



Book trees



Who's it for?

Pupils in Years 7 and 8

What do I need?

- Photocopied 'leaves' with space (not too large) to write a book review
- A painted tree on the wall to attach reviews to

How long does it take?

One session or part of a number of sessions

What happens?

The aim is to construct a 'book tree' for pupils to attach their reviews to. A review can consist of anything a pupil wants – just one word or lots, a drawing, a cartoon, or a picture of the pupil reading the book, with a smile or a frown depending on whether the book was a good read or not.

- Ask group members to construct a book tree and fix it to the wall.
- Now ask them to come up with a design for the tree's leaves – there may be several different designs.
- Make sure that everyone agrees that all book reviews can be put on the tree.
- Use the review as 'warmers' at the beginning of a session and 'fillers' at the end.

Listening books



Who's it for?

Pupils in Years 7 and 8

What do I need?

- Copies or photocopies of the book that pupils are going to hear extracts from
- A cassette player and an audio cassette – you will need to plan which part of the book you will play to the pupils

How long does it take?

20-30 minutes – you could run this session a couple of times a month and call it 'Book at lunch-time'

What happens?

Pupils will listen to the audio tape of a book and read the printed copy at the same time.

- Introduce the book to pupils and talk about what they are going to hear.
- Play the passage to them – don't ask any questions, just let them enjoy the story and relax.
- At the end, discuss the story with them.



Book trailers



Who's it for?

Pupils in Years 7 and 8

What do I need?

- A computer, with 'Quick time' free software installed, so that you can download a film trailer linked to a book the group is reading – you can find many of these at www.apple.com/trailers
- Lots of copies of the book

How long does it take?

10-20 minutes

What happens?

This links pupils' reading with films that they may be eager to see.

- Use the trailer as a starting point for discussion about the book.
- Play the trailer, with the promise to see the whole film when pupils have read the book.

Poetic lunches



Who's it for?

Pupils in Years 7 and 8

What do I need?

- Somewhere to hold the lunch
- Paper and pens

How long does it take?

1 hour per month

What happens?

This involves holding poetry lunches, where pupils read and write poetry, with a different theme each month.

- In groups, decide on the themes for the first few months. Ask the students to find poems that match the theme.
- Ask group members to make up poems on a similar theme.
- Ask some of the pupils to read their poems out to the rest of the group. You could also record them.
- Discuss with the pupils what they think of the poems.

Review it!



Who's it for?

Pupils in Years 7 and 8

What do I need?

- Computer facilities with access to the school's intranet and to the internet

How long does it take?

This can last as many sessions as you like – it can be a monthly treat to go on the web to search for information about books.

What happens?

Pupils can post their book reviews on the school's intranet.

- Set up a page on the school website for the book club, with the facility for pupils to post their book reviews.
- Ask students to write reviews for the book club page. Let them look at examples of book reviews at www.cool-reads.co.uk, so that they've got a good idea of what might be in a review.
- Make sure that you, or other members of staff, check reviews before they are posted.
- Offer a prize for the best reviews.

Desert Island Books



Who's it for?

Pupils in Years 7 and 8

What do I need?

- Paper and pens
- Reviews of books
- A tape recorder and a microphone

How long does it take?

Two to three sessions lasting half an hour to an hour

What happens?

You could use this activity, which is based on the popular Radio 4 show 'Desert Island Discs', to round off a book club at the end of a term or year. Club members choose which books they would take with them if they were cast away on a desert island.

- Ask club members to draw up a list of the five books that they'd like to take with them to a desert island.
- Ask each member in turn to talk about their five books, saying why they like each one and why it would help them on the island.
- Choose someone to act as the interviewer – you could record some of the interviews.
- At the end they should choose one of the five books as their favourite.

Jackanory story



Who's it for?

Pupils in Years 7 and 8

What do I need?

- A good tape recorder
- A quiet room
- Some examples of taped story telling
- Props for making sounds

How long does it take?

You could run this activity over a number of sessions or make it a regular feature once a month, to work on the recording a section at a time.

What happens?

This activity involves recording stories for playing in 'Jackanory' story-telling sessions.

- Begin by listening together to some examples of taped stories from the radio or on cassette. It is good to make listening a regular part of the group's meetings.
- Now choose a story for the group to record. You could either read a popular story that already exists or ask the group to compose one themselves and write it down.
- Ask for some volunteers to research what sounds will be needed to illustrate the story and to find suitable props to make the sounds.
- Record the story (or parts of it).

The brown paper bag game



Who's it for?

Pupils in Years 7 and 8

What do I need?

- Enough books for each member of the club to have one – choose a good selection of different types of books
- Brown paper bags – put each book in a bag before the start of the session

How long does it take?

A few minutes at the end of a session, for handing out the bags, and 20 minutes at the start of the next session for pupils to report back

What happens?

This is a good way of widening pupils' reading tastes – they sometimes get stuck in a rut, going back to the same author time after time. They may be surprised to find that they can read and enjoy books that they wouldn't usually pick for themselves.

- At the end of a club session, put out all the books in their brown paper bags and ask each member to take one, without looking inside the bag.
- Explain what you want them to do – to try out the book in their bag and then bring it back with them next time and tell the rest of the group what they thought of it.
- At the beginning of the next session, collect the books in and ask pupils for their verdict. You may find you have a queue to borrow books that get enthusiastic endorsements from club members.