



Reading Resource Library Health Literacy Instructor Resource Guide

The [Reading Resource Library](#) is a tool created for educators to share with learners and is filled with topically relevant, educational, and captivating books for readers of all ages and levels.

- The books are sorted into sixteen topics that can be explored with learners and their families.
- 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.
- Each topic has a general Resource Guide to support engagement with the texts.

Consider using these texts from the Reading Resource Library to support themes and ideas about health literacy:

Book Title	Author	Collection and Topic
<i>Because You'll Never Meet Me</i>	Leah Thomas	Collection Two: Physical Health
<i>Chew on This: Everything You Don't Want to Know About Fast Food</i>	Eric Schlosser and Charles Wilson	Collection Two: Physical Health
<i>Everything, Everything</i>	Nicola Yoon	Collection Two: Physical Health
<i>Knock Out</i>	K.A. Holt	Collection Two: Sports
<i>My Sister's Keeper</i>	Jodi Picoult	Collection Two: Physical Health
<i>The Fault In Our Stars</i>	John Green	Collection Two: Physical Health
<i>The Omnivore's Dilemma: A Natural History of Four Meals</i>	Michael Pollan	Collection Two: Physical Health

Overall Planning Suggestions

- Consider desired learner outcomes, key vocabulary terms, incorporating relevant material based on learner's interest, and any differentiation and modifications 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' content knowledge and pre-assess or consider a knowledge inventory before exploring this topic.
- 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](#).

What Is Health Literacy?

Health literacy is the gap between how people can find, understand, and use health information (individual) and how those who deliver health information make it findable, understandable, and useable (organizational). To learn more about health literacy, read [What is Health Literacy?](#) and to learn more about how to improve health literacy in teaching, read this [background paper](#) from the Open Door Collective.

Authentic Application

As you begin to work with learners, be mindful of barriers they may face in their own health literacy. Explore the term with them and support them in making connections to their own lives. You may want to have a whole group discussion– consider a think-pair-share, or gallery walk activity. Consider these questions and develop additional questions based on your learner needs:

- What is health literacy?
- Why is it important to understand health terms? How does it help us when talking to a medical person?

- What is challenging for you when you think about your health?
- When you have a health problem, how do you look for a solution?
- Share what you feel are the top barriers in your own development of health literacy (you may want to prompt topics, such as, reading a prescription label, accessing online health information, reading documents that are sent home from medical appointments, understanding what a doctor is saying during a health visit.)

After this discussion and as you plan your activities, consider how you can provide authentic applications using your learners newly gained knowledge. Be sure to engage your learners in customizing their own learning path with health literacy.

- Do they want to learn more about reading a prescription label?
- Do they need support in understanding how to navigate an online health portal?
- Do they understand how to read online health information and assess it for accuracy and reliability?
- Do they feel comfortable reading documents that are sent home from medical appointments?
- Do they need to role play speaking and listening with their doctor or their child's doctor?

Vocabulary – Key Terms to Explore

To help learners better understand and explore health literacy, pre-teach a few key vocabulary words. There are several key words to explore, this is a short list to choose from:

- Food pyramid
- Nutrition
- Nutrition Label
- GMO
- Vital signs
- Blood pressure
- Deficiency
- Immune System
- Diabetes
- Health Risk
- Calories
- Diagnosis

- Symptom
- Disorder
- Chronic
- Mental Health

Vocabulary activities could include:

- **Framer Models:** Have learners write the vocabulary term in the middle of four boxes. Then, ask them to write the definition, the word in a sentence, synonyms and antonyms, and a visual representation of the word in one of the boxes. (Each box will be its own category).
- **Semantic Mapping:** Ask learners to create a semantic map showing the relationship between the words (after you have taught them the definitions and given them some context). Semantic maps can be created online or by hand in personal notebooks. They are a great way for learners to visualize and engage in conceptual thinking!
- **Vocabulary Notebooks:** Ask learners to keep a notebook, or section in their writing notebook to structure, organize, and make note of important vocabulary. By doing so, this helps build learners' memory and comprehension skills. Words can be entered by categories, unit topics, pairs, or ways of their choosing to best support their learning and vocabulary acquisition.
- **Concept Cubes:** Ask learners to create a six-sided cube that they can roll like a dice. Each side of the cube will have a different vocabulary activity for learners to do that will engage them in the use and acquisition of their words. Activities may include: draw a picture of your favorite vocabulary word, use the vocabulary word in a sentence, put your vocabulary words into categories, or write a story using all of your vocabulary words.

Integrating Health Literacy into Your Lessons

Create content-based lessons and activities to help learners acquire content knowledge (health literacy) while improving reading and literacy skills.

Content-based instruction enhances students' learning by allowing learners to explore relevant content and make connections to their own lives.

Consider the following lessons and activities:

- **Understanding Medical Words:** This lesson from Wisconsin Health Literacy provides a tutorial on learning medical words. To review more lessons from Wisconsin Health Literacy, explore their [curricula](#).
- **Healthy Food:** This lesson is from the Florida Health Literacy Initiative, which will help learners explore why it is important to make healthy

food choices. To review more lessons from the Florida Health Literacy Initiative, explore their [curriculum and resources](#).

- **[Reading Skills for Healthcare Workers](#)**: This lesson is from Southwest Adult Basic Education and it offers text selections and activities that explore a variety of health topics within authentic applications.
- **[Health Information and the Internet](#)**: This lesson from LINCS will help learners evaluate websites for accuracy on health information.
- **[What Is Good Health?](#)**: This lesson from LINCS will help learners identify health activities and categorize them.
- **[The Cost of Smoking](#)**: This lesson from LINCS identifies the costs of smoking and how it relates to long term health consequences.
- **[Field Trip to a Hospital or Health Care Facility](#)**: This lesson from LINCS will help learners think about their own experiences with health care facilities and how to communicate with doctors and health care professionals.

Resources for Educators

- **[Health Education Literacy Program \(HELP\)](#)**: The HELP curriculum, developed by the [Institute for HealthCare Advancement](#), is a free program that addresses 20 different topics from the book “What to Do When Your Child Gets Sick”. Each of the 20 topics can be taught as part of a curriculum or as a stand-alone unit. There are three levels (basic, intermediate, and advanced proficiency). The curriculum is free, and comes with a teacher’s guide, tool for assessing each learner’s starting level, and both visual and text-based glossary.
- **[Florida Health Literacy Initiative](#)**: The Florida Health Literacy Initiative, funded by the Florida Blue Foundation and operated by Florida Literacy Coalition, works to improve the health literacy level of Florida residents by supporting literacy programs with grants, professional development, and technical support. This award-winning program combines ESOL instruction and health education in a multi-disciplinary approach that teaches English to adults and families while helping these individuals acquire skills and knowledge to make informed choices regarding their health and nutrition.
- **[The Heal \(Health Education and Literacy\) Program](#)**: The eight-week HEAL program includes 6 topics, a review session, and a session with local community health professionals such as Emergency medical personnel, ambulance drivers, and local police (the program includes training local health professionals as well).

- [Skills for Shared Decision-Making: Evaluation of a Health Literacy Program for Consumers with Lower Literacy Skills](#): This article shares a curriculum for teaching adults with low skills how to engage more actively with their health care providers.
- [A Novel Approach to Improve Health Literacy in Immigrant Communities](#): This project demonstrates the efficacy of training and using peer language navigators to share health information resources within their respective communities.
- [Teaching the Skills that Matter](#): This brief describes the important skills that matter and should be taught regardless of context in health literacy.
- [Health Systems and Adult Basic Education: A Critical Partnership in Supporting Digital Health Literacy](#): This article describes how literacy, health literacy, and digital literacy intersect and is a promising area for adult basic education.