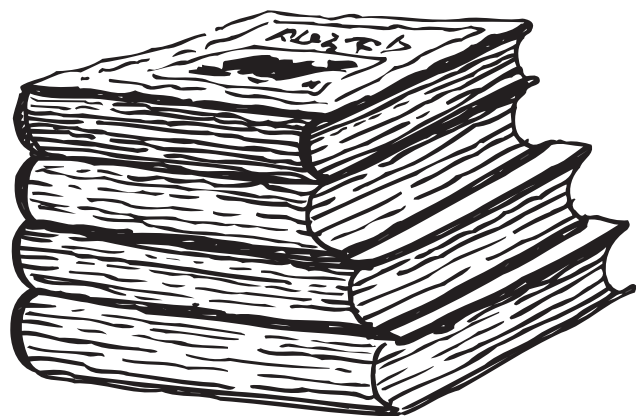


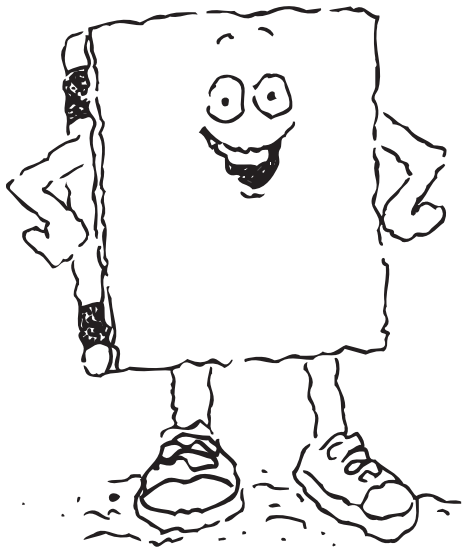
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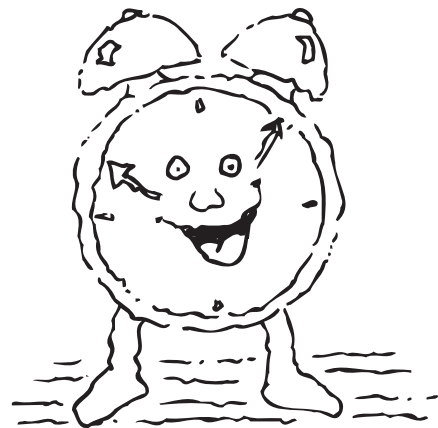
Literature Circle Role Sheets

Literature circles and the roles that accompany this student-centered discussion strategy can be exciting additions to your literature-based classroom!



The literature circle group meets at scheduled times while reading the book, and students rotate roles each time.

Literature circles are student book discussion groups in which each student has a role for which he or she is responsible.



Advantages of Using Literature Circles in Your Classroom

Using literature circles in your literature-based classroom has many advantages over other book discussion methods. These advantages recognize that literature circles:

- utilize cooperative learning strategies

Literature circles capitalize on the positive interdependence and individual accountability aspects that are hallmarks of cooperative learning. With literature circles, students work within a group setting with the common goal of sharing ideas about the same book. In order to achieve this common goal, students must fulfill the responsibilities of their individual literature circle roles.

- allow all students to succeed regardless of reading level or ability

Student choice is an important aspect of literature circles. However, for students who are participating in literature circles for **the first time** and/or for teachers who are implementing literature circles in their classrooms for **the first time**, I recommend that each student in each literature circle **read the same book**. More details about implementing literature circles for the first time follow these introductory remarks.

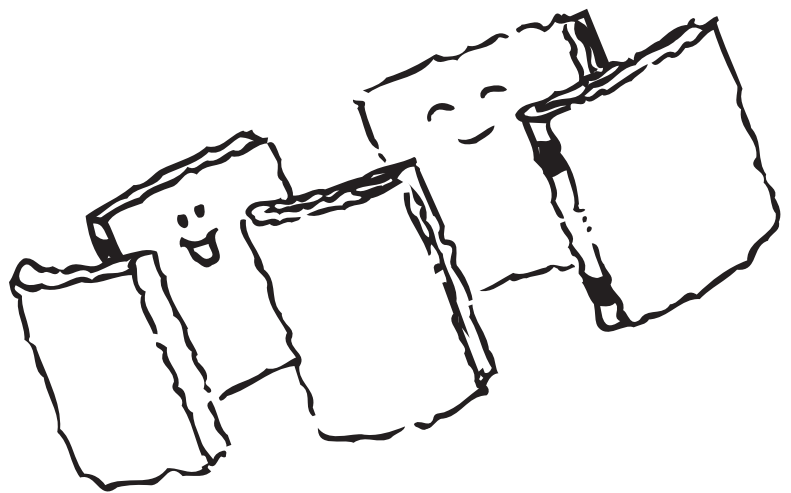
After your students have read and discussed the same novel using the literature circle approach, your students should be ready to choose a novel from a teacher-selected text set of books. Text sets include a variety of books of varying degrees of difficulty that are based on the same theme, author or genre. At some point in the future, students who become very proficient at literature circles may want to create their own text sets. However, whether you create the text sets or your students create text sets, students are placed into literature circles according to their interest in a certain author, genre or theme. (Once again, **the first time** you implement literature circles, the criteria for student groupings is different.) Most importantly, students are not grouped into permanent reading “ability” groups, and students move more easily between reading a variety of books of varying difficulty.

- are student-centered and directed but are teacher-facilitated

The teacher sets the parameters of the overall literature circle experience, but the students run the operation of the discussion group. In other words, the teacher selects the end-date when all literature circles must be completed, but within that time framework, student groups decide the amount of pages to read, which roles they’ll choose and how the roles will rotate. (Suggested role types to accompany different genres as well as a schedule for how often students should meet are discussed later in these pages.)

- capitalize on the social needs of middle school students

As students get older, they seek out opportunities to interact with their peers. Students in grade six, seven and eight are especially social and find it more enjoyable as well as rewarding to complete activities with a partner or a small group. Literature circles encourage students to do what adults, who have read the same book, do all of the time—talk—with enthusiasm, expression, intelligence and curiosity!



- provide opportunities to differentiate instruction and to utilize the Theory of Multiple Intelligences

Literature circles allow for differentiated instruction in the curriculum areas of content, process and products. Using a variety of different books within the same themed text set, utilizing a variety of different role sheets for each discussion group and providing several literature response activities for end-of-the-book projects represent ways literature circles differentiate instruction. At the same time, students are able to choose the book that they read, their discussion roles and their end-of-book projects based on the best way they learn whether it be linguistic, spatial, logical-mathematical or any other of the intelligences.

- are organized around groups of students but allow for individual assessment

Authentic cooperative learning is based on group activities that allow students to be assessed as individual learners. Because students are observed as individuals working within a group, each can be given a participation grade based on a rubric. In addition, individual role sheets must be completed prior to the literature circle meeting. The role sheets are used to guide and promote group discussion; however, each student's role sheet should be turned in after the discussion so it can be graded individually. Finally, end-of-book projects can be used to assess individual student learning.

- capitalize on how students personally respond to various types of literature

Each literature circle role sheet allows students to respond to the literature in a way only they can. Each role sheet allows students to respond to the literature using their own unique point of reference and prior knowledge. For example, four students reading the same book will respond differently in their individual groups even though each is performing in the role of Dialogue Designer.

