

Goal: Promote student inquiry while reading and deepen understanding of a text through student-led discussion

Book Clubs/Literature Circles

Book Clubs are small-group discussions around a shared text. As a group of students reads a novel or longer text, they meet regularly in Book Clubs to share observations, questions, and new learnings related to their reading. Students are often assigned roles during Book Clubs, which focuses them on specific actions to do while reading. Prior to a group meeting, students read an assigned text or section and prepare discussion points to share with their group. Book Clubs can be used to encourage close reading and foster student discussion around both fiction and nonfiction texts.

Challenges

Since groups of students are reading different texts, it is difficult for the teacher to monitor individual student progress and provide targeted instruction to meet student needs and learning objectives.

Not all students feel comfortable participating in small group discussions. This may be because they struggled with reading and comprehending the text or they feel less confident about sharing their ideas in front of others.

Groups have a hard time recalling insights from earlier sections of the text and prior discussions. As a result, as students progress through the text they are unable to build on previous ideas and connect their learning.

Solutions

The teacher assigns each group's text in Actively Learn and embeds questions to check for understanding and prompt deeper thinking. As students respond, the teacher provides feedback and addresses misconceptions.

The teacher adds annotations within each group's text to provide key background knowledge and scaffold challenging concepts. Students also prepare for discussion by adding their own notes and reviewing other students' responses.

As groups progress through a text, their notes and question responses are stored in Actively Learn. This allows them to easily reference ideas from previous discussions. At the end of a text, all of the group's work can be easily reviewed.

Thinking about using Actively Learn for Book Clubs? Here are some tips:

- [Assign only the portion of the text](#) that students will be reading for their Book Club meeting.
- Use teacher directions to assign student roles and to [set objectives](#) for each group's reading.
- Rename [note categories](#) based on the roles students will take while reading (e.g., summarizer, vocabulary enricher, connection maker, etc.). Direct students to use these categories as they read the text to prepare ideas for discussion.
- Include a reflection question at the end of each assigned section that students can complete after their Book Club meeting (e.g., *Based on the text and your discussion, how has your thinking about ____ changed? What was an important idea or explanation shared by someone else during the discussion?*).