

Ohio Literacy Conference for K-3rd Grade Teachers

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B-8 Expanding Thinking with Read-Alouds (Gr. K-3)

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Providing Daily Read-Alouds

*Not to let the method get in the way of teaching,
Not to let teaching get in the way of learning,
But to send your knowledge of what must be learned
Out to meet the child's questions,
That is skillful teaching.*

—Marie M. Clay

When we read to children, we teach them to use language as a means of communicating thoughts and ideas through the written word. We model what fluent reading “sounds” like. We introduce vocabulary that might otherwise be left unexposed to many students. We excite imaginations and stimulate creative thinking. We increase attention span and stretch listening skills. We encourage children to ask questions in our search for answers through a variety of print sources. Reading aloud is an essential approach to catching not only falling readers but all readers!

Reading aloud to students is not as easy as one might think. It requires thought, planning, and practice. What doesn't?! Before engaging in reading aloud to students of all ages, we would be wise to give some thought to the type of book we want to share each day, the purpose for selecting it as a read-aloud book, and the amount of time for each read-aloud session. Without prior thought and planning, the tendency is to just pick a book off the shelf and start reading. There is so much more to it! Reading aloud to students requires skillful teaching.

Here are a few questions to ask yourself as you prepare for reading aloud to children on a daily basis:

- ◆ What type of genre do I want to focus on today? Have my students been exposed to different types of poetry, informational text, and a wide variety of literature? Do I need to search for books in order to have a varied selection, or am I well stocked with books of all types?
- ◆ Have I read the book that I selected to myself first? If not, why not? It makes all the difference in the world to “know your book” before sharing it.
- ◆ How long do I have to read to students today and where are some juicy stopping points in the book? Juicy stopping points leave kids wanting more!
- ◆ How will I hold this particular book when I read it? Will I rest it in one hand, showing all the pictures to students as I read it? Will I switch hands occasionally, thus offering a different view of the pictures? Should I show some of the pictures *after* I read instead of *while* I read, building imagination and visualization skills?
- ◆ What is my purpose for reading this book to my students? Do they know my purpose? If not, why not?
- ◆ Can I extend their thinking of the story by modeling my own thinking? How can I model “interaction” with this book so that students will learn from my example? In what ways can I use this book to show evidence from the text after I read it, justifying answers to questions that lead to critical thinking? Do I want to read it solely for enjoyment, or do I have other intentions for using this particular book?

In the case of falling readers, we will want to read to them as often as possible. Many of these students have not been read to on a daily basis during preschool years, or many of them

have simply not been exposed to good-quality literature. It has been my experience that teachers want and need recommendations for books that “must” be read to elementary students of all ages. Here are just a few of many that I personally recommend to teachers because they are all books that teach life lessons and provide opportunities to think, grow, and learn. In essence, they are classic, timeless stories.

Books for Reading Aloud to ALL Kids

Recommended by: Dr. Connie R. Hebert, National Literacy Consultant & Author

Problem Solving & Critical Thinking:

- ◆ *Fantastic Mr. Fox* by Roald Dahl. (1998). NY: Puffin Books.
- ◆ *Sylvester & the Magic Pebble* by William Steig. (1969). NY: Simon & Schuster.
- ◆ *Caps for Sale* by Esphyr Slobodkina. (1987). William R. Scott, Inc.
- ◆ *Go Dog Go* by P. D. Eastman. (1989). NY: Random House.
- ◆ *The Giving Tree* by Shel Silverstein. (1964). NY: Harper Collins.
- ◆ *The Mitten* by Jan Brett. (1989). NY: Penguin Putnam Books.
- ◆ *Two Bad Ants* by Chris Van Allsburg. (1988). NY: Houghton Mifflin.

Pure Enjoyment:

- ◆ *Blueberries for Sal* by Robert McCloskey. (1948). NY: Viking.
- ◆ *Mouse Tales* by Arnold Lobel. (1978). NY: HarperCollins Publishers.
- ◆ *The Remarkable Farkle McBride* by John Lithgow. (2003). NY: Simon & Schuster.
- ◆ *Fly By Night* by June Crebbin. (1995). Walker Books.
- ◆ *Owl Moon* by Jane Yolen. (1987). NY: Penguin Putnam Books.
- ◆ *Mouse Tales* by Arnold Lobel. (1978). NY: HarperCollins Publishers.
- ◆ *The Very Quiet Cricket* by Eric Carle. (1990). Philomel.

Bibliotherapy (life issues):

- ◆ *Babushka's Doll* by Patricia Polacco. (1999). NY: Simon & Schuster.

- ◆ *Thank You, Mr. Falker* by Patricia Polacco. (2001). NY: Penguin Putnam Books.
- ◆ *Sophie's Masterpiece* by Eileen Spinelli. (2004). NY: Simon & Schuster.
- ◆ *Stellaluna* by Janel Cannon. (1999). FL: Harcourt.
- ◆ *The Man Who Walked Between the Towers* by Mordicai Gerstein. (2007). Square Fish.
- ◆ *The Heart of the Wood* by Marguerite W. Davol. (1992). NY: Simon & Schuster.
- ◆ *The Children's Book of Heroes* Edited by William J. Bennett. (1997). NY: Simon & Schuster.

Model Fluent Reading:

- ◆ *The Little Yellow Chicken* by Joy Cowley. (1996). Wright Group.
- ◆ *Go Dog Go* by P. D. Eastman. (1989). NY: Random House.
- ◆ *The Napping House* by Audrey & Don Wood. (2004). FL: Harcourt.
- ◆ *A House is a House for Me* by Mary Ann Hoberman. (1982). NY: Puffin Books.
- ◆ *Wolf* by Becky Bloom. (1999). NY: Orchard Books/Grolier.

Multi-Cultural:

- ◆ *The Day of Ahmed's Secret* by Florence Parry Heide & Judith Heide Gilliland. (1997). NY: Puffin Books.
- ◆ *Legend of the Indian Paintbrush* by Tomie dePaolo. (1996). NY: The Putnam & Grosset Group.
- ◆ *Brother Eagle, Sister Sky . . . A Message from Chief Seattle*. (1993). NY: Puffin Books.

Poetry Collections:

- ◆ *Talking Like the Rain: A Read-to-me Book of Poems*. Selected by X.J. Kennedy & Dorothy M. Kennedy. (1992): Boston: Little, Brown, & Co.
- ◆ *Falling Up* by Shel Silverstein. (1996). Harper Collins.

C. Hebert. *Catch a Falling Reader*. (2008). Corwin Press.

www.conniehebert.com



Reflections . . .