

Literacy-Focused Activities for Classrooms

For generations, teachers have used countless variations of exercises and projects to help kids learn to spell, read, write and speak publicly. Following are a number of creative classroom activities that can spark imagination while instructing students in the various forms of literacy.

- **Book Trailers** – Students create video ads about books they have read to share with the class and attract new readers. – *copywriting, writing (persuasive), speaking, digital literacy*
- **Book Podcasts** – Students create and share podcasts to relate excerpts from books, using appropriate background music and sound effects. – *reading, speaking, digital literacy, listening*
- **Alternate Endings** – Students read books up to a certain point and then summarize how they feel the stories should proceed and end. The results can be shared aloud or in writing. They then complete the books and compare their endings with the actual ones. – *reading, speaking, writing*
- **In Character** – Book characters come to life when students take on their roles, telling their first-person stories, dressed as the characters or using related props. – *reading, speaking*
- **Breakfast Book Club** – Before school starts, students meet in the cafeteria over breakfast to discuss a book they're reading together. – *reading, speaking, listening*
- **Grab Bag** – After reading a book, each student chooses a character and select 3-5 items that symbolize or have importance to the character. As the characters, students introduce themselves and pull each item out of the bag, explaining its significance to them and the story. – *reading, speaking*
- **When I Was Born** – What happened on the day of your birth? Each student researches their day in areas such as news (local, national and international), music, pop culture, sports, science and literature, and then report on their results. – *reading, web research, speaking, writing*
- **Celebrity Guest** – Students select famous persons with whom they would like to spend a day. After researching their lives and accomplishments, students write summaries of the celebrities and then introduce them as if they were present and about to meet the class. Photos could be used to provide a visual element. – *web research, writing, speaking*
- **The Greatest American** – Which American exhibits excellent personal characteristics and has made outstanding contributions to our way of life? Students answer that question and prepare a brief biography and related visuals to introduce the person to the class. – *web research, writing, speaking*

- **Book Madness** – Like March madness, but with books. Beginning with a chart listing 64 popular books, students cast votes for each pairing, day after day, until one book emerges victorious. In class, students discuss why they feel certain books deserve to win and try to persuade others to vote for their favorites. – *reading, speaking (persuasive)*
- **Read-a-Thon** – Students raise funds from sponsors to benefit a local literacy program by reading as a group in a large space over several hours. For variety, periods of silence alternate with periods of music, and breaks are advised to let students expend energy either in the gym or outdoors. – *reading*
- **Book Covers** – Students select a favorite book that they have read and design and create a book cover that portrays the theme of the book. They can also share with the class the book that they have chosen and why. – *reading, speaking*
- **Book Boards** – Students select a favorite book that they have read and summarize it and create a picture about the book's theme. The writings and artwork are then displayed on bulletin boards in the classroom or hallway to encourage others to read these books. – *reading, writing*
- **Book PSAs** – Students select a favorite book that they have read and, throughout a given month, promote the book for 30-60 seconds during morning announcements. The book pitches could also be printed and featured in a school newsletter or student newspaper. – *reading, writing, speaking, listening*