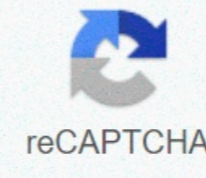




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## Literature circle job sheets

Literature Circles is an exciting reading program that allows students to control their learning. In this program, the class is divided into reading groups, each group consisting of four or five students. Each group has the opportunity to choose their own book to read, as well as the pace at which it wants to read it (all under the supervision of the teacher, of course). During reading their chosen literature, students perform a variety of jobs, highlighting skills such as high-level questioning, vocabulary development and writing. Similar to the book club, students then get together for the opportunity to share their work and discuss the books they read. Interested in starting Literary Circles with your students? Below you will find the materials and information Brent used when he ran the Literary Circles program in his class. Feel free to use and customize any of the resources found on this page. Literature Circles WorksheetsClick on the page below to download it for use in your class. Frequently asked questions While he was still in class, Brent received a lot of questions about how he ran his literary circles program. Below is a list of the most frequently asked questions, followed by his answers. Please understand these answers should not be considered the right or only way to run a literary circle program. Rather, the answers represent what Brent found to work well in his class. How do you group students? I group my students homogeneously. I'm happy in my school to access the Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI), a fantastic reading assessment that quickly and easily measures student reading awareness. Using SRI scores called Lexiles, as well as other class ratings as a guide, I place students in groups with readers at a similar reading level. I also try, whenever possible, to create only boys and girls-only groups. I don't do this throughout the curriculum, but over the years I've found that students tend to open up more in their book-based discussions when they are surrounded by others of the same sex. Are students staying in the same groups all year round? Not always. Literary bows aim to match readers to properly leveled text, so it makes sense that if a student shows a dramatic improvement in his/her reading ability, it is necessary to move him to a higher level group. That said, I have found that over the course of the school year, everyone is improving, not just one or two students. As one student develops, so do the rest. In short, most groups grow together, enabling them to remain intact. Of course, if a student develops his/her skills much faster than the rest of the group, changes are needed. Do students choose their books or assign them? Although I confirm their selection to ensure that books are reading level, groups choose their books. When students are introduced to the literature circles for the first time, they are given a list of all available books. Next to each title, the list contains the level of the book Lexile. By comparing the book level with the lexile levels of the students in the group, students can quickly and easily find a suitable selection. It is important to note that when selecting books, the lexile levels of books are used as a guideline rather than a strict rule. I occasionally recommend books for my students that are not exactly playing for the student and book Lexile level. I have encountered books awarded by Lexiles compared to my experience with books that don't seem quite accurate. For example, Mr. Popper's Penguins are lexile 910, putting it at a high 5th grade level. I have found, however, this book is perfect for some of my struggling 5th grade readers. In fact, when I taught grade 4, I used this book as the main novel for my entire class. I think what I'm trying to say is if your experience makes you think the book can be a good match for your students, despite the fact that there are no obvious games between lexile level books and students, don't be afraid to give it a try. Students will know in a chapter or two if the book is too hard or too easy. How long does it take for a group to complete a book? It depends on the group and the book that is being read. A shorter book can be completed by a high-level group in just a week or two, or a longer book may require a month for students reading slower. How are jobs assigned? Every student has what we call a working wheel. To create a working wheel, I first give students a circular piece of paper divided into pie-like sections, each section in which it is lit. Circle working name (here is the uncut working wheels that I use for 4-person and 5-person groups). Then this piece of paper is attached to a small square piece of building paper, pushing a small brass brad through the center of both sheets of paper. By drawing an arrow on top of the construction paper and turning the wheel, students are able to determine for the same what jobs they are responsible for completing. Students follow their work by reading assignments, and execution dates in the literature circles Assignment Sheet.How do you grade student jobs? In my class, each job is worth 5 points. When sorting works, I look for three things: completeness, effort, and accuracy. First, I check that the work has been completed in its entirety, including all relevant items (e.g. book title, pages/chapters read). Works with incomplete headings are automatically docked at one point, and work in progress is marked down and must be melted. I then check to make sure that the work is completed accurately. For example, did the discussion director write a high-level (not just yes/no questions)? Can Word Finder correctly define the words he/she looked at? Finally, I try. It's very clear when a student has put a good effort into the literary circles of the task, just as it's very clear when he/she isn't. I consistently stress to my students that if they work hard and do their best, improvement (and usually a good grade) is bound to follow. How often do you meet the circles of literature? My students meet in the literature once a week, usually on Fridays. The other four days of reading instructions are spent in our district's adopted reading series and/or in a new base unit. In recent years, I've had students meet twice a week (Tuesdays and Fridays), but I've found once a week more to my liking for two reasons. First, it allows me to devote more time to our reading series, and secondly, because there is more time between meetings, students are able to read a larger portion of their books, thus allowing them to have deeper discussions when they meet in their groups. Where do you get your Literary Circles books? I have been fortunate enough to build my Literature Circles library almost entirely using bonus points from book clubs like Scholastic. Starting with about my third year of teaching, I started putting all my bonus points against new Lit Circles books. By adding two or three new books each time I place a student order, I've been able to build a pretty substantial collection. How do you find Lexile level in your Literary Circles books? Lexile.com is a fantastic database of over 100,000 books from over 450 publishers. Every time I get a new book, I search the database using my book search function to find books at the Lexile level. At what degrees can you run literary circles? I have run Literature Circles in both my 4th and 5th grade classes and know about teachers who have run them at the top class level. The 3rd grader may not be ready for the freedom and responsibility that comes with the full blown Literary Circles program, so I recommend a modified program with greater teacher involvement at this grade level. When I taught in 4th grade, I used to wait until about January to start the program. Since student responsibility is imperative for the program to work successfully, I always waited until we got a little deeper into the school year. It gave students more time to strengthen their independence and accountability before we got started. When I taught in 5th grade, I usually presented the program in October.How do you monitor the groups? In each session, I usually move around the classroom, spending a little time with each group. I sit down and listen to the discussion and exchange that's going on, make sure the group is on the task, and then move on to another group. Me too to point several times a year to spend sessions from start to finish. This allows me to see the group dynamics for a full session and not just during a random five-minute time block. Is Literature Circles Effective? I have found that they are very effective. My student awareness and vocabulary scores have steadily increased as a result of the program. But what thrills me more than improved test scores is the fact that Literature Circles make my students excited about reading. They wait for their group meetings every week, and are always disappointed when something like the assembly forces rescheduling the Literary Circles session. Here are some research on the effectiveness of the Lit. Circles.Can I use my worksheets with my students? Please feel free to download and use my worksheets and other handouts with your students. If you have a class website and decide to post pages on your site to your students to download, please include the link back to the Literary Circles page on my site. Any tips to get started? Make sure you take the time to carefully train your students on exactly how you want your program to work. Before I even split my class into groups, I usually spend two or three weeks on things like introducing the concept of Literary Circles. Here is a PowerPoint presentation I use to help introduce the program to my students.discussing the qualities students need to show to Literary Circles is effective.going over Bloom's six-level questioning, emphasizing the need to use higher level issues during group discussions, discuss and modeling each work. Here is the Things to Look For chart detailing the requirements for each job.introducing work wheels and award sheets.modeling procedures for the Literary Circles session (what you do first, second, etc.). Also, I highly recommend being strict with your expectations early so that bad habits don't develop (I speak from experience here). As for jobs, I've found that when I've accepted less than a student's best efforts at first, I was more likely to continue to get a job that doesn't necessarily reflect what a student was able to produce. Finally, Literature Circles only works when everyone comes to the group prepared. The group cannot have discussions unless the discussion director does his job. Students must be responsible for the program to work. Comments like I didn't do my job or I left my job at home can doom it. I previously had problems with students who don't finish their jobs in time. I've found that the best way to ensure that students finish their work on time is to make the penalty for not doing their job hard. In my class, students know that if they don't finish their assigned work, they must then complete all five works during recess and lunch. Simple benching during recess is personally, it turned out to be a sufficient deterrent. I say to my class, take the time to do one job well, so you don't have to spend much more time doing all five. Strictly? You can be sure. But you know what? It works. Plus, I let my students know that if they don't do their job, they are not just letting me and myself down, they're letting their group mates down as well. Also.

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