Sample Reading Logs and Writing Assignments to use with Book Love
# Student Reading Log

Write the starting and ending page numbers for your reading every day and the total number of pages read each week in the last column.

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Adapted from *Book Love* by Penny Kittle
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Adapted from *Book Love* by Penny Kittle
Independent Reading Check-In: Non-Fiction

Directions: Please complete all the questions/activities on this sheet using complete sentences and provide examples when requested.

1. What made you decide to read about the topic of your book? What aspects of the topic are addressed in your book?

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2. What are three things you learned reading your book? In what way would use the information in your own life?

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3. What has been your greatest challenge in reading this book? Provide examples to support your answer.
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4. What would help you to continue reading this book and successfully finish it? Provide specific information.
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5. Would you recommend this book to fellow classmates? Explain your answer.
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Independent Reading Check-In: Fiction

Directions: Please complete all the questions/activities on this sheet using complete sentences and provide examples when requested.

1. To which character in your novel do you feel the closest connection? Why? Provide examples to support your answer.

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2. What is the primary conflict the protagonist is facing? How is this conflict affecting him or her? Provide examples to support your answer.

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3. What has been your greatest challenge in reading this book? Provide examples to support your answer.
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4. What would help you to continue reading this book and successfully finish it? Provide specific information.
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5. Would you recommend this book to fellow classmates? Explain your answer.
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Blog Post

"You don't own hungry, Aimee"
Blog Post by Kelsey, Grade 12

Meghan Ball (AKA "butterball"): sophomore at Valley Regional High School
status: obese
hobbies include: eating, being invisible, refusing to speak, observing as an outsider, and stalking Aimee Zorn from a distance
friends with: no one
misc. info.: skips gym class, gets bullied by the most popular jock in the school ("J-Bar"), eats herself into a coma

Aimee Zorn: freshman at Valley Regional High School
status: anorexic, but refuses to admit or believe that she is
hobbies include: eating nothing but green Jell-O and carrots, writing poetry
friends with: her mother's ex-boyfriend Bill (poetry professor) and head editor of the school newspaper The Photon, Cara Roy
misc. info: gets sick often due to malnutrition, has an exponentially growing list of foods she is "allergic to", doesn't like talking to her mom

Cara Roy: editor of the Photon
status: formerly anorexic?
hobbies include: smiling, writing poetry, and being popular
ex-best friend: Meghan Ball
current best friend: Aimee Zorn
misc. info.: wins the poetry competition with a stolen poem.....written by Aimee Zorn

Read the fantastic book *Looks* by Madeleine George to find out:
what Aimee does as a result of being followed by Meghan
if Meghan ever gets the courage to stand up to J-Bar and Cara
how Aimee plans to seek revenge on her former best-friend for taking credit for her poem

*Looks* is a heartwarming tale about an alliance between both an overweight and an underweight teenage girl and the struggles that both of them have had to overcome throughout high school.

Whether you're "too fat" or "too skinny" or somewhere in between, I promise you, you WILL relate to and enjoy this book.
**Blog Post**

**Reality Check** by Peter Abrahams
Blog Post by Jordan, Grade 11

GOLLY GEE WILLAKERS GUYS, YOU WON'T BELIEVE THIS BOOK, IT IS A MYSTERY.

Now, this is a story all about how
Cody's life got turned upside down
And I'd like to take a minute.
Just sit on that vent
I'll tell you how Cody decided to leave Little Bent
He was in Little Bent, born and raised.
On the football field was where he spent most of his days.
Chillin' out maxin' relaxin' all cool
And swimmin with his girl outside of the school.
When a couple of days, that were no good
It started making trouble in their neighborhood.
Clea got one little B and her dad got scared.
He said "You're moving to a school way over there."

She begged and pleaded with him everyday.
But he packed her suitcase and sent her away.
He gave her a kiss and then gave her a ticket.
Cody and her broke up and Cody said, 'I might as well kick it'.

Cody playing football shattered his leg like glass.
Cody got mad and dropped every class.
He started missing his old relationship like.
Hmmmmm this ain't alright.
But wait he hears Clea's missing and all that.
Cody couldn't take it so, curiosity killed the cat.
He has to find her.
He traveled faster than air
To see his lost girlfriend way over there.

Well, Cody arrived and when he got out
There was a dude who looked like a cop standing there yelling his name out.
He said he's here to help and the cop sent him away.
He just got here
but started thinking about how his girlfriend just, disappeared.
Reading Ladder

Reading Ladder and Reflection for Semester 1
by Andrew, Grade 12

2. *American Sniper* by Chris Kyle (377 pages) Difficulty: Medium
3. *Guns, Germs and Steel* by Jared Diamond (426 pages) Difficulty: Medium
4. *Little Brother* by Cory Doctorow (365 pages) Difficulty: Easy
5. *The Lost Hero* by Rick Riordan (533 pages) Difficulty: Easy
6. *Mark of Athena* by Rick Riordan (574 pages) Difficulty: Easy
7. *House of Hades* by Rick Riordan (583 pages) Difficulty: Easy

Total pages read: 3169 and approximately 186 pages per week

The books I’ve read this quarter have varied drastically. One was set in the fantastical world of J.R.R Tolkien, another was a projection through the eyes of the most dangerous sniper in American history. *Little Brother* was set in a seemingly dystopian future where everything is monitored and surveyed by authoritarian figures. *Guns, Germs and Steel* is a brief history of the past 13,000 years of human history. I would definitely say the *The Silmarillion* is the odd duck in this list because of the fact that it takes place in a separate universe and reality than all the other books on the list. It was also the hardest book in the list to read seeing as though it was the reintroduction to reading large books and just reading in general for me.

The following books in the order of easiest to hardest were *Heroes of Olympus, Little Brother, American Sniper* and *Guns Germs and Steel* have proven easier to read as time has progressed and I have read more. They aren’t easy books, well except for *Little Brother* and what I’ve read of the *Heroes of Olympus Series* which I hammered each book out in about 3-4 days. *American Sniper* and *Guns, Germs and Steel* have been a little harder because all the information presented in the books. The three books that I read second quarter were more along the line of just brain candy and very easy to read. I decided to start the next Rick Riordan series, *The Heroes of Olympus*, which furthered the story of Percy Jackson and highlights the other aspect of the demigods because I remember enjoying the Percy Jackson series when I first read it. This series focused on the Roman Demigods and follows the adventures of Jason, who is the son of Jupiter.

This semester I read 3169 pages and, compared to when I started reading, my rate nearly doubled from 70 pages per week to 120 pages per week and finally 186 pages on average. I know for a fact that certain weeks I read more than 300 pages while reading *The Heros of Olympus Series*. In other weeks it was closer to the average of 250-300. I think this quarter, I’ll challenge myself to read more historical non-fiction because I enjoy history and the more I learn about it the more fun I have. I’m also going to challenge myself to read fiction too, but it’s probably going to be small, controlled doses and most likely books similar to the *Lord of the Rings* and other works of authors similar to J.R.R Tolkien. As well as reading more pages and more books in general, I’m going to try to read as many books as I can for the rest of the school year to prepare for college and astronomical amount of reading that I’ve been told about.
Teachers Make Time for Reading

Colin Flynn and Kerry Holtmeier
Washington High School: Washington, MO
colin.flynn@washington.k12.mo.us
kerry.holtmeier@washington.k12.mo.us

Objectives for Training:
1. Learn to make reading something the students want to do instead of have to do
2. Understand methods to increase the complexity of the books the students read
3. Find techniques to create a community of readers
4. Highlight activities to increase student comprehension as a result of their own independent reading
5. Discover how to create life-long readers

"Read. Read anything. Read the things they say are good for you, and the things they claim are junk. You'll find what you need to find. Just read."
Neil Gaiman

"The more that you read, the more things you will know. The more that you learn, the more places you'll go."

There is no such thing as a child who hates to read; there are only children who have not found the right book.
Frank Serafini
We collected the following goals for our reading community through a lengthy examination of expert reading teachers’ practices and programs. We read numerous books, articles, blogs, and tweets to establish our list. Any teacher or building committed to Independent Reading should write their own list of “must haves” and then get busy making it a reality.

1. Structured Time Every Day
   - We find time in the class period and make that time sacred.
   - Students have embraced the routine and the purpose.
   - We sacrifice anything else before this time.

2. A Wide Variety of Books in the Classroom Library
   - The books should appeal to ALL our students.
   - The books help us get the right book to our students as soon as possible.
   - Students see books every day, reminding them of the value of reading.

3. Continuing Conversations about Books
   - Both the formal and informal talks reinforce the value of books and reading.
   - Students complete written reflections after reading to better understand their role in the reading community.
   - Student to student recommendations are the best!

4. Goals Agreed to by Student and Teacher
   - Individualized goals encourage students to continuously improve.
   - Goals allow for tracking and assessment.
   - Meeting or exceeding goals provides opportunities for celebration.

5. Continuous Reflection about What Students Read
   - Reflection encourages deeper thinking about what students are reading and how those books connect to their world.
   - These activities provide an opportunity to assess progress on reading and writing standards.
   - Students learn how to determine their individual reading preferences.
Proposal for Implementing *Book Love* in the English 3 Classroom

To implement Book Love in the English 3 classroom, we will reduce the number of teacher chosen texts and increase the amount of student chosen reading. We will eliminate all whole class texts except *Of Mice and Men* (1st Quarter), *The Crucible* (2nd Quarter), and *The Great Gatsby* (4th Quarter). Instead of teacher selected books, students will choose their own books. Students will read from their independently chosen books for 10 minutes at the beginning of each class period and outside of class for a minimum of 2 hours per week.

**Activities to Accompany Student Independent Reading:**

- Students will keep a reading log tracking the choice books they read each quarter (in the front of their writer’s notebook) and a NEXT list (in the back of their writer’s notebook).
- Students will use their choice books to complete activities in and outside the classroom. These tasks will focus student learning toward the standards assigned to each quarter.
- Students will create a reading ladder at the end of each quarter—including books read (ranked from hardest to easiest), a calculation and discussion of the student’s reading rate, mini-reviews of favorite books, and a reflection over their goals for the quarter and new goals for the next quarter.
- Teachers will create an enthusiastic attitude toward reading by introducing a wide range of books through book talks at a regular interval throughout the year.
- Teachers will design mini-lessons to teach reading and writing standards that can be completed using the students’ choice books for completion.
- Teachers will confer 1 on 1 with students during the sustained silent reading time to assist readers with their reading life (to ensure that students are reading), reading comprehension (to ensure that students are understanding what they are reading), and planning for future reading (to ensure that students increase complexity and challenge themselves in future reading).

**Grades for Student Independent Reading:**

- 10 points per week for reading log (80-90 points per quarter)
- 50 points per quarter for reading activities
- 50 points per quarter for reading ladder
“But The Kids Aren’t Reading--20 Ideas for Creating Passionate Reading Environments”
by Pernille Ripp--blog post available on Blogging Through the Fourth Dimension at pernillesripp.com

So many of us are trying to create passionate reading environments, we are doing all the things the
experts tell us to do, and yet, something just isn’t clicking. Some kids are reading sure, but they would
probably be reading any way, others though, not so much. Our passionate reading environments are just
not working for all of our kids.

So what have I done to continue to create passionate reading environments? Here are a few ideas…

**Invested in books.** Every single book that I have in my classroom, pretty much, is a book that I think
might capture a reader. While I know our libraries should have massive amounts of books for all readers, I
also believe in quality over quantity.

**Diversity in books.** Our students need to be able to find themselves and their lives within the books we
have. Not just across racial lines or economic lines but also in the narratives of their self-identity.

**Easy access to our books.** We need to have in-class libraries so that students can bookshop whenever
they need to and so that they can be enticed to read.

**Giving choice.** Choice in seating, choice in books, choice in way of reading.

**Free abandonment.** Students think they need permission to abandon books for some reason and so I
celebrate freely whenever I abandon a book.

**Leaving time to talk books.** Too often we over-schedule our lessons and don’t leave time to just talk
about what we are reading and why it is amazing. So find holes in your schedule where students can just
talk books without any project attached to it.

**Teacher recommendations.** I start many classes with the 1 minute book recommendation sharing why I
loved a book or why I bought a book. Then I place it on a ledge and walk away. I do different
recommendation in all of my classes.

**Student recommendations.** We talk about books quite a bit, both in structured and unstructured ways.
We do the 1 minute speed book dating where students face each other in two long rows and one side
recommends their book in a minute, once the timer buzzes they go to the next person and recommend it
to them.

**The To-Be-Read List.** Students need to always have an idea of what they will be reading next so we
have a paper list this year of the books we cannot wait to read.

**It is judgment free.** I am not the reading police and while I continually recommend books to students I
will not stop them from reading a book, nor will I judge them based on what they are reading. Sometimes
your strongest readers need a break, other times your developing readers need a challenge.

**Celebrating the re-read.** Too often we assume that students are re-reading because they lack
inspiration, but that may not be the case. Some kids are re-reading to discover more about the text, that is
true close reading.

**No need for speed.** Because we are reading log free, we have no need to track minutes or pages.
Students read as much as they can in our independent reading time and I only ask them to write down
the title.

**Protecting independent reading time.** Often our independent reading time is what we sacrifice when we
have a lot to cover, and yet, this is the thing we need to protect the most. I start almost every class period
with 10 minutes of independent reading and it is sacred time for us (thank you for the idea Jillian Heise!).
Creating enticing libraries. Kids love book stores because the books are exciting, even our most reluctant readers will pick a new book off the shelves if we display it well.

Creating reading role models. Students need reading role models, and not just adult ones. I love being passionate reader and it is something I showcase any chance I get in our classroom, but more importantly students need to see students who are reading role models as well.

Let them order books. If a child says they cannot find a book they love, then I pull out a Scholastic catalog or get on Amazon and I let them choose a book. I use bonus points when I can or I buy the book myself if I need to. Sometimes simply being able to completely choose a brand new book means that a child will at least try to read the books.

Crack your hardest nut. You know that kid that really hates reading and almost flaunts it every chance they get. Spend your energy on them because often they are influencing the way their peers are thinking. So they are the ones I continually pass books to, they are the ones I am always talking books with, and they are the ones that I try to get be a reading role model if I can get them hooked.

Embrace mature books. These are the books that some of our most reluctant readers will finally pick up. The ones with the swear words, or the ones with the little bit more mature story lines. Be selective, set your standards, but don’t shield all readers from mature books. These can be “that” book for some of our kids who otherwise will never read.

Ask your students. Too often we assume that we know why students are not reading, so we never ask, but that is the very first thing we need to do. Ask your students to discuss why they hate reading and get those demons out in the open so that you can start to work with them rather than just assume you know what the problem is.

Stay passionate. There are times when we get so busy that reading was pushed to the side, yet often within our busyness is when we need to embrace our passion even more. So re-ignite your own passion, change things up, go on a mission to find the most magnificent book you have ever read so that you can hand it to students. Don’t let the outside world influence your inside passionate classroom.

Become a reading warrior. No more quiet compliance when initiatives are introduced that we know will hurt students’ love of reading, we have to band together and start speaking up for our students. Their love of reading is too sacred for us to stay silent any longer.

Partner with the librarian! Whether your school has one (which every school should!) or you partner with your local librarian, bringing in another knowledgeable reading adult is a sure fire way to have an even bigger impact. You are not alone in trying to create passionate reading environments, your librarian should be a trusted ally.
Kids Hate Reading? Then Introduce Them to Read-Dating

by Chase Mielke, Blog Post available at weareteachers.com

“I hate reading.” No three words frustrate me more than these. What enrages me about this phrase is that it is a lie. Students love reading. They read hundreds of texts and newsfeeds every day. They just hate boring reading.

But ultimately, what frustrates me most is that we teachers create this perception by killing the joy of reading. How do we kill it? By being terrible matchmakers.

Reading a book is like dating. Here’s why:

1. It's often disastrous to judge a book by its cover.
   Just watch The Bachelor or The Bachelorette for guaranteed support of this idea.

2. We don't hate relationships. We just hate terrible, boring relationships.
   We don't hate reading. We hate terrible, boring reading. So, saying we hate reading altogether is like saying we hate all boys or all girls. We just haven't found the right person or the right book. Sure, we can convince ourselves that we really do hate boys or girls. But then we'll end up old and lonely with 30 cats.

3. Sometimes we have to get through a few dates before we really know whether the relationship is worth it.
   Similarly, books can be really boring in their exposition. The first few pages (dates) are often awkward and filled with a lot of background talk. Just as we may benefit from a certain number of dates before bailing on the relationship, we can set a benchmark number of pages before quitting. Surprises may surface as we get to know our date.

4. Breakups are OK.
   Ever known a person who just will not realize how terrible his/her significant other is? As friends, we often find it is our duty to help the person out and identify the thousand “red flags.” Do we allow the same escape plans for reading?

So, if you're ready to make your students love reading, then help them be lovers with the tips below.

And if you want to take your matchmaking skills to the next level, set up a reading speed date.

Step 1: Know your audience.
   If you're going to be a good matchmaker, get to know your students’ likes, dislikes, interests, frustrations, reading abilities—everything you can. With this knowledge in hand, find as many books as you can. I try to find at least three potential books for
every student. Challenging and time-consuming? Yes. But it's worth it. Use your local or school librarian or consult other teachers.

Step 2: Set the mood.
At tables or desks, spread out an assortment of books. Mix them or keep them together by genre. Light some candles and play some D'Angelo in the background if you want to creeping the kids out. Otherwise, just the tables and books will do.

Step 3: Set the expectations.
Post students up at a mingling table. I've found benefit in letting a few students sit at a table with a wide assortment of books. Require students to spend some silent time browsing, perusing and reading. After some silent one-on-one time, though, let them gossip about their dates before rotating to the next station.

Step 4: Play Cupid.
Pre-brief with certain students about particular titles to “keep an eye out for.” But don’t get too emo if your matchmaking isn't successful and they choose something different. Even Cupid makes mistakes.

Step 5: Use speed-dating reflection cards.
Hand students a few reflection cards (example below). As they come across a potential match, have them note the information. In the event that someone else swoops the book off its feet, they'll have some backup dates. Collecting these cards will also help your matchmaking in the future.

Title: _________________________________________
What interests me about it:
After reading a page I'd rate the reading level at:
(Too Easy) (Too Hard)
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Who else might like it:

6. Check in.
While students are reading, use this time to conference with a few kids each day. Ask them what they are liking/disliking about the books. Not only will this give you better insight into their approach to reading and style, it helps them develop metacognition about why they don't like a certain book.

7. Let them enjoy dating.
Nothing kills the mood like forced expectations in the relationship. Remember: Kids don't hate reading. They will read for enjoyment. If a student isn't reading, it's not a sign that we need to force an assignment for accountability; it's a sign that we need to work harder to help the student find the right book.