



## Reading Resource Library Building a Reading Life for Learners and Families

The [Reading Resource Library](#) is a tool created for educators to share with learners that is filled with topically relevant, educational, and captivating books for readers of all ages and levels. The books are sorted into 16 topics that can be explored with learners and their families. Each topic has a general Resource Guide to support engagement with the texts.

We suggest using the collections from the Reading Resource Library when engaging in these activities. Books in all collections span different reading levels, including books for children and families to read together. Each text set shares book summaries and additional information, such as book trailers and links to reviews.

### Overall Planning Suggestions

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The following activities were designed to explore activities and resources when using the Reading Resource Library. When you use these activities, please consider desired learner outcomes and incorporating relevant material based on learners' interests, and any differentiation/modification needs.

- Materials were developed to allow for instructor customization based on their program's standards and learning objectives. Instructors should modify and format lessons, activities, and assessments (formative and summative) based on the needs of their learners and desired outcomes.
- Consider learners' abilities, backgrounds, interests, and experiences with text, as well as their thoughts on texts, as you design and plan your lessons.
- Review resources for working with adult learners:
  - [Adult Learning Theory](#)
  - [Adult Learner Strategies](#)
  - [Authentic Audiences & Purposes](#)
  - [Cultural & Life Experiences Connections](#)
  - [Learner Variability](#)
- To plan a more detailed lesson or unit, view our [Reading Resource Library Instructor Planning Materials](#).

### Preparing to Work with Your Readers

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To begin this conversation with your learners, it is important for instructors to understand the term "reading life," and to determine how they can best support their learners. Keep in mind barriers learners may face in developing or engaging in

a reading life. Begin by reflecting on the following questions and consider exploring these questions with other reading instructors:

- What does a reading life mean to you?
- How do we build a reading life?
- What has been the most influential factor (or most influential person) in your reading life?
- What barriers might learners face when trying to build a reading life for themselves?
- What barriers might readers face when building a reading life for their families?

End this reflective work by defining a “reading life” and its impact on learners and their families.

## Getting to Know Your Readers

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Reading is part of daily life, especially for adult learners, for a variety of text types and purposes. While reading helps learners and parents in many ways, you may want to discuss a few specific benefits:

- Increases vocabulary, fluency, and communication skills
- Enhances knowledge as a learner, citizen, and employee
- Increases family engagement for parents and caregivers
- Increases knowledge of new ideas and unfamiliar places
- Increases confidence in interacting with these new ideas and places

To learn more about the benefits of reading and to support conversations with learners, explore these articles: [Benefits of Reading: How it Can Positively Affect Your Life](#), [The Benefits of Reading for Fun](#), and [Why Reading Aloud to Kids Helps Them Thrive](#).

To support learners in their own reading lives, it is important to learn about their interests, daily interactions with text, and history as a reader. Consider the following activities and select the ones that best meet the needs of your learners. Spread out activities over a few meeting periods to ensure you lay a foundation for learning and to build rapport in your learning environment.

## Activities

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- Consider incorporating these questions (or modifications of these questions) when exploring these activities:
  - What is your favorite memory of reading?
  - What is your least favorite memory of reading?
  - Do you like to read? If the answer is no, why do you not like to read?

- What do you like to read? What could get in the way of you reading?
- What stops you from reading?
- What or who has influenced your reading?
- What does a reading life mean to you?
- **Written Conversations:** This strategy can be used after reading texts, watching videos, or doing experiments. The activity pairs students and fosters collaboration, curiosity, and thinking through the use of writing. It encourages the exchange of thoughts and ideas among learners. [Facing History](#) and [Written Conversation Protocol](#) are resources to support written conversations. Encourage learners to write, sketch, or do both, as much as possible in response to others' thoughts, writing, or conversation. This [resource](#) provides ideas and tips on how to best support learners with constructive listening and speaking skills.
- **Sketch a Literacy Memory:** Ask learners to sketch a memory of their favorite places to read, the most influential factor (or person) in them becoming a reader, a time when they remember loving reading, etc. Consider that they may not have a positive memory of reading and determine how to best modify this activity.
- Have them set [reading goals](#) for themselves (long and short term). Setting reading goals can be a powerful experience for learners. It helps them to feel invested in their education and feel part of the learning process. It also gives them meaning and sets a purpose for reading, and will help them discover their reading identity.
- Ask them to complete [reading or interest surveys](#). Reading and interest surveys can foster a collaborative relationship between educators and learners. They can also be useful formative assessments for educators, as well as foster self-discovery in learners as readers.
- [Use the Reading Resource Library](#). This resource can be very helpful for educators and learners to access texts of various topics, levels, and genres, for both themselves and their families.

## Developing a Reading Community

For learners to continue to develop a reading life and be conscious of what it means to do so, they need to feel part of a community that supports it. Consider using the following ideas to promote a reading community within the educational environment:

- [Community Graffiti Boards](#) with the following ideas:
  - Promote/feature books within the learning environment
  - Pictures and visuals of what engaged reading looks like
  - Quotes from books
  - Book clubs
  - Events that promote literacy within the community

- Allow time for learners to read books of their choice
- Conduct shared reading to share a reading strategy with a short text, and learners can practice with their own text
- Conduct [book talks](#) to get learners interested in books
- Participate in “[First Chapter Fridays](#)”
- Create a [Bookflix](#) page
- Develop a full-scale [culture of reading!](#)
- [Hold a book tasting](#)

## **Promoting Family Literacy**

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For readers to develop and sustain their own reading lives and a sense of community, it must go beyond the learning environment and into the home environment. Parents and caregivers must be viewed as essential partners and made to understand the benefit of their involvement in their child’s learning.

Research (Anne T. Henderson and Karen L. Mapp, 2022) tells us:

- When families are involved at home and at school, children do better in school
- Family engagement has the most impact when it is directly linked to learning
- Children whose parents advocate for them experience greater success in school

To promote family literacy, consider the following ideas:

- Support learners in building a home library
- Provide take-home activities for families to complete together
- Connect literacy topics from texts into a learner’s personal life
- Share ideas for [learning at home](#)
- Connect home and school topics
- Complete a Literacy Eco Map (Help families create a web graphic organizer and explore questions, such as, “What do you talk about with your child? Who reads with your child? What does your child enjoy reading?”)
- Use the following family resources to promote family literacy:
  - [Mrs. Bush’s Story Time Podcasts](#)
  - [Sharing Stories](#)
  - [Book Explorers](#)
  - [Raising Readers](#)
  - [Reading Rockets](#)
  - [Unite for Literacy](#)
  - [Dial-A-Story](#)

## Activities to Promote Reading Engagement

Reading engagement is an important piece to building a sustained reading life. Reading develops critical thinking skills, expands vocabulary, and fosters social outcomes such as empathy for others. This article explores [How Reading Fiction Increases Empathy and Encourages Understanding](#). To promote reading engagement, consider any of the following activities:

- [Reading Resource Library](#): Explore this resource to source books of high interest for adult learners and their families. Materials have been developed to support using the library.
- [Speed Booking](#): This activity is great for readers at all levels and exposes them to a large number of books at one time. It also gives readers a context and a frame of how to look at books to determine interest.
- [Emotional Response to Text](#): This activity fosters engagement through self-connection to text. It asks readers to think about the emotional or physical responses that reading can give them and asks them to note these responses through writing and/or drawing.
- [Information is Beautiful](#): This website shares infographics on a variety of topics. Consider exploring infographics with learners and providing simple prompts, such as, “What does it say? What does it not say? How is it said?” to encourage discussion and thoughtful writing.
- [Two Word Strategy](#): This strategy fosters collaboration, reflection, and active listening among learners, as well as critical thinking skills. It also encourages connections to texts by asking readers to think of two words that express their thoughts, feelings, or reactions to a section of text they read.
- [Tracking Thinking](#): This is a great way for readers to think about various aspects of a text to support meaning and purpose.
- [Notice and Note Signposts](#): These give readers specific points to note while reading either fiction or nonfiction that will help foster their critical thinking of a text in order to make meaning and deepen comprehension. They are also great annotation notes readers can look for and note, rather than highlighting in meaningless ways.

## Additional Resources

- [Understanding Reading Instruction for Adult Learners](#)
- [Marshall Leveled Reading Program](#)
- [Adult Literacy: Better Reading Comprehension, How to Speed-Read, and Some Life-Changing Literature to Improve Your Life](#)
- [National Center for Families Learning](#)
- [Reading is Fundamental](#)