

l i b r a r y t i m e

Taking your class to the library will benefit you and your students. The library is a multifaceted learning opportunity for your students, and you can use library books and resources to create lessons that will grow the literacy level of your students.

It may feel challenging to experiment with different ways of teaching, because we are not sure how our

students will respond. The tips and techniques in this section will support you when braving unfamiliar teaching strategies. These routines and structures will help you to manage your class while allowing your students to engage with the lesson and improve their reading. The more you use the library, the more your students will excel!

Download all these resources at the Hands Teachers Resource Guide webpage:
www.handsacrossthesea.net/TeachersResourceGuide.htm



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Why to Incorporate Library Time into Your Timetable

As you know, covering the entire curriculum within a school year is a very big task. What you may not know is that library time can help you catch up on a topic or skill your students are struggling with. The books that Hands sends to your library have been specifically chosen to help you cover topics and

objectives from your curriculum through interactive, entertaining read alouds. The *Hands Across the Sea Teachers Resource Guide for the Library (Grades K–3) (TRG)* will help you cover the curriculum and the need to read with your class—and engage and entertain your students all the while!

A Teacher's Poem for the Library

Let's see, I need a lesson on counting, one, two, three!
Head to the library and count with me.
I just read a book with high-frequency words: *my, where, with, and me*.
I borrowed another for math and entertainment, you see!
Chicka Chicka Boom Boom 1 2 3.

Here I am rhyming—you may think I'm a fool,
But I got your attention to have more fun at school!
Speaking of rhyming, a topic we must cover,
One Fish, Two Fish, Red Fish, Blue Fish is like no other!
An entertaining read aloud filled with rhyming words,
Vocabulary delight and reading ideas like you've never heard!
More rhyming to come with *Rainbow Stew*,
Another lesson with *Sweet Victory* too!

Building background knowledge on a topic is Oh, so easy!
Check out the book blurbs in this guide—they make it breezy.
Oh rat-a-tat-tat, I need a book on habitats!
Not a problem! Here you go—how about *A House for Hermit Crab*!

So no need to fret or sweat. We've got you covered in all respects.
The Nutmeg Princess covers your curriculum in language arts—
Retelling, role playing, reflecting and writing too.
Lessons to teach morals, we've made with ease,
Should I Share My Ice Cream? Yes, please!
It's time to celebrate with *Peppa Pig*
The TRG makes you want to dance a jig!

—Heidi Fagerberg, *Hands Literacy Link for St. Kitts and Nevis*

The Art and Craft of Reading Aloud

Read alouds are good to do daily in your classroom because they cover so many important skills children need for learning.

The lesson plans in this guide showcase different skills and purposes for each read aloud, as listed below.

Reading and learning skills you can cover during a read aloud

Model the rhythm and sound of reading

Promote reading as entertainment. Students who learn that reading is fun will be self-motivated readers and read more often

Make personal connections to a text

Target vocabulary development

Build background knowledge on different topics by using topic-specific library books

Make inferences, predictions, and judgments using metacognition strategies

Build phonetic awareness

Set the stage for a lesson or unit on a specific topic

Ways you can teach during an interactive read aloud

Scaffold on prior knowledge

Summarize the story to bring closure

Teach elements of a story (setting, characters, conflict, plot, theme)

Preview the book

Use a Think Aloud to assist comprehension

Model reading fluency

Model vocabulary development, use strategies for comprehension and word recognition

Model reading behavior

Ask purposeful questions that help with comprehension, topical background knowledge, vocabulary development, and connection to text

Turn Your Read Aloud into Performance Art

A read aloud is a form of performance art.

What your students take away from your read aloud depends on what you put into it. Simply picking up a book and reading aloud will probably not inspire your students with a love of stories or develop their listening and comprehension skills. Here's how to make your read aloud performance both highly effective and fun for your students and for you.

Choose the Right Book

First, select a book that is appropriate for your students—most picture books and Big Books work well. Chapter books come in a variety of lengths and levels—choose the ones that suit the abilities of your students. It's good to choose books you are already

familiar with, because your students will pick up on your enthusiasm. If you don't know what you'd like to read, browse the Book Blurbs and Lesson Plans in this guide, and pick those which are new to most of your students and interesting enough to hold their attention.

Good read aloud stories succeed for different reasons. Remember when you heard a good story when you were a child? What made it so memorable? Was it action-packed? Funny? Did you have something in common with the main character? Today's children enjoy stories for the same reasons that you did.

Remember, you'll need enough reading material for a 15- to 20-minute session.



Less time than this doesn't allow your students to become engaged with the story; too much time, and they'll get restless.

Practice, Practice, Practice

Even the best storytellers need practice. Often, practice is the difference between a passable read aloud and a terrific one. It may seem foolish to practice reading aloud

by yourself, but doing so will make the session with your students much smoother. Practice also allows you to use enhancements and plan your explanations and the questions you will ask your students. Me, practice? Seriously? Yes, do it: practice.

Choose Your Delivery

Your read aloud delivery depends on the book you choose. Here are some tips.

1. Make sure your students are seated comfortably, with a clear view of you, and that they are settled and quiet before you begin. Do not start your read aloud until everyone is ready. Let them know they should not interrupt the reading. State your rules from the outset and reinforce your routine every time you read aloud. It will take time in the beginning to establish your rules and routine, but it will get easier with repetition.

2. Make yourself comfortable. You will be reading aloud for 15-20 minutes—so where will you be during this time? While many teachers prefer to sit, it can also be effective,

and even more comfortable for you, to stroll among your students and read.

3. If your read aloud book has pictures, read the words first and then turn the book around to show the illustrations to your students. Move the book slowly from left to right, then back again in case anyone missed the pictures or would like another

look. Make sure to angle the book so your students can see the pictures easily.

4. Speak loudly and clearly so that your students can hear your every word.

The Star of the Show:

Your Voice

The most important device you have for enhancing your read aloud performance is your voice. Some teachers read without expression or inflection, which can be fine with some books. Other books, however, are much more engaging if read expressively. It depends on the book. Ask yourself, "I wonder if this story will sound better if I . . . ?"

You may decide to use different voices for different characters. This is tricky—you don't want to accidentally mix up the characters' voices—imagine Little Red Riding Hood speaking in the Wolf's voice! To use different

voices effectively, you absolutely must practice the voices.

You may want to modulate your voice. When someone in the story shouts, you shout. When someone whispers, you whisper. If there is an explosion, lower your voice leading up to it and then BOOM!—

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Yes, do it: practice.

your students will jump. You'll startle them—but they'll like it.

Don't be afraid to go a bit over the top or be dramatic. Your students are not sophisticated or critical—your performance will keep their attention firmly on you and the story.

Most teachers use only the book as a prop when reading aloud, but you can use more things—such as wearing a special hat, a vest, or all or part of a character's clothes—to enhance your performance and set read-aloud time apart from other school activities.

Explaining Words and Idioms

You may run across words that you think students will not understand. It is fine to pause your reading and ask if anyone can tell you the meaning of that word, and then clarify the definition, if needed, before continuing with the story.

The same holds true for unfamiliar idioms. You can ask your students, "What do you think the author means when he says, 'as sly as a fox'?" and for words in foreign languages. "What do you think 'bien' means?" Most children's book authors tend to use foreign words sparingly, and they endeavor to add context clues to help the reader understand them (this is a good opportunity for you to talk about context clues, too). Any time you think your students may be confused by what the author has written, you can pause and make sure they understand what's happening before resuming the story.

Questions, Questions, Questions

During your read aloud, pause to pose comprehension questions to your students—*who, what, when, where, why*. Or you can save them for afterward, to avoid interrupting your storytelling. Usually, comprehension questions avoid

details and focus on the main points of the story. It is also a good idea to ask your students questions that the book does not directly answer—this prompts them to think critically, using clues in the book.

It is also good to ask your students to give their opinions on character actions, emphasizing that there are no right or wrong opinions. Prediction questions are excellent, too, especially in chapter books with cliffhanger plot points or chapter endings. Pause and ask your students: "What do you think will

happen next?" Experience will guide you on the kinds of questions to ask and when to ask them.

Across the Curriculum

Reading aloud is a great way to teach your students about plot, character, theme, conflict, protagonist and antagonist, story patterns involving a climax and denouement, and subject areas you are teaching. With a bit of planning and preparation, you can connect your read aloud book's characters and plot to curriculum subject areas, such as language arts, maths, or art. When your read aloud is over, have your students write a carefully thought out review of the book. Or you can ask them to write about the character they liked most, and why.



Use the Five Finger Rule to Find "Just Right" Books

The treasure trove of books in the library only works for your students if they know how to find books they are interested in and books that they are able to read. The Five

Finger Rule is a tool your students can use to help pick out “just right” books—that’s two to three fingers up—for themselves.

How it works: Ask your students to choose a book they find interesting, open it to any page, and start reading. Every time a student finds a word that they are unable to decode, they put up a finger. Once they are done reading the page, the student counts how many fingers they have up.

Student Guidelines: Five Finger Rule

- Open a book to any page and start reading
- Hold up a finger every time you see a word you do not know
- Two to three fingers means “just right”



Teach Your Students the Five Finger Rule

1. Demonstrate an example of a “too easy” book (0–1 fingers), a “just right” book (2–3 fingers), and a “too hard” (5+ fingers) book so that your students understand the rule.
2. Ask your students to practice the Five Finger Rule in groups of two or three.
3. After students try the rule on three books, ask them to choose a “just right” book.
4. Once they have their “just right” book, students can sit quietly and read independently.
5. Ask each student to practice the rule on their book to confirm their understanding.

Five Finger Rule Tips & Tricks

The large, diverse collection of books in the library may prove overwhelming for your students to try out the Five Finger Rule. In that case, use other settings and strategies:

- In the library, but with books you have pre-selected
- In your classroom with books you have pre-selected
- After some practice, your students can try the Five Finger Rule in the library with all of the books.

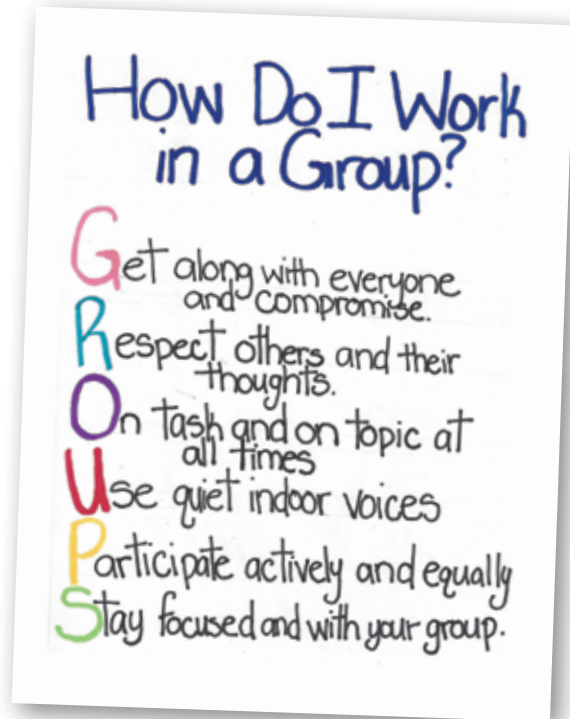


All Together Now: The Power of Group Work

You and your students will benefit when you make group work an essential part of your lessons. In order for Group Work to go smoothly, first set guidelines and routines that students can understand and follow. Display a poster so that students see and are reminded of your rules.

Group Work Guidelines

- G**et along with everyone and compromise
- R**espect others and their thoughts
- O**n task and on topic at all times
- U**se quiet indoor voices
- P**articipate actively and equally
- S**tay focused and with your group



Group Work Routines

Before the group activity starts, remind students of your guidelines, and that you will call on students to remind them of your expectations. Here's an example: You say: "Before we go into group work, can someone please remind us what group work looks like?"

A student says: "We use our indoor voices, respect each other, stay on task and participate."

Then have your students move into groups.

Group Work Tips & Tricks

Sometimes group work can get noisy. It is O.K. to allow some noise if your students are on task and having great conversations. If they become too loud, just remind the class to use their indoor voices.

It Takes Two, Partner: How to Work in Pairs



Working in pairs works best when you need your class to accomplish a small task. For example, if you set a task to read a short passage and answer three questions about it, working in pairs works better rather than in a big group.

Working in Pairs Guidelines

- Use quiet indoor voices
- Take turns speaking
- Stay focused and on task
- Participate equally
- Listen to your partner
- Respect your partner

Working in Pairs Routines

With some practice, the guidelines will become a daily routine for the students. It is helpful to refresh students on the guidelines before they go into their partner work. Here's an example:

You say: "Before we work in pairs, can anyone give me an example of what good partners do?"

A student says: "We take turns speaking and listening to each other."

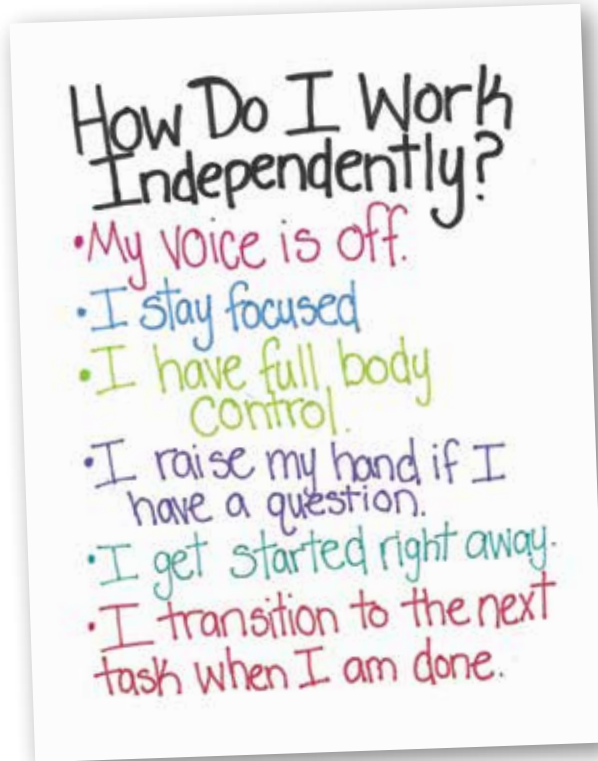


Working in Pairs Tips & Tricks

Picking a partner can be a time-consuming task for some students. Make it easy by using Clock Buddies—students who have pre-picked partners for each time on the clock. In the beginning of the year students write down on a paper clock a buddy for each hour. When it is time to pick a partner, you say, "Work with your ____ o'clock partner." Students know who their partner is, eliminating time spent trying to find one.



Test Your Teaching: Independent Work



Independent work, when students practice a skill by themselves, is a good way to evaluate your students' understanding of the lesson.

Independent Work Guidelines

- My voice is off
- I stay focused
- I have full body control
- I raise my hand if I have a question
- I get started right away
- I transition to the next task when done

Independent Work Routines

After the students know your guidelines, it becomes part of their routine. It is helpful, especially in the beginning of the year and after breaks, to refresh your students. One way to do this is to take time in the lessons to review how to work independently. For example:

You say: "Before we begin our independent work, can someone please remind us how we work independently? Do we yell? What do we do when we are done?"

You will then call on students to share the rules.



Independent Work Tips & Tricks

Always have extra activities for students to do once they finish their work. Students work at different paces.

Extra activities can include:

- Independent reading
- Students finishing work they were unable to complete in previous lessons
- A fun activity such as coloring or a cross-word puzzle related to the subject area.

Line Up! How to Take Your Class to the Library

Your students love to go to the library. But library time can cause a bit *too* much excitement in your class. It is helpful to have your guidelines in place for how to line up and go to the library. You can also call on someone to review the rules before everyone lines up. It is helpful to practice how to do each of these tasks, especially how to behave in the library. Students should be given specific guidelines on how to line up at the door. A chant (see poster at right, below) is a fun way for students to learn the rules. Examples of guidelines:

Library Time Guidelines

- Line up quickly and quietly
- Walk in a straight line with voices off
- Take your shoes off before entering the library
- Walk through the door one at a time
- Sit down quietly with your hands in your lap
- Wait patiently for the next instruction

How to Line Up Your Class

Examples of how to line up your class:

- By tables: "Table 1 can line up."
- Gender: "Girls can line up."
- Clothing color: "If you are wearing white sneakers, line up."
- Phonetically: "If your name starts with a 'b,' line up," or "If you have three syllables in your name, line up," or "If your name ends with an 'm,' line up."
- Birthday: "If you were born in June, line up."

With enough practice, this becomes a routine. It is still helpful to consistently review the guidelines with your students by having them demonstrate good line behavior in front of the class.





How to Walk in a Line

Examples of how to line up your class:

- One behind the other
- Hands by your side
- Voices off!
- Soft feet
- Face forward
- Walk slowly

How to Enter and Exit the Library

- Take off your shoes before entering the library
- Line up your shoes up outside the library
- Walk through the door calmly, one-by-one
- Students can pass an open door to each other, or you can assign a door handler
- Sit down quietly with your hands in your lap
- Wait for the next instruction
- If students act out, remind them of the rules

After Lunch and Break: Drop Everything and Read Aloud

After lunch and break, your students may be wound up and need to calm down before they can complete afternoon tasks. This is when you can take 10 minutes to read aloud to your students, give them time to unwind, and get their concentration back. For example, every day you can read a chapter from one of the *Magic Tree House* series books.

This is a great opportunity to immerse your students in books that are too challenging for them to read on their own. Reading texts of a higher reading level in short chunks exposes your students to new topics and words. It also gives you the ability to share an entertaining text with your students when there may not be enough time to do so during the Language Arts block. Let your students know that they can quietly put their head down, close their eyes, and do what they need to do to calm down and focus on the story you are reading.



The Role of Your Students During a Read Aloud

A read aloud is an opportunity for you to teach your students directly, and for your students to actively listen. Most of the books in the Lesson Plans section are perfect for read alouds. Each Lesson Plan offers guidance on how to use the book for a read aloud.

Student Guidelines for Active Listening During a Read Aloud: Am I . . .

- Paying attention to what is being said?
- Asking questions if I am confused?
- Raising my hand when I want to speak?
- Participating?
- Making eye contact?
- Keeping my feet quiet?
- Sitting up straight?

Your Read Aloud Routine

To reinforce your read aloud routine, remind the students of the guidelines before the activity begins. Here's two examples:

You say: "I am going to read this book aloud. Can everyone show me what it looks like to be actively listening?"

You say: "Before I read this book, who can remind us of how we actively listen?"



Interactive Teaching Strategy: *Think, Pair, Share!*

You can use Think, Pair, Share, an interactive teaching strategy, during any lesson. When you ask a question or want your students to think about a topic they are learning, use this strategy. Students (1) Take a minute to think about the question/topic; (2) Pair up with the person next to them, and; (3) Take turns sharing their thoughts. This is a quick way to get your students to collaborate and to think about other ideas that they normally would not get to hear if they were just thinking by themselves.

Your Routine for Think, Pair, Share

Student Guidelines for Think, Pair, Share

- Close your eyes and **think** quietly about the answer
- Quickly **pair** up with your neighbor
- **Share** your thoughts by taking turns

It is helpful to practice the steps a few times in a safe, "low-risk environment," so your students understand how to do the activity in a lesson. This can be done in the beginning of the year or when students need a refresher on this activity. For example, you can say: "We are going to act out how to do a think, pair, share. Let's look at how we do it... Now that we have reviewed our rules, let's try using the question—what is our favorite summer activity?"

Students then participate in the activity for practice.

Think Alouds: Time to Think Outside the Box

Think alouds are a quick way for your students to brainstorm ideas and share their answers. When you ask the students a question, give them a few seconds to think about how they'd like to respond—and then have students call out their answers while you write them on the board. You can use a think aloud during a pre-reading activity, a read aloud, or when using an anchor text. Here's a pre-reading activity for *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*: You say: "Before we read this book, we are going to think about what we already know about

caterpillars. I am going to give you a minute to think independently...Now that we have thought for a minute, I want you to share your answers aloud, and I am going to write them on the board."

Think Aloud Guidelines

- Think outside the box
- Stay on topic
- Don't be afraid to speak
- Use your indoor voice



Think Aloud Tips & Tricks

- If your students are not answering, have them think, pair, and share, and then have them share with the rest of the class.
- Since this is a quick brainstorm, accept all forms of answers. It is O.K. for your students to answer in dialect. You can correct the answer to standard English later.
- It will get a little bit noisy at times during the student sharing, but that is expected. This means that students are engaged and excited to share their answers aloud.

What If?

Keeping Your Students Focused

What if my students . . .	I can . . .
Get too noisy during group work or partner work and are <i>off topic</i> ?	Praise the groups that are using the right behavior, and remind everyone of guidelines for working in groups. Tell the students who are too noisy or off-topic that they need to quiet down and focus.
Get too noisy during group work or partner group work but they are <i>on topic</i> ?	Remind myself that it is O.K. if it is noisy. I can tell the noisy students to keep having these meaningful conversations, but to lower their voices.
Are unengaged during the whole group instruction?	Switch the lesson up. Add in some movement, partner work, group work, or a think, pair, share activity.
Refuse to work with each other?	Remind students that the class is one unit, and they are partners for this activity.
Are not collaborating or communicating during group work or partner work?	Make each group member responsible for doing one thing for the group. For example, if your students are writing the events in a story, each student will share and write one idea. Or, if students are reading a text, each group member will take turns reading parts of the passage.
What if there are a few students who never finish their independent work?	Look at how much work the student can do in the time frame. The work may need to be differentiated to fit their needs by being divided into smaller bits. For example, if the task is to do 10 math problems in 20 minutes, give the student 5 problems in 20 minutes, and slowly work him or her up to do more with the rest of the class.
Are not answering any questions I give them during a lesson or read aloud?	Have the students think, pair, share, and then call on students by name to tell the class what their group talked about.