

PROMOTING LITERACY

In this lesson students will learn about the importance of literacy in expanding peoples' worldview. They will engage in activities that expand their own exposure and promote diverse literature for others.

Grade Levels 3-6

Note: Lessons are designed to support multiple grade levels. Modification suggestions and extensions are for alternative pacing and to engage students at various levels.

Standards

Common Core State Standards (CCSS)

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.1 Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.6 Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.1 Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.3 Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric.

Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL)

SOCIAL AWARENESS The abilities to understand the perspectives of and empathize with others, including those from diverse backgrounds, cultures, and contexts.

Social Studies Standards (NCSS)

Theme 1: Culture

Theme 4: Individual Development and Identity

What You'll Need

"Sibling Story" article from TIME for Kids, "A Closer Look at Books" worksheet

Essential Question(s)

- Why is literacy important?
- How do different types of books impact readers?
- How can I help promote access to diverse literature.

Learning Objectives

- I can define *literacy*.
- I can explain why access to a variety of literacy resources is important.
- I can identify literature that reflects my identity and literature that provides insight into other identities.
- I can list books that will increase access to other perspectives.

INSTRUCTIONAL PLAN

Introduction

Begin with a discussion of the term *literacy*. What does it mean to be literate? What are the different components of literacy? (*Reading and writing*.) Why is literacy important to our lives? Explain that literacy helps guide our understanding of the world around us and gives us access to knowledge and perspective. Have students turn and talk to a partner about what these abilities mean. How does literacy help us better understand the world? How can you help others understand the world through literacy?

Discuss the importance of different types of books, such as fiction and nonfiction, and the reasons why they are important. Can students learn as much from fiction as they can from nonfiction? Expand on this discussion by analyzing how elements such as character, setting, and theme impact our reading experience. You may invite students to share knowledge or a perspective they have gained from reading.

Discussion

Have students read “[Sibling Story](#)” independently. While they’re reading, ask students to look for the problem the siblings set out to solve, the solution they came up with, and how they came up with the solution.

Discussion Questions

1. What motivated Haili and Brooke Smith to start reading books for pleasure?
2. What does it mean that the books collected by the siblings are culturally diverse?
3. Why is it important for students to have access to and to read a variety of books?
4. How has *Books Like Me* affected the students in Anitra Carter’s class?

Independent Activity

Have students reread the first paragraph of the section “Shared Perspectives.” Have them turn and talk about what the author means by “windows” and “mirrors.” Then provide some examples of books that were windows and mirrors for you. Pass out copies of the worksheet “[A Closer Look at Books](#).” Have students first brainstorm some ways in which they identify themselves. Then have them add some titles to the “Books I’ve Read” shelves

for both windows and mirrors. Tell them to write a reflection on the back. Prompt the reflection with questions such as: Which books do you tend to favor? Which books are easier for you to find? Why do you think that is?

Small Group Activity

Put students in groups. Have each student share a book from their mirror shelf and their window shelf and tell their group why they chose them. As students hear about books that catch their interest, they can add them to their sheet. After sharing, have students discuss if it is easy or challenging to find books that are mirrors for them. Why is that? Have the groups discuss why it is important to read books that feature diverse characters.

Closing

Remind students that writing is part of literacy too. Invite them to share their own stories. These should be stories tied to their culture or identity. For example, they might write about a special holiday celebration, visiting a country that one of their relatives was born in, or playing a game taught to them by their grandparents. If students feel more comfortable using one of these themes to write a fictional story, they may do that. Then have them create a list of their mirror books that they would like to share with others. Post these personal stories and book lists for others to read and learn from. You can extend this lesson by creating an Amazon Wish List of books recommended by your students and sharing donated books with other classes or schools.

Exit Ticket (Survey)

Have students complete the [“Promoting Literacy Survey”](#) to capture the impact this lesson has had on them.

Optional Extension Opportunities

Visit Read Your World’s website for [diverse book lists and activities](#) and access to a variety of [free classroom kits](#) containing book recommendations, resources, and downloadable posters.

Home-to-School Connections

- **Talk about it.** Have students go home and look at their home library. What kinds of books do they have at home? Students should talk to their family about the books they have and what they learned from reading each of them. Are there types of books they wish they had more of?
- **Act on it.** Have students visit a library and ask for help finding books with diverse characters. Does the library have a special spot that promotes a selection of books? If so, suggest a theme that would help library visitors be exposed to more-diverse books. If not, talk to a librarian about creating a table like that.