

LIBRARY MANUAL

for
Primary Schools



Tested and proven ways to set up, operate, and maintain a great lending library at your school!

- Choose and Prepare Your Library Space
- Organize, Level, and Color-Code the Books
- Create Library Rules and a Checkout System
- Choose a Library Team and Student Librarians
- Prepare the Students, Teachers, and Parents



Explore. Discover. Learn. Grow.

A world of knowledge awaits your students in the library. Bringing a vibrant lending library to life in your school is one of the most academically powerful, life-changing gifts you can give to your students. Hands Across the Sea is dedicated to creating sustainable lending libraries in Eastern Caribbean schools, and we want to help you create a first-class library that can be easily managed and maintained.

This manual offers a step-by-step method for creating and running a color-coded library system for your primary school. The suggestions are the result of assisting over 375 Hands Wish Lists projects with their libraries and are designed to require minimal funding to set up and minimal time to maintain.

Libraries support the school's work of literacy and education. They also complement the Child Friendly Schools Initiative and the book report requirements for the CPEA or Grade 6 primary school exit assessment. A school's library is useful for young children because it encourages the formation of good reading habits. It is crucial for teachers to

stimulate children's curiosity about books and to encourage students to read. One of the best ways of supporting literacy is to set up a school library with a wide variety of information and fiction books that students can borrow. While a few books will get lost along the way, the benefits of encouraging regular reading habits are better students and thus better citizens.

We encourage you to set up a simple composition book or index card checkout system (computers are expensive and require upgrades and repairs). The most important measure of a successful library is that children are borrowing the books and reading them. We want your library to work for you and your students. Hands Across the Sea is here to support and encourage your work in raising the literacy levels of your students.

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Student Librarian Handbook Contents

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Central Library or Classroom Library?

Hands Across the Sea believes strongly in the power of a central school library. While some teachers will have classroom libraries, these can be challenging for individual teachers to maintain and manage year after year.

It's also difficult to access great new books, and while one teacher may have a source for appropriate books, another teacher may have too few or inappropriate books for her classroom library.

Classroom space in city schools can be very tight, and there may be no room for a reading corner and classroom library in a crowded school. Some advantages to having a central school library are:

- The entire school community can be involved in creating and maintaining a dedicated space for a library. Teachers, students, parents, librarians and government employment scheme workers can all share the load.
- A "reading corner" floor mat, fresh paint on the walls, a literacy mural, and enticing books with covers facing out on the shelves creates a child-friendly space where students can feel at home, be comfortable, and even find a safe haven in the pages of a great book.
- The books can be shared by every student and teacher in the school. Some students may be reading below grade level, but they will be able to find a fiction or nonfiction book that suits their abilities in a central library. For fluent readers a central library offers various chapter book series they can dig into or more advanced nonfiction books full of facts and information to explore the world.
- In a school with spacious classrooms, a teacher can always select a range of books from the central library and borrow them for a week or two for her classroom reading corner. When the students have read the books, they can be swapped for fresh ones.
- The library provides opportunities for student leadership. You may pick your most responsible students to become Student Librarians, or perhaps you encourage those students who are causing trouble to step up, improve their behavior, and help their fellow students by serving in the school library.



How and Why to Form a Library Team

Attempting to run a library singlehandedly is an all-consuming undertaking—especially when it comes to getting students and staff involved. Forming a Library Team of enthusiastic and eager members can spread the work and decision-making, which will foster the long-term sustainability of the library. Library Team members can tap their leadership and creative skills to create an atmosphere of ownership and encourage everyone to use the library.

The Role of the Library Team

A Library Team is an excellent way to make the library popular in your school. Because your committee members have helped to make decisions about the project, other staff and students are likely to be inspired by their enthusiasm. The Library Team will make management decisions about library hours, borrowing practices, rules, whether there will be fees for late or lost books and the book classification methodology.

The Library Team can create a Student Librarian program to share the work load and foster responsibility for and pride in the school library. The Library Team also determines which books should be removed from the collection, either because their content is inappropriate or because they are old, damaged, or cannot be repaired. The Library Team must also decide which books and materials must stay permanently in the library and should not be loaned out. These may include encyclopedias, and books (such as vintage West Indian titles) that the committee wants to give special care.

Create Your Library Team

A way to set up your Library Team, which has worked successfully with other schools, is to include the teacher-librarian (or government employment scheme worker) as secretary; the head teacher, literacy coordinator or remedial reading teacher (or HOD of English in a secondary school) as chairperson; one other teacher and maybe a few students. Students can be asked to vote for representatives or responsible pupils can be appointed by the Library Team.

The teacher-librarian is an important committee member to help advise the com-

mittee and suggest ways to improve the library. He or she should, wherever possible, arrange a visit to a successful school library. Discuss the different kinds of people the library will serve and how you can involve them in the Library Team. Write job descrip-

tions for Library Team officers. Write guidelines for committee action. Select the officers according to the guidelines. The Library Team should meet regularly, perhaps once a month, or at the start and end of every school term.

While the Library Team will be in charge, make sure students, parents and staff can share their ideas about the library in other ways. This can be done through student librarians, a library club and a suggestions box. Don't forget to reach out to Hands Across the Sea and your local Literacy Links to share best practices that have worked well for your school. Your Literacy Link can brainstorm with your team about other schools' library activities that you can adopt.



How to Choose and Prepare Your Library Space

Choosing the Right Space

If you don't have a library space already, be creative and think about what spaces you might have—whether it is an empty classroom that holds 20-plus children, or a small space like a closet full of shelves, or an unused storeroom (or one filled with “school stuff” that can be moved elsewhere or thrown out). We have seen successful libraries created when a good-sized room that was a teachers' lounge or a photocopy room for the district, or the special education room was partitioned to make space for a library. A library can be anywhere you have space and that will allow for traffic flow from children passing through. One of the busiest libraries we know was created from the text book scheme storage closet!

Students and staff, the PTA, parents and members of the community, and owners of local businesses can help clean, paint, and set up the library space at your school. Only a few things are needed to create a school library—a table or two, a quiet reading area with maybe a rug or floormat and a few pillows, and bookshelves! Whatever you can imagine for your school is possible. And

remember to consider ways to protect your library space against bugs, wind and potential water damage.

Get your library space ready by checking electrical outlets and repairing broken ones. Clean out any debris and junk, including old worn-out, inappropriate, or moldy books that children and teachers are not using. Wipe down all the books that you wish to keep and clean off the shelves.

How many books do you need?

A general goal might be 8 books per student (8:1 book-per-child ratio) or ideally a 10:1 ratio, but this number depends on your library space. You can get more books if you have more space, but 8:1 is sufficient. To start, you might only have a 3:1 or 4:1 ratio, and you can build up your collection over time once the idea of a vibrant library takes hold in your school community.

A large space with books shelved vertically either in bins or cardboard boxes gives you room to spread out your

books and display them with the covers, not the spines, facing out. The idea is to make the library space child-friendly and attractive to



From abandoned classroom to vibrant lending library, Cane End Government School, St. Vincent



students, to make the library look like an inviting bookstore that will draw in young readers as your customers. Your Hands Across the Sea Literacy Link is happy to visit and offer suggestions on your library set up.

What should you do with old, moldy inappropriate books? The best bet is to hold a book sale (\$.10 or \$.25 a book) or give away the books to students, teachers, or community members. Repair damaged books that are still appealing and exciting by using glue, tape, a stapler, and scissors. Even though it may be difficult to discard old books, especially when your shelves look empty, know that a shipment of books from Hands Across the Sea will soon fill up your shelves with new amazing books to entice young readers!

Give away any textbooks to teachers and students for projects, since children will not read textbooks. Reference books that are 10 to 20 years old no longer have current information and should be given away unless they have historical or cultural value. Old Caribbean readers or West Indian texts fall into this “keep” category. Mature books can be kept for the Teacher Section of the library or you can give them away to teachers and parents.

Library Furniture and Supplies

If you are setting up a library for the first time, the following items may be just what you need: a few chairs, a “reading rug” or floor mat and pillows, tables for reading or book displays, and a circulation table or desk for checking books in and out. Bookends (bricks

or small concrete blocks can also be used) help to keep books in place and highlight books (covers facing out) on the shelves.

Supplies for the circulation desk may include: index cards in box, or a composition book, pen, pencil, scratch paper for notes, book repair supplies, and a ruler. Donations from the Ministry of Education or a fundraiser in your community may be able to supply your library with what you need to get started.

Ways to Decorate and Personalize Your Library

Literacy Mural. Transform your library with a mural! Invite a local artist to work with several

Grade 5 and Grade 6 students to paint a mural in your library with just a few brushes and some paint on a clean, dry wall.

Literacy Poster Contest. Decide on a prize for the top poster or top three posters and get prizes donated. Announce the literacy poster contest among the teachers and set a date to submit posters. Hang posters for classrooms to vote on the winner or winners. Buy adhesive and hang the posters in the library. Announce the winners to the school.



Book sale, Dominica (above). Literacy mural, St. Thomas's Primary School, Nevis (below)



How to Organize the Book Collection

Sorting Your Books into Categories

We recommend sorting your existing and new books using a simple color-coding system. You can put fiction and nonfiction together, and sort your books into five piles using leveled color-coding. Consider naming the levels by their color. One school named their levels “Grow,” “Blossom,” and “Nourish.”

One reason to name your levels: you may have slower readers in Grade 5 and 6 who will be reading Level 2 books. There are great non-fiction books (such as the *True Book* series) that we would categorize as Level 2, but would be very useful for school-based assessments and projects for your Grade 5 and Grade 6 students.

If you wish to further categorize your books, consider putting readers together (books with a reading level number on the cover or the back) and series chapter books together. Children often start with one book in a series and wish to read the rest.

Nonfiction books can be further categorized by subject area, such as: Animals, Plants, General Science, Space, Transportation/Buildings and Structures, Body and Health, Environment, Rocks and Minerals, History, Poetry, Biographies/Autobiographies, People/Places/Culture, Careers, and so on. Consider grouping these nonfiction books in bins or cartons so children can flip through a subject bin that interests them.



Level 1: Yellow (Grade K and Grade 1)

Fiction and nonfiction with a large font, few words on each page and lots of pictures. Picture books with beautiful illustrations can be in this category. Please note that picture books may have a reading level of Grade 2, 3, or higher and may need

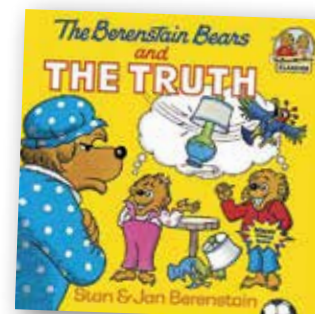
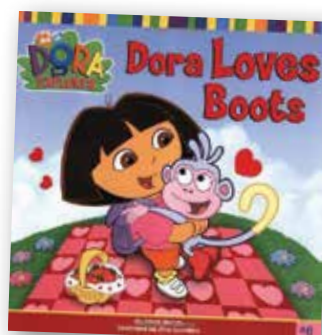
to be read aloud to a young student by a teacher or parent. In the case of picture books, young children will engage with the illustrations as they hear the story read to them. Children in Grades 2, 3, and 4 may want to borrow picture books too!

Leveled reading books with a 1 or 2 in the upper right-hand corner or on the back. Examples:

Townsend Press *King School Series*
DK Readers or other branded readers
Macmillan and McGraw-Hill leveled
and decodable readers

Large format picture books or read-aloud children's books. Examples include:

Berenstain Bears
Clifford the Big Red Dog
Curious George
Dora the Explorer
Dr. Seuss books
Eric Carle books such as *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*
Franklin
Scooby-Doo
Caribbean children's books published by Little Bell
Caribbean or CaribbeanReads



Townsend Press *King School Series*

Level 2: Blue (Grades 2, 3, and 4)

This category will encompass a broad range from fiction and nonfiction readers with a number 3, 4, or 5 on the cover to beginning chapter books. They will range from several sentences, medium font size, and sometimes fewer pictures to short,

several-page chapters. The *Flat Stanley* series is an example of a beginning chapter book, and the *True Book* series is an example of enticing nonfiction for this reading level.

Leveled reading books with a 3 or 4 in the upper righthand corner. Examples include:

Townsend Press *King School Series for Grade 2*

DK Readers or other branded readers

Macmillan and McGraw-Hill leveled readers in boxed sets and decodable readers

Chapter books include:

A-Z Mysteries (series)

Cam Jansen (series)

Captain Underpants (series)

EllRay Jakes (series)

Flat Stanley (series)

Horrible Harry (series)

Books by Judy Blume

Junie B. Jones (series)

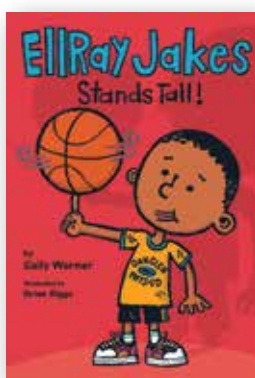
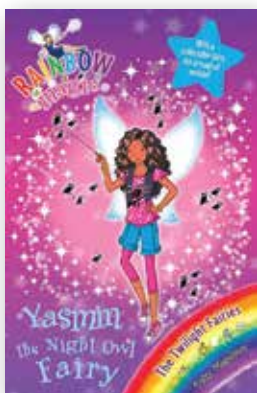
Magic Treehouse (series)

Magic School Bus (series)

Rainbow Magic Fairies (series)



Grouping series books together helps your students find the next one to read, and helps the librarian see gaps in the series.



Level 3: Green (Grades 5 and 6)

Fiction and nonfiction with small font sizes and more advanced vocabulary. Fiction will have few pictures. Nonfiction will have text and pictures with detailed captions. Some examples:

Animorphs (series)

Babysitter's Club (series)

Books by C. S. Lewis

DK Eyewitness books

Diary of a Wimpy Kid (series)

Goosebumps (series)

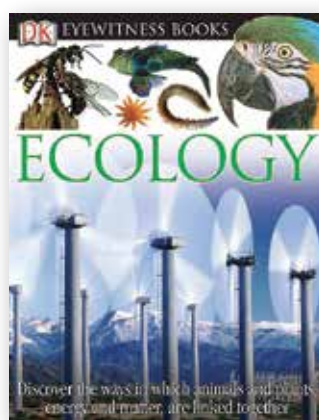
Graphic novels and nonfiction that looks like a comic book inside

The Hardy Boys (series)

Lemony Snicket: A Series of Unfortunate

Events (series)

Nancy Drew (series)



Reference: Red

Place **ONLY** nonfiction books such as encyclopedias, dictionaries, thesauruses and atlases that you want to remain available in the library in the Reference category. Make all other nonfiction books available for lending to students and teachers and put them in Level 1, 2, or 3. Vintage Caribbean and West Indian literature, readers and nonfiction pamphlets might also be in this category especially if they are out of print or hard to replace. Your reference section can include:

Dictionaries, atlases, thesauruses and encyclopedias

Caribbean and West Indian titles that are out of print

Teacher: Orange

Mature books, curriculum books, teaching guides, Big Books, charts, and supplies. This section can include:

Adult novels and biographies

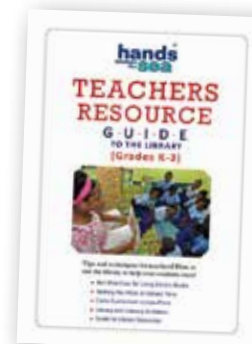
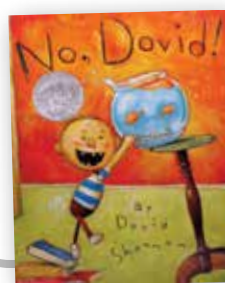
Big Books

Curriculum books

Leveled readers in boxed sets

Teachers' guides

Charts and supplies



Organize the Bookshelves

Choose the best location for each of the five sections in the library. For example, place the Level 1 (Grade K and Grade 1) books lowest on the shelves, making them easy for the younger children to reach. And locate the Teacher section higher up and removed, if possible, from high-traffic areas. It may help to put the books on the shelves one section at a time to prepare them for color-coding.

Purchase colored-dot stickers from a stationery or school supply store. If you don't have dots, buy colored electrical tape and



Grouping the books (above): cardboard boxes are low-cost and work well. Color-coding (below): Green for the Grade 5 and 6 *Goosebumps* series



cut it into little rectangles to cover the spine. Gather a group of volunteers and Student Librarians to color-code the books; stick a dot near the bottom of each book's spine and cover each dot with clear tape to secure it. Work on one color section at a time. Use the school stamp twice on each book—once at the front on the inside cover and again at the back. It is often difficult to stamp children's books with glossy finishes; in this case, put the school stamp on the outer edge of the pages.



Grouping the Caribbean books (above). Students color-coding new books (below).



Display the books with covers facing out or face up. Series books can be shelved spine-out.



Create labels for the shelves, either by hand or by making and printing them. Get construction paper and glue the labels on top to designate the color and/or subject of each section. Consider creating special sections, such as:

- Jones, Captain Underpants, Magic Treehouse)*

To entice students, be sure to highlight the eye-catching books. Display a number of books that have exciting covers with their covers facing out, either flat on the shelves or standing up. Look at the pictures in this manual for more ideas or ask your Hands Across the Sea Literacy Link about best practices.

Create labels for the Teacher section, such as Fiction, Nonfiction, Reading, Information Technology, Social Studies, Language Arts, Health and Science, Charts, and Supplies.



Display the collection in an enticing fashion—with the covers facing out or facing up—to use the color, beauty, and excitement of book covers to inspire your students. Morne Du Don Primary School, St. Lucia.



Create Your Checkout System and Borrowing Policies

Establish Your Borrowing Policy

Decide how many books each student can check out at a time. We suggest one book for students in Grades 1, 2, 3, and 4, and two books for students in Grades 5 and 6. We recommend that Grade K (and possibly Grade 1) students learn responsible book handling during the first two years by checking out one book to be kept in the classroom, but not taken home.

Decide how long a student can keep a borrowed book. A week is about the right length of time for most students. It might be easier for the teacher/librarian/volunteer if all books are returned on the same day of the week, such as your class's library day. This decision will also



depend on your library's hours.

Decide if there will be a fee for lost books. If so, use the fees from lost books to purchase supplies needed to run the library. Keep track of what kinds of books are lost and

request replacements from Hands Across the Sea. Keep in mind that a fee might discourage families from allowing a child to check out books, so balance a lost book against the value of learning responsible book handling. Consider only charging a fee for a student's *second* lost book.

Consider putting each checked-out book into a Ziploc plastic bag (photo, left) for protection. When the book is taken home, the bag will help distinguish it as a library book that will need to be returned.

Create Your Checkout System

Here are two options that schools use for keeping track of books loaned:

Composition Notebook

Purchase a composition notebook or notebooks. Divide the book by the number of classes, plus one extra section for teachers. Create tabs with each teacher's name and one tab labeled "Teachers," either typed up or handwritten, and tape them into the book so that it will be easy to find each section. Organize the book from Grade K to Grade 6, with a Teacher Section last. Each teacher should have several pages to get the class through the term. If your school is large, consider a notebook for each class.

Create four columns on the page: Student

Name, Book Title, Date Checked Out and Date Returned/Initials of person checking it in. Each student's name is written in with title and date checked out when borrowing; when the book is returned the Date Returned/Initials of Teacher or Student Librarian are added and the entry is crossed out.

Index Card Checkout System

Find a small box that will hold 3" x 5", 5" x 7" (or other size) index cards. Purchase enough index cards for your school—you will need one per student and one per teacher. Create a dividing title card for each class.

As students borrow books, write their name on a card and list the book being checked out and the date. Place it behind the class's divider card. Using this method will

help to maintain a record of each student's reading accomplishments.

Returned Books Box

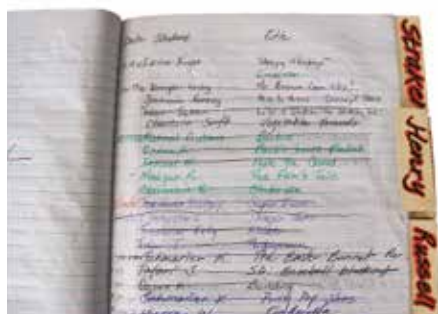
Create a return box for books that need to be re-shelved. Students should have their returned books checked by the librarian or Student Librarian and crossed off their card before placing them in the return box. The librarians and teachers will return these books

to their designated shelves.

What About a Computer System?

While it may be tempting to create a check-out system on a computer rather than using these paper/hand-written methods, we don't recommend it. Paper systems are always available, even during a power outage, and can't be lost by a computer crash or theft.

Keep your checkout and book return system simple. Use an index card system (left) or a composition book system (below), and a book return box (right)



At Kelleb John Laurent Primary School, Dominica (below), Student Librarians use an index card system to check books in and out.



Organize the Operation of the Library

When should your library be open and accessible to students and teachers? Some thoughts:

Before and After School, and During Lunch and Break Time

Consider deploying Student Librarians, teachers, and community volunteers to supervise the library before school, during lunch and at break time. Student Librarians and teachers can open the library. Teachers and community volunteers can take turns on a roster being the adult-in-charge.

Once-a-Week Timetabled Class Visits

Classes should be timetabled for a weekly library visit. In some large, crowded (and noisy) schools with only dividers for class delineations, consider holding Language Arts classes in the library for 30 minutes each day.

Create a schedule to train every class to

use the library, and decide which day of the week the library schedule will start and announce that to the school.

Train a Team of Student Librarians

Students love to be librarians! They gain valuable skills, love helping their fellow students, and feel like they are contributing to their school community. Please see the Student Librarian section at the back of this manual, and ask your Hands Literacy Link about a complete training program for your school.

Be sure to rotate your Student Librarians and provide them with badges. Introduce them to the school at an assembly and inform the school what their job will be in the library. Some schools designate two Student Librarians per class to assist their teacher during their weekly library period.

Library Checklist for the School Year

At the Beginning of the School Year

- Organize several students to clean the library—dust bookshelves and books, mop the floor, and wipe down furniture.
- Purchase supplies for repairing books and a new composition book or index cards.
- Set up a new composition book or index card system to loan books. Update the names of teachers and remove index cards from the previous year.
- Update signs if necessary. (Library Rules, Hours of Operation, Class Timetable).
- Go through all the books to see if repairs are needed and mend books or put them in a pile to give away if they cannot be mended.
- Review library rules at an assembly and train new classes and students.

- Send permission slips home for parents to sign.

Before the End of Each Term and at the End of the Year

- Two weeks before the end of a term, stop lending books. Only accept book returns.
- Remind students at assembly that books are due and must be returned. Ask teachers to remind their students often, so that all books are returned before break.
- Ask teachers to review the check-out book to determine which students need reminders.
- If necessary, send a letter home to parents. Will you be collecting fees?
- Ask teachers and staff to return borrowed books.
- Look over the composition book or index cards to see which students and classes have

read the most books and announce it at an assembly. Provide a book as a prize for the top

three students who have read the most, and organize treats for the winning class.

How to Prepare Your Library for a Hurricane

Books are valuable and are very costly to replace and time-consuming to restore when wet, waterlogged, and moldy. In the aftermath of Hurricane Maria's destruction on Dominica, we learned how valuable books are—especially when there is a widespread, months-long blackout of electricity, television, phone service, and electronic communication. Reading books became a primary source of entertainment, learning, and relief from difficult circumstances. Anytime during the school year when a storm is approaching, please prevent book damage and protect your library with these simple steps:

1. Remove the books from the shelves and pack them into one of the following:

- Doubled plastic trash bags
- Plastic bins with a cover
- UNICEF school-in-a-box suitcase(s)

2. Keep the packed books away from windows or in the center of the room, preferably on a table or shelf to prevent damage from possible flooding.

3. Close the windows or louvers. If your library has open air holes from concrete blocks, move the packed books to a room with no windows.

After a direct hit by Hurricane Maria destroyed their beloved school library, staff and students at Sineku Primary School, Dominica, renewed and rebuilt it.



Teacher Orientation to the Library

How Teachers Can Help in the Library

Taking your class to the library will benefit you and your students. The library is a multi-faceted learning opportunity, and you can use library books and resources to create lessons that will improve your students' literacy levels.

- First, take advantage of your timetabled library period. Your students will love visiting the library! For ideas on classroom management routines for the library, please refer to the Hands Across the Sea publication, *Teachers Resource Guide to the Library (Grades K - 3)* or go to www.handsacrossthesea.net/TeachersResourceGuide.htm for ideas.

- Review Student Orientation to the Library (on the next page) for ways to introduce your students and to discuss rules and routines.
- Help students pick out books that are appropriate for them by using the Five Finger Rule (see the *Teachers Resource Guide to the Library (Grades K - 3)*).



Turning Students into Student Librarians

Your class's Student Librarians can be a big help. For ideas on making the most of library time and the Student Librarian program, see Melisa Hippolyte's interview in the Best Practices section of the *Teachers Resource Guide to the Library (Grades K - 3)*. Ms. Hippolyte, a Grade 4 teacher at Vide Bouteille Primary School in St. Lucia, is forthright about the challenges she overcame while developing

a lending library and Student Librarian program. Some tips:

- Help Student Librarians develop their leadership skills. Encourage them to talk with their peers when a rule needs to be enforced.
- Assist Student Librarians to enforce the rules and to help students follow good book handling and library behavior.

- When it's checkout time or time to return books, look over the entries in the composition book or index cards and make sure they are not forgetting to date and initial after checking a book in and to cross out the name/

title of each returned book. Make sure they are not missing a step.

- Keep an eye on students who might steal books. A student might tuck them in their clothing or drop them out a window.
- Do not leave younger students without supervision in the library. Older students may be able to manage themselves, especially when you have capable Student Librarians.

Teacher and Staff Borrowing Tips

- Teachers and staff must check out their books with the librarian on duty.
- If you are checking out a class set for a two-week period, make sure your school has set up good procedures and routines so books don't go astray.
- Return books when done or in two weeks.
- Report any damage to the books when returning them so they can be repaired.

Student Orientation to the Library

Preparing Your Students for the Library

- Discuss the purpose of a library. Ask students what they think a library is for and what kinds of things they can find in a library. Make a list on the board and discuss.
- Review the Library Rules. Ask students what they think the rules should be. Here are some sample rules for behavior in the room:
 - Students cannot bring food, drinks, or school bags into the library. Belongings should be left in the bag area. (Some schools encourage students to remove their shoes too.)
 - Whisper and use an inside voice. Students are not allowed to play or loiter.
 - Place books in the book return box and not back on the shelves.
 - Respect librarians, teachers and students.

Rules for Book Handling

Here are some sample rules for handling books. As a best practice, review these rules at the beginning of every term.

- Make sure your hands are clean before reading a book. Clean hands = clean books!
- Keep food and drinks away from books. Do not take books out in the rain.
- Keep your books in their Ziploc bags when you're not reading them.
- Do not write or draw on the pages.
- Use a bookmark to mark your place in a book (don't fold over the corner of the page).
- Carry your books in your backpack or bag. Water bottles should not be in your backpack with your books.
- Do not bend the cover of a book backwards. Do not lay books face down when they are open.
- Keep your books in a safe place where little brothers, sisters, pets, and rain showers cannot reach them.

School Lending Policy

Your school will want to create your own policies, and here are some guidelines:

- Decide how long books can be borrowed.
- If your library will be open daily in the mornings and at lunch with Student Librarians, students have more opportunities to borrow books and a two-day loan might be sufficient. Fast readers will want to change their books more often.
- If students will be borrowing books once a week with their class, then students will keep the books for one week.
- Don't worry too much about lost or damaged books. Some loss and damage will occur; this is simply the price to pay for the greater value of students borrowing books and learning to be responsible for their care and return.

Borrowing Books

Here are some sample routines and procedures to discuss with students:

- Take your book to the circulation desk to be checked out. Students must stand quietly in a line to borrow a book or to return a book.
- Only borrow the number of books that are allowed for your grade. (Here are some suggested guidelines, and you will need to create your own for your community.)
 - Grade K: one book, to stay in the classroom.
 - Grades 1, 2, 3, and 4: one book at a time.
 - Grades 5 and 6: two books at a time.
- Reference books (dictionaries, thesauruses, atlases, encyclopedias) are for library use only.
- Return your books to the library on time.
- Return your books to the circulation desk when you are done so that your book can be checked in. (If you do not give it to the librarian to cross off in the notebook or index card, no one will know that you have returned it.)

Parent Orientation to the Library

We hope that you will encourage parents to grant their children permission to borrow library books. Below is a sample letter you can use to inform parents about library rules.

One important topic to consider is the issue of fines. We all know that books are expensive and valuable, and sometimes when schools ask parents to pay for a lost or damaged library book, that rule discourages book borrowing. Parents might not sign the book borrowing permission slip if they know they might have to come up with funds they lack.

We don't want children to lose access to books, but at the same time we want everyone

to be responsible. Instead of cash, sometimes schools ask parents to replace a lost book with any appropriate book that is new or "gently used." You might also consider charging a fee for the second time a book is lost.

Hands Across the Sea is committed to helping you sustain your library, and we can help you replace the handful of books that may be lost in any given year—just let us know. It is important for you and your school to create rules and procedures that work for your community within the overall goals of encouraging as much independent reading as possible and engaging parents in the process.

Dear Parent(s)/Guardian(s),

We are very excited to inform you that we will shortly be opening a school library and your child/children will be able to borrow books. We hope that the library will create a positive learning environment where students will enjoy reading, and we encourage you to read with your child/children. Before students can check out books, we will need your signature indicating that you have reviewed the library rules below with your child.

Thank you for your cooperation and support! Please return this letter to the class teacher once signed.

Library Rules

1. Make sure your hands are clean before reading a book.
2. Keep food and drinks away from books.
3. Turn pages carefully from the top or bottom corner.
4. Do not write or draw on the pages of a library book.
5. Do not take books out in the rain, even if you have them in your backpack.
6. Mark your place in a book with a bookmark. Don't fold the pages of a book.
7. Carry your books in your backpack or bag, preferably inside a Ziploc bag. Water bottles should not be in your backpack with your books.
8. Keep your books in a safe place at home, where little brothers, sisters, or pets cannot touch them.
9. Do not bend the cover of a book backwards. Do not lay books face down when they are open.
10. Return your books to the library on time.

Please sign below to indicate you have read the rules with your child and write their name and teacher's name below.

Parent

Name of Child and Name of Teacher

Sample Note to Parents When Books Have Not Been Returned

Dear Parent/Guardian,

[Name of Student] _____ has
not returned the following book
_____ that was borrowed
from the school library. Please have them
return it to school by [Date].

Thank You,
[Name of Principal]

Sweet Inspiration: Make It Your Library

Traditional libraries are, well, boring. Too often, conventional libraries feel intimidating, even unfriendly to children. Instead, we urge you to make your library a wonderland of fun, dis-

covery, and learning for your students. Make the library a welcoming, encouraging place for your students, and an exciting, valued resource for every child and teacher in your school



Bagatelle Primary School, Dominica

Librarian Melina Anselm engages younger students with read aloud sessions, and assists teachers by creating a Teachers Resource Centre in the library, stocked with books that teachers can utilize in their classroom lessons.

Sandy Point Primary School, St. Kitts

Librarian Nicole Williams Francis stokes students' excitement for books and reading through library themes (such as "Fish for a Good Book," right), a Student Librarian program, Literacy Week activities, and a Literacy Camp during Easter Break—books, reading, and literacy are part of the community.



Kingstown Primary School, St. Vincent

The artwork of students, read-aloud and choral-reading sessions, and colorful paint, posters, and bookshelf labels make this library a friendly, peaceful oasis in this busy, urban (911-student) school. Does the teddy bear inspire children to read? Yes, he does!



Sweet Inspiration: Success Story

Yes, dreams do come true. If your dream is to bring a lending library to your school, start by reaching out to community members, parents, past students—and Hands Across the Sea. You may find that local businesses are willing to

supply funding or materials, and volunteers can lend a hand to your project. Your Hands Literacy Link can suggest ways to make your library a reality, from choosing a space to promoting and maintaining the library.



A library is born at Odsan Combined School, St Lucia: Months of construction, followed by new books from Hands.



Grade K on the “reading corner” floor mat. The newly-trained Student Librarian team, with Hands Literacy Link Clara Paul.



Sweet Inspiration: Small Wonders

What essentials do you need for a great library?

One thing: a passion for books and literacy. Since 2007, Hands has helped create nearly 400 lending libraries; here are the things that we consider “nice but not necessary” for a

school library: tiled floor, tables and chairs, fancy furniture, air-conditioning, computers, and a TV. If you think you don’t have the space or the funding for a library, we ask you to approach the challenge with fresh eyes.



Constantine Methodist Primary School, Grenada. Principal Shundalyn Niles-Scott and her teachers wanted a library, but the school’s only available space was a store-room filled with textbooks and cleaning supplies—it was a small space, but big enough to start a library. Enough of the the existing materials were moved elsewhere to make way for new books from Hands, and a busy lending library, complete with an energized Student Librarian program, was born. “All things are possible,” says the Principal. “If it is possible for our cute, little, closet-size library to facilitate 168 students, it is possible for every school to have a library.”

Riviere Doree Anglican School, St. Lucia. Secodina Alcee, the Principal at this 183-year-old, 103-student primary school wanted a library but lacked space or funding. We suggested partitioning off a portion of the Grade 3 classroom, using simple tables and unused cabinets to display the new books from Hands—and soon a vibrant lending library was born.





STUDENT LIBRARIAN HANDBOOK



Here's how to create, operate, and maintain a
Student Librarian program at your school!

- Student Librarian Tasks, Responsibilities, Rewards
- Student Librarian Job Application
- How to Promote Your Library
- Lunch & Break: Student Librarians Go to Work
- How to Manage Your Student Librarian Program

We Are Student Librarians

We Operate the Library >

- We manage security, doors, windows, lights, A/C, and computers.
- We manage good behavior and the observance of library rules.
- We manage checkout and book returns.
- We repair damaged books.



< We Help Other Students

- We find the right book for their reading level and interest.
- We read to and share books with younger students.
- We find the right reference books and materials.



We Organize the Book Collection >

- We stamp, color-code, and glue card pockets into books.
- We shelve books in an appealing fashion—covers facing out, special interest and series books grouped together.



< We Improve the Library

- We add posters, murals, and student artwork that celebrate books and reading.
- We create book displays based on an author, theme, or event.



We Keep the Library Tidy >

- We re-shelve returned books and library materials.
- We tidy the books on the shelves.
- We keep the library clean—sweep the floor, wipe down shelves and book covers.



< We Promote the Library

- We create shared activities and competitions in the library, especially during school literacy events.
- We support the library at school and in our community.

Student Librarian Tasks and Responsibilities

Library Room

Make sure that the library is in order:
Open and close windows, curtains, blinds.
Turn lights, A/C, and computers on/off.
Maintain good behavior of library users.
Keep furniture and cushions tidy.
Clean shelves, books, and furniture.
Sweep the floor and empty the rubbish.

Book Collection

Know the library layout and where different sections are located.
Keep color-coded books grouped together.
Keep series books grouped together.
Keep books displayed face-out or face-up.
Keep bookshelves tidy.

Checkout System

Use the library checkout system to issue and receive returned books.
Handle book reservations, overdue books and fines, and loan limits.
Put books needing repair aside for mending.
Apply labels and color-coded dots to books.
Help protect library books through proper book handling.

Assist Library Patrons

Locate suitable books for different grades and reading levels.
Locate and use reference tools: dictionaries, thesauruses, atlas, and encyclopedia.
Recognize parts of a book, such as contents page, index, glossary, bibliography.
Interact positively with students by helping, listening, and answering questions.
Direct younger readers to the right books.
Read and/or discuss books with peers.
Assist librarians and students with internet, photocopier, and printer use.



Student Librarian Team

Create clearly defined tasks and simple operation.
Organize flexible rosters and share tasks equally.
Ensure there is ongoing supervision by teachers and /or library staff.
Schedule training time for new Student Librarians.
Timetable regular meetings with the Librarian/Teacher with library responsibility and the Library Team.
Discuss activities and upcoming events, make suggestions, ask questions.
Periodically review and update the Student Librarian program.

Promote the Library and the Collection

Make literacy posters and wall charts.
Create book displays based on an author, theme, or event.
Write and/or illustrate reviews or recommendations.
Contribute to a library newsletter, blog, or library page on school website.
Talk about good reads in class, during a library visit, or at assembly.
Help to run library competitions and events, such as quizzes, author visits, Literacy Week, book fairs, and Reading Month.
Be a library guide for school visitors.

Improve the Library

Help the Library Team choose new resources for the library.
Recommend book titles and authors in all genres.
Use a Suggestions Box to get ideas and opinions from students.

Student Librarian team members (below) at Jones Beupierre Primary School, Dominica



Student Librarian Job Application

(This is a sample. Download the Word doc at: www.handsacrosstheea.net/StudentLibrarians.htm)

Position Description. You will be part of the team running the library: issuing books and receiving returned books, helping other students use the library, shelving books, tidying the library, and promoting the library, books, and reading.

Personal Qualities. You must be reliable, careful, friendly, hard-working, like helping people, good at keeping books in order, able to work without supervision, be a good listener and communicator, and love books and reading.

Benefits of the Position. You will gain valuable work experience, new skills, librarian training and certificates, get the chance to take responsibility, receive appreciation from teachers and students, know the satisfaction of doing a good job, and be first to read the new books.

Expected Outcomes. You will help make the library an excellent environment for reading and learning, keep the checkout system operating and the bookshelves in order, help other students use the library, and keep the books displayed properly and accessible to all.

I agree to meet the following expectations as a Student Librarian:

- Show up for my shift on time.
- Wear a Student Librarian badge and leave it in the library when my shift is done.
- Encourage students to follow the rules of the library.
- Return books from the Book Return box to the correct place on the shelves
- Check books in and out to students and teachers.
- Tidy the shelves and library furniture, and keep the library clean.
- Encourage all students to read and support the library.

I also agree to the following statements:

- I will uphold the library rules.
- I will always do my best.
- I will always be honest.
- I will help make the library a positive environment for everyone.

I sign this contract knowing what is expected of me as a Student Librarian.

Name: _____ Grade: _____

Reasons for Applying: _____

Favorite Book and Special Interests: _____

Reference (teacher): _____

Reference (parent or guardian): _____

Student Signature _____ Date _____

Lunch and Break: When Student Librarians Go to Work

Keeping the Library Open During Lunch

Student Librarians are the solution to keeping the library open during lunch. Tips:

- Be cheerful and approachable to everyone using the library, so that they see it as a friendly place to visit
- Encourage students to follow the library and bookhandling rules.
- Help students find the right book.
- Run the checkout desk for books being borrowed and returned.
- Remove books from the Returns Box and sort, so the books are ready to be shelved.
- Put any books needing mending aside to be repaired.
- Sort the books by their color-coded dots and shelve the books in the correct section. Put series books, such as *Magic Tree House* and *Nancy Drew*, together.
- Straighten up and tidy the books on the shelves.
- Fill any empty spaces in the face-out book shelf displays.
- Read a suitable story book to the younger students.
- Ten minutes before closing time, remind students in the library that they need to get ready to leave.
- Spend the last few minutes of lunchtime having a quick tidy-up to finish your duty; put chairs, tables, cushions, and reading corner floor mat in order.
- Collect the rubbish, sweep the floor, dust the books and shelves as needed.

Student Librarian team, Belmont Government School, St. Vincent



Student Librarian Rewards Are Part of the Job

Student librarians are positive role models for everyone. Student Librarians receive acknowledgement and positive reinforcement from the Principal, teaching staff, the Librarian, and the Library Team. Student Librarians are recognized at assembly and through certificates,

awards, and badges, and may receive small prizes (such as stickers, pens, or books) in addition to book-borrowing, photocopier, and internet privileges. And the more that Student Librarians know, the higher their job satisfaction and rewards.

Bronze Level Skills

- You must know the library layout.
- Maintain order in the library (furniture in place and rubbish removed).
- Tidy library shelves (books upright or some face-out).
- Shelf returned books.
- Choose books for most eye-catching face-out display.

Gold Level Skills

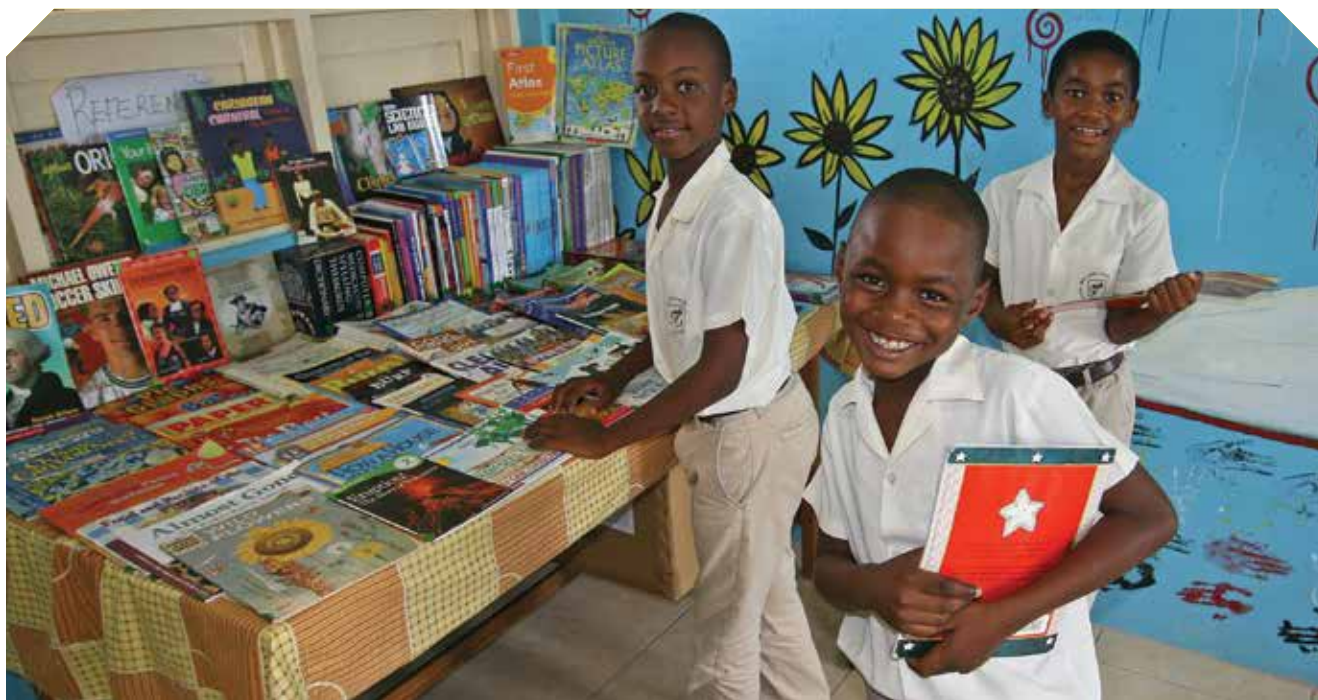
(includes Silver and Bronze Level Skills)

- You must be confident in shelving resources in all areas of the library, including doing a shelf check.
- Deal with overdue and reserves.
- Be an issuing/returns monitor for a junior class.
- Use a print reference resource (such as an encyclopedia or dictionary).
- Create a display for the library and help change displays.
- Promote books to fellow students in class or assembly.

Silver Level Skills

(includes Bronze Level Skills)

- You must be able to issue and return a book.
- Open and close the library.
- Check shelves for books in need of repair.
- Write a review of a new book for display in the library.
- Read to students at lunch-time.
- Be a library guide for visitors to your school.



How to Promote the Library

One of your challenges as a Student Librarian, Librarian, or Library Team member is helping your students, teachers, and community appreciate the fun and the benefits of reading and the library. Every school has a unique culture, and you'll need to adapt the ideas below to your school. Remember to discuss each idea with the Principal, and to ask for participation and feedback from teachers.

Peer Invitation

Keep students informed about the resources and activities of the library. Ask the Principal for a day when Student Librarians, the Librarian, or the Library Team can host the assembly, spotlight the books and resources available in the library, and motivate students to visit the library.

"Mobile" Library

If students are reluctant to visit the library, take the library to them by setting up mobile lending areas at strategic locations around the school. Members of the library can check out books, and new students can join the library. Be sure to include notices of library events and activities.

Dramatic and Artistic Presentations

Organize special library presentations around a theme, such as Independence, Black History, or a Religious Holiday. Presentations can take place in the library, if the space is large enough. Invite students to do readings of favorite books, act out a skit, or share artwork.

Engage the Parents

During PTA meetings, Student Librarians can perform a dramatic presentation about the benefits of literacy and the importance of en-

couraging children to read. Student Librarians, the Librarian, or Library Team members can also speak about the school library.

Enlist the Teachers

Keep teachers abreast of library activities and ask for their participation. Explain to teachers what types of resources are available to assist them in planning lessons. Create a reading list for teachers featuring books in the library. Ask them to have students visit the library to check out books and write book reports. The

Librarian and/or Student Librarians can help mark the book reports if the task is too much for teachers.

Reading Competitions and Story Time

Hold monthly reading competitions with prizes (ranging from a week of free lunches to books and school supplies). To encourage participation, ask students for ideas for other competitions (students can contribute ideas through the library's Suggestion Box). Invite older members of the community to the library for story time and to share their folklore tales. Invite local writers, artists, or storytellers to read to and

speak with parents and students.

Media Outreach & Workshops

Create your library's Facebook page and showcase the resources and activities of the library. Create a newsletter featuring students' work, library resources, and upcoming workshops. Keep students engaged with creative and fun workshops on topics of interest, such as poetry or rap lyrics, fashion, sports, and popular public figures. Workshops can be free or the library can charge a small registration fee to help support the library.

Ask the Principal for a day when Student Librarians, the Librarian, or the Library Team can host morning assembly, spotlight the books and resources available in the library, and motivate students to join and visit the library

How to Manage the Student Librarian Program

My Student Librarian program is very simple.

I allow any interested student in Grade 3 or above to fill in the application form for Student Librarians. This gives students who do not usually get a chance to lead an opportunity to do so. I have found that students do well and seem to really enjoy this opportunity (I have only had to remove one student from the position).

Students are waitlisted in order of when they return their applications, which encourages them to turn it in promptly. I don't have a deadline to turn it in because I want to encourage any student to become more involved in the library, and it is easy to just put them at the bottom of the list. I post the list in the library and they enjoy coming to look at whose turn it is and figure out how long until it's their turn.

A student's responsibilities are to come in first, take out their class folder, and call students in to return their books and do the check-in paperwork. Depending on the library activity that day, Student Librarians can read aloud to their class or reshelve returned books. After the activity is over they check

books out for their classmates. When every student is done, the Student Librarian can choose their book and make sure the library is tidy. As a reward, I give them a lollipop for their work and a name tag sticker to put on their shirt for the day. Neither of these things are necessary, but they are fun.

I have Student Librarians change every week, and they are only responsible for their own class. I do it this way because that is the easiest to arrange with my teachers, and should allow for them to continue the program when my Peace Corps service is over. I hold a training session for Grade 3 students and just do a 10-minute review for all the higher grades. Training everyone how to check in and out equips the students to run the book checkout on their own.

The Student Librarian program has been very successful at my school—the students are now much more involved in our library.

—Signe Midelfort-Vognar
U.S. Peace Corps Volunteer



Training and graduating a team of Student Librarians at Millet Primary School, St. Lucia



For more ideas on managing your Student Librarian program, read the advice of Melisa Hippolyte, a Grade 4 teacher at Vide Bouteille Primary School on St. Lucia, in the "Best Practices" section of the Hands publication *Teachers Resource Guide to the Library (Grades K–3)*.