Launching Reader’s Workshop: A Community of Readers

Grade 5

Unit Overview
Notes to the Teacher

The format of the Unit Overview contains:

- A brief description of the workshop focus (*Reader’s Workshop: A Community of Readers*) and its purpose
- Framing questions - essential learning for students
- *Reader’s Workshop Launching Unit Big Ideas* - key goals and objectives for the unit of study
- Related *Minnesota Reading Standards* and *NCEE New Standards - Reading*
- *Professional Resources* for teacher reference
- A list of suggested anchor (key) texts for mini-lessons
- Brief descriptions of the learning activities for each week of the unit
- A *Reader’s Workshop Launching Unit Planner* with suggested daily lessons
- Possible *Assessments, Student Work, and Artifacts of Teaching and Learning* (e.g., charts, checklists, rubrics)
- An *Appendix* with supporting examples and materials

The general flow of this launching unit of study is:

- Week 1 – Establishing the Reader’s Workshop Community and Independent Reading Routines
- Week 2 – Learning and Practicing Active Reading and Response
- Week 3 – Honing Roles and Responsibilities in the Reader’s Workshop Community
Reader’s Workshop: A Community of Readers

The dictionary definition of community includes concepts of kinship, common interests, society, and interaction; all of these are important to foster in the Reader’s Workshop. Students have responsibilities to themselves and to others in their classroom learning community. At this stage in their development, young adolescents can recognize and acknowledge that their choices and behavior have consequences for their own and others’ learning. Having choices can be a welcome and powerful motivator. Throughout the workshop, students have many choices to make: choosing books for independent reading and how they will respond to them; how actively they’ll engage in listening during the mini-lesson; their level of participation in a partnership or small group; the energy and effort they’ll put into a written assignment, etc. During this launching unit, the Reader’s Workshop community is built with careful consideration of the social dimensions of learning.

“A community of readers is a group of people who share the common goal of reading and discussing literature and becoming literate human beings. (This community is) built upon mutual respect and a willingness to listen to and consider the merits of each member’s ideas and interpretations.”

~ Frank Serafini in Around the Reading Workshop in 180 Days

When teachers share decision-making with their students in establishing strong rituals and routines, the students become invested in the environment, artifacts, procedures, and responsibility for their own learning. Having students co-create guidelines for the workshop, artifacts, and rubrics build ownership in the rituals and routines. Another powerful way to build investment is for students to help set up and organize the classroom library - they better understand the arrangement of materials and get a hands-on overview of the books. It’s important to acknowledge and accept their suggestions, and to assure that this collaboration will result in the best possible system. Engaging in the set-up labor helps ensure materials get put back where they belong because students know why they were put there in the first place!

Active listening, thinking, engagement, and participation are fundamental expectations for the Reader’s Workshop learning community. Thinking and talk – focused and accountable – become more sophisticated as students grow in background knowledge and the ability to carry on meaningful conversations through wide reading and discussion in the workshop.

“The Reading Workshop should become a space for students to feel comfortable sharing ideas, where students can generate and negotiate interpretations without fear of punishment, and where they have opportunities and support for revising their interpretations and understandings. In other words, a space where readers are supported and challenged to make sense of what they read and experience.”

~ Frank Serafini in Around the Reader’s Workshop in 180 Days

Conducting individual and small group self-assessments for workshop learning over time reinforces the social responsibility that students have for encouraging each other and supporting another’s learning as readers.

Serafini identifies five critical dispositions that students need to build while becoming proficient and sophisticated readers. They are to:
• Understand that reading is a process of making meaning with texts
• Assume responsibility for understanding what they are reading
• Develop an awareness of reading as a thinking process
• Be willing and able to recognize and acknowledge confusion
• Apply a variety of reading comprehension strategies when meaning breaks down

This launching unit contains lessons that support each of these.

It can be helpful to begin with a vision of the end goal. By the end of the launching unit, most students are choosing appropriate books in various genres for independent reading, and are building up their reading stamina. They are willing to share and respond to a partner and in a small group, to work independently, to help others, and to ask for help when they need it. They are engaged listeners in the mini-lesson, and are writing thoughtful responses in reader’s notebooks. They’re into the Reader’s Workshop flow.
Purpose:
The launching unit is designed to help create a community of respectful and mutually-supportive learners, and to build the rituals and routines for the daily Reader’s Workshop. Together, the teacher and students work out structures, guidelines, systems, and procedures for the learning environment; students are supported in taking on more responsibility for their Reader’s Workshop learning.

Framing Questions:
- What does a successful community of readers look like and sound like? What values and guidelines help create it?
- How do my attitude and interactions affect my learning, and the learning of others in our classroom community?
- What responsibility can I take for my own progress as a reader? How can I help others make progress?

Reader’s Workshop Big Ideas
Grade 5 students will:
- Help to co-create Reader’s Workshop rituals, routines, procedures, and learning environment (e.g., classroom library)
- Actively engage and participate in the Reader’s Workshop mini-lesson, literacy work time, and share
- Learn and practice active reading strategies
- Read, think, question, respond, and revise their understanding and interpretations of texts within a community of readers

STANDARDS
The following standard benchmarks are specifically addressed in this unit and are reflected in the Reader’s Workshop Launch: Big Ideas on page 1. See SPPS Literacy Frameworks for all of the reading standards for grade 5.

Minnesota Standards
Literature
Students will:
- Actively engage in the reading process and read, understand, respond to, analyze, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate a wide variety of fiction, poetic, and nonfiction texts
  - Read a variety of high-quality traditional, classical, and contemporary literary works specific to America and significant works from other countries
  - Interpret literature by answering questions that ask for analysis and evaluation
  - Distinguish among various literary genres and subgenres
  - Respond to literature using ideas and details from the text to support reactions and make literary connections
  - Read from and respond to a variety of fiction, poetic, and nonfiction texts of increasing complexity for personal enjoyment

Speaking, Listening, and Viewing
Students will:
- Speak clearly and effectively for a variety of purposes and audiences; actively listen to, view, and evaluate oral communication and media
- Demonstrate understanding and communicate effectively through listening and speaking
  - Participate in and follow agreed-upon rules for conversation and formal discussions in large and small groups

NCEE New Standards
Reading
Students will:
- Read at least twenty-five books or book equivalents each year. The materials should include traditional and contemporary literature—both fiction and nonfiction—as well as magazines, newspaper, textbooks, and online materials. Such reading should represent a diverse collection of material from at least five different writers and from at least three different literary forms, such as folklore, poetry, and science fiction.
- Read and comprehend at least four books or book equivalents about one issue or subject, or four books by a single writer, or four books in one genre; produce evidence of reading that:
  - Makes and supports warranted and responsible assertions about the texts
  - Supports assertions with elaborated and convincing evidence
  - Draws the texts together to compare and contrast themes, characters, and ideas
  - Makes perceptive and well-developed connections
  - Evaluates writing strategies and elements of the author’s craft

Literature Response
Students will:
- Respond to nonfiction, fiction, poetry, and drama using interpretive, critical, and evaluative processes; produce work that:
Unit Overview

Grade 5  Launching Reader’s Workshop: A Community of Readers  (3 weeks)

- Demonstrate active listening and comprehension
- Distinguish between speaker’s opinion and verifiable facts
- Give oral presentations to various audiences for different purposes
- Restate or summarize and organize ideas sequentially using evidence to support opinions and main ideas
- Perform expressive oral readings of prose, poetry, or drama

- Considers the differences among genres
- Makes inferences and draws conclusions about contexts, events, characters, and settings

Speaking, Listening, and Viewing
- Participate in one-to-one conferences with teachers, others, in which they:
  - Initiate new topics and respond to adult-initiated topics
  - Ask relevant questions
  - Respond to questions with appropriate elaboration
  - Confirm understanding by paraphrasing directions or suggestions
- Participate in group meetings, in which they:
  - Display appropriate turn-taking behaviors
  - Actively solicit others’ comments or opinions
  - Offer their own opinions forcefully without dominating
  - Respond appropriately to comments and questions
  - Volunteer contributions and respond when directly solicited by teachers or discussion leaders
  - Give reasons in support of opinions expressed
  - Clarify, illustrate, or expand on a response when asked to do so; ask classmates for similar expansions

READING

Professional Resources

Anchor Texts
Here are some possible texts to use in selected Reader’s Workshop mini-lessons.

Building a learning community:

The power of words:

Response to literature:
**Unit Overview**

**Grade 5  Launching Reader’s Workshop: A Community of Readers  (3 weeks)**


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 1 – Establishing the Reader’s Workshop Community and Independent Reading Routines</th>
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<tr>
<td>In the first week of the unit, the teacher and students co-create guidelines for the Reader’s Workshop and establish its key rituals, routines, systems, and procedures, particularly for independent reading and response. The teacher and students get to know one another as readers by sharing about their reading lives and while building the workshop structures and environment. The teacher uses a tool (e.g., survey, interview, introductory letter) for students to write or tell about themselves and their interests, and to describe their reading lives and feelings about reading. Students set reading goals for themselves (e.g., read in different genres, extend time in independent reading) and begin to use their reader’s notebook. Beginning this week, the teacher conducts initial reading assessments and informal conferring to get to know the students as readers. S/he thinks aloud and models desired routines, strategies, and procedures in each day’s mini-lesson. The teacher and students co-create charts and artifacts, and post them around the room so students can refer to them.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Week 2 – Learning and Practicing Active Reading and Response</th>
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<td>During the week, students begin learning active reading strategies and using them in directed independent reading in the literacy work time. They learn and practice a variety of options for responding to reading in their reader’s notebooks. Students and the teacher co-create a rubric for effective independent reading and response, and students self-assess their individual performance. Students practice using cooperative routines (e.g., think-pair-share, heads together – see Appendix) to build their accountable talk and listening skills.</td>
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<th>Week 3 – Honing Roles and Responsibilities in the Reader’s Workshop Community</th>
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<td>Students have opportunities to practice strategies and develop skills as they participate and assume responsibilities in their classroom community of readers. In addition to continuing to learn and practice active reading strategies, they learn how to prepare for a reading conference with the teacher – a routine that will continue across the year. Teachers will confer regularly with students to informally assess their progress as readers. Students will also learn their roles and responsibilities as they participate in two key mini-lesson strategies: shared reading and read aloud.</td>
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<td>Week 1</td>
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<td>Work Time: Students complete a survey about themselves and about their reading lives; they set individual reading goals for wide reading and building up their reading stamina</td>
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<th>Week 2</th>
<th>Mini-lesson: Active Reading: Monitoring Comprehension</th>
<th>Mini-lesson: Independent Reading in a Community of Learners</th>
<th>Mini-lesson: Active Reading: Visualizing (Sketch to Stretch)</th>
<th>Mini-lesson: Working in Collaboration*</th>
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<tr>
<td>Work Time: Students read independently; they choose a response option from several modeled, and write a response in their reader’s notebook</td>
<td>Work Time: Students deliberately stop at two points during independent reading and jot their thinking (e.g., areas of confusion, question, comment)</td>
<td>Work Time: Students read independently and self-assess their performance with a co-created class rubric (developed in the day’s mini-lesson)</td>
<td>Work Time: Students read independently, then Think-Pair-Share about their book with a partner, and then with another pair</td>
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<tr>
<th>Week 3</th>
<th>Mini-lesson: Active Reading: Learning New Words</th>
<th>Mini-lesson: Preparing for a Reading Conference</th>
<th>Mini-lesson: Shared Reading: Student Routines</th>
<th>Mini-lesson: Read-Aloud: Student Routines</th>
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<tr>
<td>Work Time: Students note 2 – 4 unfamiliar words from the day’s independent reading and complete a graphic organizer to learn and practice with the words in order to transfer them to their reading and writing vocabularies</td>
<td>Work Time: Students add minutes to their independent reading time and use the rubric to reflect and self-assess their progress</td>
<td>Work Time: Students spend some time reviewing their reader’s notebooks and jot 3 things they want to tell or ask the teacher when they meet for a reading conference</td>
<td>Work Time: Students spend time browsing in the classroom library or through book baskets to select another book for independent reading</td>
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*Teachers can use ‘Clock Buddies’ (see Appendix) to pair students for Think-Pair-Share activities
### Assessment
- Previous year’s reading assessment data or formal initial reading assessment (reading level and behaviors)
- Survey or other tool for learning about students as readers
- Student self-assessment with independent reading rubric

### Student Work
- Sticky notes with jottings, responses
- Reading logs
- Reader’s notebook entries

### Artifacts of Teaching and Learning
- Co-created charts and rubric (see examples, below)
- Standards-based teaching bulletin board
- Genre Word Bank:
  - Launching
  - Independence
  - Rituals & routines
  - Response
  - Think-Pair-Share
  - Think-Pair-Write
  - Turn and Talk
  - Heads Together
  - Rubric
  - Responsibility

### Artifacts – Possible Charts (beginnings…)

#### Our Reader’s Workshop Community
- We value and respect each person in our classroom
- Everyone has a right to learn and ask questions
- We need to be able to ask for help and to give help with our disrupting others’ learning

#### Guidelines for Reader’s Workshop
- Literacy work time is for reading or writing about reading
- Work quietly so you and others can do your best thinking
- Keep your reading log up to date with your independent reading

#### Proficient Readers:
- Understand that reading is a process of making meaning with texts
- Take responsibility for understanding what they are reading
- Understand that reading is a thinking process
- Recognize when they are confused or not understanding what they’re reading
- Try many different strategies when meaning breaks down

#### Selecting Books for Independent Reading
- Use the 5-finger rule to check and see if the book you’ve chosen is not too difficult
- Choose books to read that you think you’ll read and enjoy; abandon books only after you’ve given them a chance
- Challenge yourself to read a variety of genres
- Build up reading time (stamina)

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**Rubric for Independent Reading**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Statements</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Outstanding</td>
<td></td>
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</table>
You read the whole time.
Your hand stays in the right place all the time.
You have just the right books (not too easy or too hard). You stop when it's time to stop.
You work quietly and make sense as you read.
You stop others from making sense.
You ask questions about what you read.
You ask questions about what you read.
You work quietly and make sense as you read.
You ask questions about what you read.
You work quietly and make sense as you read.
You ask questions about what you read. |
| 2. Proficient | 
You read most of the time.
You work quietly and make sense as you read.
You ask questions about what you read.
You work quietly and make sense as you read.
You ask questions about what you read.
You work quietly and make sense as you read.
You ask questions about what you read.
You work quietly and make sense as you read.
You ask questions about what you read. |
| 3. Developing | 
You read some of the time.
You work quietly and make sense as you read.
You ask questions about what you read.
You work quietly and make sense as you read.
You ask questions about what you read.
You work quietly and make sense as you read.
You ask questions about what you read.
You work quietly and make sense as you read.
You ask questions about what you read. |
| 4. Emerging | 
You wanted more reading time.
You got around a lot.
You didn’t have just the right books.
You didn’t have enough reading time.
You didn’t have enough reading time.
You didn’t have enough reading time.
You didn’t have enough reading time.
You didn’t have enough reading time.
You didn’t have enough reading time. |
Appendix

Reader’s Workshop Classroom Environment Artifacts

Student Interest Survey Samples

Sample Mini-Lessons

Sample Assessment Rubric for Independent Reading

Sample Graphic Organizer for Building Vocabulary

Cooperative Routines

Buddy (Appointment) Clock Graphic

The Reader’s Notebook
Reader’s Workshop Classroom Environment Artifacts

Meeting Area & Teaching Charts

Model Teaching Chart

Accountable Talk/Rituals & Routines

Classroom Library
Student Information and Interest Survey

1. Give your full name including your middle name: ____________________________
2. When is your birthday? (month, day, year) _________________________________
3. Where were you born? (city and state) _____________________________________
4. If you have one, what is your email address? _______________________________
5. What is your mailing address? (include zip code) ____________________________

List your favorite:
Color ___________________________ TV show ________________________________
Food ___________________________ Movie ________________________________
Soda ___________________________ Music group _____________________________
Fruit ___________________________ Singer ____________________________________
Candy __________________________ Musical instrument ____________________
Snack __________________________ Cartoon _________________________________
Dessert __________________________ Type of car ____________________________
Restaurant ______________________ Holiday ________________________________
Animal __________________________ Day of the week ________________________
Subject in school __________________ Season of the year ____________________

Books and Literature
Check off all of the following genre (types) of books that you would like to read.

____ animal stories ______________________ ____ adventure ______________________
____ science fiction ___________________ ____ fantasy __________________________
____ horror ___________________________ ____ sports stories ____________________
____ suspense _________________________ ____ fairy tales _______________________
____ poetry ___________________________ ____ mythology ______________________
____ stories about children ___________ ____ comics __________________________
____ classics _________________________ ____ history stories ____________________
____ news stories ____________________ ____ stories about children ___________
____ true-life stories _________________ ____ fables __________________________

What is your favorite book? _______________________________________________

List four books that you have read in school: _______________________________

Who is your favorite author? _____________________________________________

Give a title of a book you would like to read: ________________________________

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Reading Interest Survey

from "But There’s Nothing Good to Read’ (In the Library Media Center),” by Denice Hildebrandt,

1. Do you like to read?

2. How much time do you spend reading?

3. What are some of the books you have read lately?

4. Do you have a library card? How often do you use it?

5. Do you ever get books from the school library?

6. About how many books do you own?

7. What are some books you would like to own?

8. Put a check mark next to the kind of reading you like best.
   (topics you might like to read about)

   _____history          _____travel          _____plays
   _____sports           _____science fiction  _____adventure
   _____romance          _____detective stories  _____war stories
   _____poetry           _____car stories     _____novels
   _____biography        _____supernatural stories  _____astrology
   _____humor            _____folktales       _____how-to-do-it books
   _____mysteries        _____art             _____westerns

(over)
9. Do you like to read the newspaper?

10. If ‘yes’, place a check next to the part of the newspaper listed below you like to read.

   _____ Advertisements  _____ Entertainment  _____ Columnists
   _____ Headlines        _____ Comic Strips    _____ Political Stories
   _____ Current Events   _____ Sports          _____ Editorials
   _____ Others: (please list)

11. What are your favorite television programs?

12. How much time do you spend watching television?

13. What is your favorite magazine?

14. Do you have a hobby? If so, what is it?

15. What are the two best movies you have ever seen?

16. Who are your favorite entertainers and/or movie stars?

17. When you were little, did you enjoy having someone read aloud to you?

18. List topics, subjects, etc. which you might like to read about:

19. What does the word ‘reading’ mean to you?

20. Say anything else that you would like to say about reading:

   from “But There’s Nothing Good to Read” (In the Library Media Center),” by Denice Hildebrandt,
### Reader’s Workshop Plan

**Standard:** Literature  
**Focus of lesson** (week 1): Reader’s Timeline  

| Mini-lesson (5-15 min.) | Key idea: I have a history as a reader; I have thoughts and feelings about that history as I start my reading, this year.  
Teacher resources: The Day of Ahmed’s Secret (book), model Reader’s Timeline  
Students bring: Reader’s notebook, pencil, book for independent reading  

| Focus of lesson (week 1): Reader’s Timeline | Connection: How this fits in with what we’ve been doing…  
“This week, we’ve been setting our groundwork as a new community of readers. We all have a history of ourselves as readers. We can think about that history as we look to growing or changing the way that history will unfold for us, this year.”  

| Teach: | “I’m going to read The Day of Ahmed’s Secret, a book that gives us a glimpse into a young boy’s life and about a secret he has that will make you think about your own life and history. [Read aloud the book; ask students if they were surprised at Ahmed’s ‘secret’]”  
“We can see how very important reading and writing were to Ahmed at this age and point in his life. As we’re starting a new year of reading and writing, I think it’s important for us to think about our own history as a reader. I’m going to show you a Reader’s Timeline that I made after thinking about significant events or memories I have about my own history as a reader.”  
[Show and talk through a timeline with sketches and jottings of 3-5 significant memories or events in your own reading history (e.g., being read to at bedtime as a child, reading several books in a series, having anxiety around a reading test, etc.).]  

| Active Involvement: | “Think about an event you could put into your own timeline. Turn and talk with a partner.”  

| Link/Off you go: | “I want you to settle in and begin with either a sketch of an event/memory or with a jotting about it. See what comes into your mind as you think about your experiences and feelings as a reader. Create a timeline with 3-5 events or memories. We’ll be sharing our timelines in a special way today when we come back together after the work time.”  

| Literacy Work Time and Conferring (35-45 min.) | [Circulate and confer with students and/or continue with reading assessments.]  

| Share (5-10 min): | “We’re going to do a ‘museum share’ today. You’ll leave your Reader’s Notebook open to your timeline at your place, and we’ll all circulate around the room and take a brief look at each others’ timelines.”  
Sharing what happened…  
• Link to focus  
• Reinforce teaching point  
• Demonstrate new learning  
• Popcorn share  
• Celebrate learning

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**Grade level:** 5
Sample Rubric for Independent Reading

# Four-Square Vocabulary

**Name:______________  Book Title:_______________**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word:</th>
<th>Examples:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dictionary Definition:</td>
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Cooperative Routines

In a classroom that invites students to actively participate in learning, the emphasis is on helping them understand how language works and how to connect new knowledge with prior knowledge to generate new learning.

(Mondo Bookshop)

Cooperative routines are taught and used at every grade level to increase students’ engagement and accountability for participation. The consistency, predictability and evolving rigor of the K-6 cooperative routines ensures that students learn to work together, develop social skills, and take responsibility for their learning as the texts and content become more complex.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Levels</th>
<th>Cooperative Routine</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>K-6</td>
<td>Turn and Talk</td>
<td>Students turn to a partner sitting next to them to discuss a question or concept.</td>
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<tr>
<td>K-6</td>
<td>Think, Pair, Share</td>
<td>Students think individually about a question before discussing their thoughts with a partner. Pairs then report their thinking to another pair or the class.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3-6</td>
<td>Think, Pair, Write</td>
<td>As in “Think, Pair, Share”, students think individually before discussing their thoughts with a partner. Students then write what they are thinking. They might share their writing with another pair or with the class.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4-6</td>
<td>Heads Together</td>
<td>Groups of four students discuss a question among themselves. Groups might then share their thinking with the class.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4-6</td>
<td>Group Brainstorming</td>
<td>Groups of four generate as many ideas as they can about a question as a group member records their thinking. These lists are then shared with the class.</td>
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<tr>
<td>K-3 4-5 (selectively)</td>
<td>Buddy Reading</td>
<td>Students read familiar texts with a partner. Students may share a book or use their own copies. Buddies take turns reading aloud, listening, and questioning. The listening student follows along and provides support when necessary. Students are encouraged to read fluently, with phrasing and expression.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4-6</td>
<td>Book Clubs</td>
<td>Heterogeneous groups of 4-6 students read and engage in authentic conversation around a title of choice. Students choose a book club based on an interest in a particular genre, author, topic or theme. Book club discussions center on talk about plot, character development, themes, or connections.</td>
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CLOCK BUDDIES
Reader’s Notebook

What is the Reader’s Notebook?
In the Reader’s Workshop, students keep a Reader’s Notebook. The Reader’s Notebook is a place for readers to document their thinking and growth, to support their thinking for group discussions, and to reflect upon and explore their own ideas about text. These are notebooks in which readers keep their thinking about their own reading processes and habits. Readers also keep notes about how authors use language in interesting ways. They zero in on literary elements that authors use to develop their stories and relate how those elements affect them as readers. Additionally, readers use the Reader’s Notebook to develop and extend their understanding of comprehension strategies as they tackle different texts from different genres.

In the beginning of the year, the teacher uses Reader’s Notebook strategies for guided practice. S/he models the strategy with a read-aloud and then asks students to try the strategy when responding to the book they’re reading independently or in guided reading. As students become more independent in using Reader’s Notebook strategies, the teacher hands over the responsibility of choosing response strategies to the students. Once or twice a week, students choose different response strategies to help them push their thinking about what and how they read.

How often do students respond to their reading?
Students should respond to their reading approximately three times per week. Although students need to know how to respond to their independent reading, it shouldn’t dominate the Reader’s Workshop. Learners need to spend most of their time reading. In essence, students need to know how to thoughtfully respond to their reading as well as how to enjoy the reading experience. Reader’s Notebook entries range in length from words, phrases, lists, and sentences to more developed paragraphs.

Launching the Reader’s Notebook
When launching the Reader’s Notebook, it is essential for students to understand that this is their notebook, these are their ideas, and they are in control of how they respond. The teacher’s job is to guide students, to help them approach their thinking in ways that focus what they want to write. The teacher uses strategies, rather than prompts, as open-ended invitations for readers to think about elements of books and genres in order to draw their own conclusions and respond in ways that seem natural to them. Response entries need to be driven by the reader’s passion and not by a prescribed list of questions that becomes a blueprint for all responses. Thus, responses to literature are fueled by the learner’s ideas, wonderings, surprises, and connections.

During the launching unit of Reader’s Workshop, interviews, reading surveys, and reading conferences provide teachers with critical information about their students. Responses in the Reader’s Notebook provide teachers with an introduction to the reader inside of each student. Within the Reader’s Notebook, students have multiple opportunities to demonstrate the kind of reader and thinker they are at the beginning the school year, as well as the reader they want to grow into as the year progresses.