading Night: Hold a Family Reading Night, open to all students and their families, at regular intervals. Ask students and families to share a book as they picnic, go on a library tour or engage in fun reading games. Consider providing books that students can choose to take home with them and keep.

Activity Type: Explicit

Debate Club: Every two weeks, introduce a new hot topic or identify a topic of interest that students are learning about in school or through another activity. Split students into two groups, for and against, and give them one week to research the topic and hone their arguments. Have students engage in proper debate the following week. Allow time for debriefing and reflection immediately after the debate or on the next day.

Activity Type: Embedded

Life as a Pilgrim: In the fall, read aloud or have students read historical fiction that depicts life as a Pilgrim at Plymouth Colony. After reading the book, have students find facts about the size of the Mayflower and measure an outline in an outdoor area.

Activity Type: Embedded

Find a “Just Right” Book: Ask students to choose a “just right” book using the five-finger method demonstrated [here](#). Model the method for any students who have trouble identifying an appropriate book.

Activity Type: Explicit

Share a Read Aloud: Have students record themselves reading stories aloud. Share the videos or audio recordings with students’ families so they can enjoy the stories. Make sure to follow the program protocols for using technology.

Activity Type: Explicit



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High School Activities

Spoken Word: Have students perform poems they have selected or written themselves. Try introducing a different theme each week to use as the starting point around which students select or create a piece to perform. Allow time during the week for students to craft their performance, and work on their public speaking and performance skills. Consider having the students perform at a local poetry night, or set one up specifically for the program.

Activity Type: Explicit

Program Marketing Team: Have students work with program leaders to design effective ways to market the program and program activities. Tasks can include creating visual displays, flyers, posters and other marketing aids. Students can also craft messages and images for the program social media channels. Make sure to monitor the students' message for appropriate content.

Activity Type: Embedded

Writer's Workshop: While reading both fiction and nonfiction texts, have students provide written responses to questions about specific literary elements. Later, have students work with the instructor or in small groups to discuss and refine their written responses.

Activity Type: Explicit





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Family (Adult and Student) Activities

Activity Description: Night at the Museum

Students choose a famous person or event from history. For several weeks, students read about their figure or event. The culminating family night is a “wax museum” where students dress as their character and families and community partners stop at the “exhibits” to learn about each person or event. This activity can easily be modified into another theme, such as “Holidays Around the World” wax museum, “Inventors” wax museum or something else.

Activity Type: Embedded

Activity Description: Movie Night

Host an outdoor movie night. Have a partner provide food, such as hotdogs and hamburgers. After the movie, facilitate a conversation about the movie. Make sure everyone has a chance to speak. Add to the fun by offering books as door prizes. You could also prepare vocabulary Bingo cards in advance and have participants listen for the words on their cards and call out if they get Bingo!

Activity Type: Explicit

Activity Description: Story Sleuths

Set up as a mystery theme, families complete a scavenger hunt throughout the building. At each stopping point, they have an opportunity to read together or participate in a literacy-themed activity. Examples of stations include reading together with detective spyglasses, working as a family team to find words in text during “sight word bingo” and inviting the community library to sign up families for library cards. At each station, you can also place follow-up questions about the plot of the story.

Activity Type: Explicit

Activity Description: Family Dinner Night

Host a potluck or partner-provided dinner to motivate attendance. As dinner entertainment, have someone — perhaps a local writer, artist, musician or actor — read a story while people eat, and then let families talk about the story as they do a related craft or activity. This is a good way to get families talking to each other.

Activity Type: Embedded