

Voluminous Reading: Nine Foundational Actions

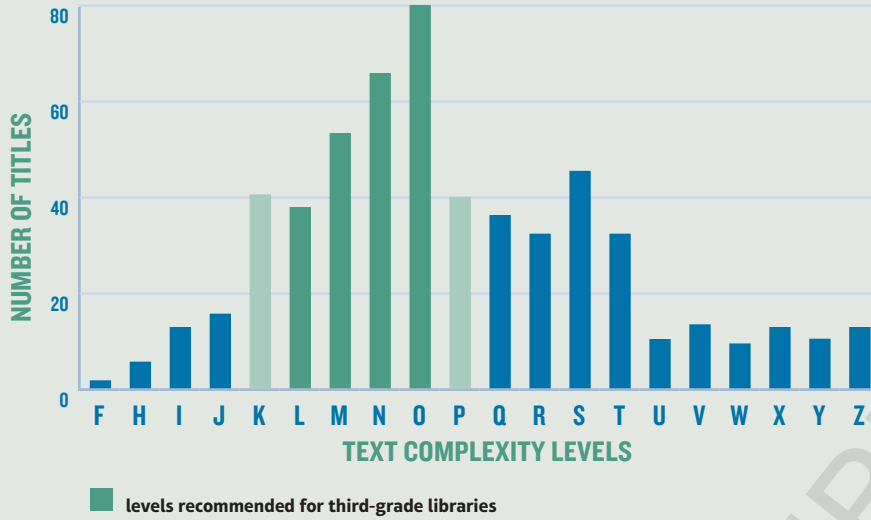
Third-grade teacher Lorraine Leddy reached into a classroom library bin and retrieved several books for a Getting-to-Know-You Preview Stack (see page 111). New to Mamaroneck, Lorraine was eager to assess her students using the technique from the district’s assessment framework. She planned to confer early with Brianna, a striving reader, to get her up and running in a compelling book and to learn about her reading history and preferences. Lorraine found that the classroom library she inherited contained few books at Brianna’s last assessed reading level—specifically, four Henry and Mudge books from 2005—even though the collection filled several bookcases. Lorraine thought about the message the classroom library would send to Brianna. If the books in it were worn and limited, would she assume they were her only choice? Likely, she would.

Lorraine knew that her personal children’s book collection, while extensive, would not fill the gap. She recognized the need to weed, inventory, and augment the classroom library, and reached out to Maggie for support. Maggie was not surprised to hear from Lorraine, having already anticipated the collection would need attention due to teacher turnover. Two of Maggie’s primary roles as literacy ambassador are to ensure that every classroom is outfitted with a serviceable library and to support every teacher in augmenting and customizing it across the year with a district budget allocation. In the Mamaroneck team’s experience, collections erode when teachers are reassigned or retire. Books migrate from one classroom to another, often leaving behind motley collections mismatched to readers—particularly strivers, as Lorraine found.

Maggie helped Lorraine conduct an inventory, using a free online electronic management tool. Using two portable scanners, Maggie, Lorraine, and two student volunteers managed to scan 75 percent of the books in the collection in a single lunch period. Later, Maggie scanned the remaining books and compiled a spreadsheet of over 600 titles, organized by text level. Maggie also created charts, like the one on the next page, so Lorraine could see the overall distribution of text levels in the collection, as well as the distribution of levels recommended for third-grade libraries, Levels K–P, in green.

Lorraine noted that the collection skewed high, a pattern Maggie had found in many classroom libraries in the district prior to curation. A substantial number of books were at Levels P–Z, well beyond the year-end benchmark for third grade: Level O. With Brianna in mind,

LORRAINE'S CLASSROOM LIBRARY PRIOR TO CURATION



Lorraine was shocked to find that her library originally contained more Level S books than Levels F–J books combined!

Lorraine started by moving most of the books at Level Q and higher to storage bins, immediately thinning the collection to better match the readers in the room. “Students were more likely to encounter books that would ensure successful, joyful reading experiences,” Lorraine commented. She redistributed some of the

books she’d removed to fourth- and fifth- grade teachers; others she held in reserve for mini-lessons, read-alouds, and more developed readers’ independent reading.

Once the library contained a majority of books appropriate for third grade, gaps became evident in, for example, nonfiction and fantasy fiction. Lorraine noted a dearth of books by and about BIPOC individuals and people with disabilities. Armed with this information, she set out to acquire high-quality books by diverse authors that spanned a range of genres, formats, and topics. (See #ownvoices later in this chapter.) Maggie gave Lorraine a baseline list of books she’d ordered for past “infusions” into third-grade classroom libraries, and Lorraine asked her students for book recommendations.

Lorraine circled back to Brianna with a robust Preview Stack containing fiction and nonfiction books, in graphic format and standard chapter book format, on topics such as sports, friendship, space exploration, animals, and cooking. “Watching Brianna interact with a new-and-improved Preview Stack gave me such a vivid understanding of her reading life, as well as her personality,” Lorraine commented. “I learned so much about her interests, thanks to the variety of books I made available to her.” For example, when presented with a biography from the Little People, BIG DREAMS series, Brianna told Lorraine she loves stories about real people. An animal lover, Brianna also leaned into a book from the Who’s a Good Dog? series. With a steady stream of appealing books—and Lorraine’s support—Brianna made great strides throughout the year.

Change the book, change the reader! Chances are, when students lack confidence and motivation to read, it’s because key elements that assure high-success reading are not yet in place. Time for a gut check! Have you ensured that all your students:

- Have access to books they can and want to read?
- Are given daily uninterrupted time to read?
- Are part of a classroom reading culture that encourages and supports their voluminous reading every day?

By embracing the following actions, you’ll create optimal conditions for independent reading for every child, and you’ll answer “yes” to those three critical questions.

Nine Actions That Promote Voluminous Reading

By thoughtfully curating her classroom library, Lorraine created conditions for striving reader Brianna to thrive. She also set up the rest of her class to read successfully and independently. In Part II, which provides the tools to support individual readers intensively, you'll notice that we periodically redirect you back to this chapter to make sure you're embracing critical, foundational actions. When you do, you equip most kids to read voluminously, which enables you to focus your volume-building attention on those kids who need it most.

Know Kids in the Round

Because children thrive when they feel known and valued, building genuine and trusting relationships is the core of our work. In a profound essay in *The Teacher You Want to Be*, Katherine Bomer urges that we view students “with an air of expectancy,” taking an open, inquisitive, and appreciative stance as we get to know them over time: “Notice that the actions of looking, listening, and accepting require us to change our stance in the classroom from being the constant deliverer of information, source of all answers, and evaluator and judge...to becoming curious, empathetic, and accepting of what is in our students” (2015).

The following prompts help you get to know each of your students and focus your teaching accordingly. For example, from informal conversations, Lorraine knew that Brianna had two older brothers at home who were thriving readers of chapter books. From queries from Brianna's mother, she knew that there was interest in advancing Brianna to chapter books as well. Lorraine put that knowledge to use in two ways: 1. She assured Brianna's parents that the Little People, BIG DREAMS biographies Brianna was reading were appropriately meaty. 2. She suspected that Brianna would seek hefty books to keep up with her brothers and classmates, and would need to find thick yet accessible anthologies to fit the bill.

Know a Child as a Person

- Who are the important people in his life? What are their occupations, schedules, and preferred modes of communication?
- Are other language(s) spoken at home?
- What are the child's interests? What does he know and care a lot about? Does he play a sport, belong to a club, or pursue a hobby?
- What responsibilities (chores, sibling care, job) does he have beyond schoolwork?
- Who are his friends?

Know a Child as a Learner

- What have his prior school experiences been like?
- What curricular topics interest him most? Least?
- Does he prefer to collaborate or work independently?
- Does he have reliable access to tech tools and the Internet outside of school?
- What is his level of academic self-confidence?

Know a Child as a Reader

- What is the child's reading history (textual lineage)? What landmark texts and reading experiences has he had?
- What are his literary tastes and preferences? What kinds of reading does he gravitate toward? Avoid?
- What experience has he had navigating different genres and formats?
- What meaning-making strategies does he use independently?
- How does the child see himself as a reader?
- What access streams does the child have? How many books are available at home? Does he use school and public libraries?
- Is he in a book club or partnership?
- Are there expectations or restrictions from parents about what the child reads?

Ways to Know a Child in the Round

- Kidwatch: Observe the child, noting his behaviors, interactions, response to challenges.
- Confer: Meet with the child individually; ask him about prior experiences, perceptions of himself as a learner and reader.
- Chat with the child before/after class, at lunch; find out what's on his mind.
- Converse with parents or caregivers: seek and share perspectives about the child.
- Study the student's work carefully, not just to assess its completeness and accuracy but to see what it reveals about his thinking and study habits.
- Inventory the child's interests, background knowledge, and preferences.
- Invite parents to provide information about the child via a parent input form.
- Use diagnostic assessments (e.g., Getting-to-Know-You Preview Stack, page 111) to assess the child's prior experiences and preferences.
- Consult with other professionals who know the child well, such as prior teachers and counselors.
- Make a home visit: Visit the child and his family at home in a relaxed, informal manner. See page 168 for more information on home visits.

Knowing children as people, learners, and readers—really knowing them—builds productive, trusting relationships and guides our teaching. Just as the best gift givers use what they know about friends and family to choose thoughtful gifts, teachers who use what they know about their students design innovative, literacy-boosting strategies tailored to kids' needs, as we'll discuss in Chapter 3. Knowing kids as people first leads us to understand them better as readers.

2 Book-Match Relentlessly

With deep gratitude to Teri Lesesne (2003), educator and book maven extraordinaire, we recognize that “making the match” between reader and book—and protecting the flame once it’s lit—is a vital responsibility for anyone who champions children’s literacy development. We use the word “relentlessly” because our commitment must be steady and ongoing. We serve as keepers of the flame when we focus on the dynamics between individual readers and their books. When we express genuine interest in their book choices, children sense it; they know we mean it when we say we want them to be enthralled by what they read. At first, they meet us halfway by offering honest opinions about our recommendations; eventually, they become active and agentive seekers of texts they want to read.

Here are our suggestions for making great book-matches for your readers.

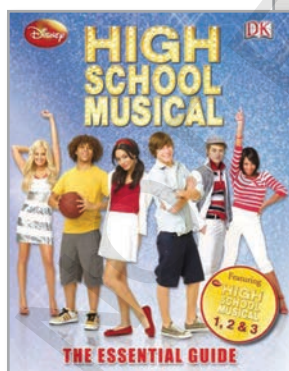
- **Notice the physical relationship between children and their books.** Engaged readers keep their books close at hand and open them whenever they have a free moment. Although it sounds obvious, one of the first signs that a reader is not well matched with a book is, well, the absence of that book! For example, when Annie asked fifth grader Elvis what he was reading, he plunged his hand deep into his desk and retrieved two empty Doritos bags before a tattered paperback. He looked at the book (presumably to remind himself of its title) before holding it up for approval.
- **Inquire into children’s book choices.** When kids do appear to be suitably matched, ask them about the book they’ve chosen. Where did they find it? What about it appealed to them? How have they made their way into it? Questions like those help you gauge the child’s level of investment in the book and identify the book-access streams they tap (e.g., home, public and school libraries). We have found that while thriving readers generally have multiple streams, striving readers often rely solely on classroom libraries and collections in literacy-support settings if they receive in-services outside the classroom, making it all the more important that those streams contain a wealth of highly accessible and appealing books (see Action 3 on page 29). And if a child like Elvis is not invested in his book, we ought to pause and help him reconsider his selection before tying instruction or accountability measures to a book he cares little about. We spend a great deal of time conferring with children about their book choices and selection processes.
- **Model ways you plan for and conduct your reading life.** Let kids know how finicky you are about what you read. (“So many books, so little time.”) Show them how you identify potential Next-Up books by reading reviews, seeking recommendations from readers with similar tastes to yours, browsing libraries and bookstores, and reading the flaps and opening pages of potential books. Point out that once you’ve started reading a book, you keep it with you to maintain momentum; you read during downtime in waiting rooms, on the train, and so forth. Explain that when you let too much time elapse without reading, you can have trouble re-entering the world of the book.
- **Use Preview Stacks to assess kids’ preferences and match them with compelling books.** We have found Donalyn Miller’s book-matching technique to be so effective that we have incorporated a variation, a Getting-to-Know-You Preview Stack, into our elementary assessment framework at the outset of the year. In the conference, the child sorts a set of books you’ve assembled by preference, and you learn the genres, formats, designs,

and other elements that appeal to—or repel—her. At the end of the conference, ideally, the child leaves with one or more good matches, and you leave with valuable assessment data to guide your recommendations going forward. (See details on Getting-to-Know-You Preview Stacks on page 111.)

- **Avoid book snobbery:** Do you look askance at funny/edgy topics and graphic formats and frown upon rereading? To be effective book-matchers, we must instead allow kids to choose and delight in books of all stripes, including graphic novels and book adaptations of movies and TV shows. As Jeffrey Wilhelm, Michael Smith, and Sharon Fransen suggest in *Reading Unbound: Why Kids Need to Read What They Want and Why We Should Let Them* (2013), we must ask, “If we want to develop engaged and competent readers, might we not benefit from understanding the nature of reading pleasure, particularly in relation to the books that students love, but that we, as adults and teachers, might disapprove of?”

In Mamaroneck, when we looked at the school library circulation data of children who’d made accelerated gains as readers, we noticed a clear and fascinating pattern of rereading! Rather than signifying reading “ruts,” repeated checkouts point to engaged reading spurts, as captured in Maisie’s circulation record, shown below. She checked out *High School Musical* seven times in two months!

- **Guide students to keep Next-Up Book List.** A Next-Up Book List (or “books on deck”) is a simple volume-building tool that prevents stalls and gaps in kids’ reading lives and gives you a window into their intentions. Prompt students to keep a running list in their reading notebooks or folders of appealing titles they’ve heard about from one another, your booktalks, or other sources. Look at those lists regularly to make sure kids have Next-Up books in mind while they’re still devouring their current one. Step in to procure Next-Up books for children who lack access. (To learn more about Next-Up Book Lists, see page 121.)
- **Guide and track readers’ paths.** Next-Up Book Lists can also serve as reading logs if students record the books they have read, as well as books they plan to read. Encourage kids to use their lists to reflect on their reading paths, noticing whether and how their preferences are evolving. On page 125, read more about Teri Lesesne’s concept of “reading ladders” (2010) as a way to support a reader’s progress from book to book.



Maisie’s library circulation history

Big Nate : In a Class by Himself (Copy: T 52448)	5/19/2015	5/25/2015	5/29/2015
Little Miss Sunshine and the wicked witch (Copy Deleted: T 52350)	5/11/2015	5/18/2015	5/19/2015
Little Miss Splendid and the princess (Copy Deleted: T 52349)	5/11/2015	5/18/2015	5/19/2015
High school musical : the essential guide (Copy Deleted: T 51417)	5/1/2015	5/7/2015	5/11/2015
High school musical : the essential guide (Copy Deleted: T 51417)	4/15/2015	4/21/2015	5/1/2015
Japan : a question and answer book (Copy: T 127802)	4/15/2015	4/21/2015	6/15/2015
Japan (Copy: T 51643)	4/15/2015	4/21/2015	6/15/2015
High school musical : the essential guide (Copy Deleted: T 51417)	4/7/2015	4/13/2015	4/15/2015
Kim Possible. Volume 6 (Copy: T 50866)	4/7/2015	4/13/2015	4/15/2015
Kim Possible. Volume 6 (Copy: T 50866)	3/23/2015	3/30/2015	4/7/2015
High school musical : the essential guide (Copy Deleted: T 51417)	3/23/2015	3/30/2015	4/7/2015
High school musical : the essential guide (Copy Deleted: T 51417)	3/13/2015	3/19/2015	3/23/2015
Kim Possible. Volume 6 (Copy: T 50866)	3/13/2015	3/19/2015	3/23/2015
Kim Possible. Volume 6 (Copy: T 50866)	3/4/2015	3/10/2015	3/13/2015
High school musical : the essential guide (Copy Deleted: T 51417)	3/4/2015	3/10/2015	3/13/2015
Kim Possible. Volume 7 (Copy: T 50867)	2/24/2015	3/2/2015	3/4/2015
High school musical : the essential guide (Copy Deleted: T 51417)	2/24/2015	3/2/2015	3/4/2015
Romeo & Juliet (Copy: T 52602)	1/30/2015	2/5/2015	2/9/2015
Kim Possible. Volume 1 (Copy: T 127771)	1/30/2015	2/5/2015	1/30/2015
Kim Possible. Volume 7 (Copy: T 50867)	1/30/2015	2/5/2015	2/24/2015

3 Create and Curate Robust, Vibrant, and Diverse Classroom Libraries

Access to books is a social justice issue. Classroom libraries provide children with fingertip access to appealing texts to read voluminously. That access is essential for all children, especially for striving readers and children in poverty, for whom the classroom library is likely the most reliable source of books. Equity and access go together. School needs to be the place kids can find and read the books they love.

Like planting a garden, curating a collection takes active, ongoing attention. Once we make the powerful decision to support all our readers with a classroom library, we must commit to curating the collection. In making an argument for increased book allocations for district-wide classroom libraries, Annie explained to the Board of Education that Mamaroneck teachers are in the business of facilitating 5,600 unique and idiosyncratic reading journeys! It takes time, energy, and resources to build and maintain the classroom libraries each of our children needs.

- **Take stock of what you've inherited, and weed aggressively.** Less is indeed more! While it may seem counterintuitive to cull your collection as a first step in building it, we can't emphasize enough that fewer but appealing high-quality books are far more valuable than a sprawling collection of unappealing, dated ones. In fact, we've found that library circulation typically increases following substantial weeding because readers are able to locate and peruse books more easily.
 - Involve students in weeding. In our experience, they will have few qualms about identifying books they won't read!
- **Build the collection for the readers you expect.** Over time, aim to acquire a core collection of books well suited to the capabilities and interests of most children at your grade level. That means familiarizing yourself with tried-and-true topics, authors, and series, as well as actively and continuously seeking new ones. As you do so, keep the following criteria in mind.
 - ▶ **Variety and appeal:** Select books in a wide range of formats, genres, and topics. Be aware of your own tastes and preferences, and make sure you acquire books well beyond them. For example, when Annie was an eighth-grade English teacher, her classroom library was low on two of her least favorite genres, fantasy fiction and science fiction, until her students brought those gaps to her attention. In our frequent tours of classrooms, we notice that collections often fall short on books that are funny, edgy, "forbidden," or inspired by pop culture—the very things that appeal to young readers.
 - ▶ **Effort-to-reward ratio:** Consider books' "effort-to-reward ratios." Striving readers benefit from books that provide multiple entry points and immediate gratification, such as graphic novels and image-heavy formats. Make sure your library includes books that require less effort from the reader to achieve high levels of satisfaction.
 - ▶ **Text quality:** Turn to reliable sources and advocacy groups, such as The Conscious Kid and We Need Diverse Books, to inform your choices for fiction and nonfiction. (See the resources in *Decolonizing Our Bookshelves*, page 32.)



Students in Janet Acobes's third-grade class relished her invitation to pull dated books out of the classroom library.

- **An appropriate range of levels:** *From Striving to Thriving: How to Grow Confident, Capable Readers* (2017) contains the eye-opening results of a room-by-room inventory of classroom libraries in Mamaroneck, revealing that, prior to any systemic attention, the vast majority of those libraries skewed high. In fact, most collections—including the one Lorraine inherited—contained mostly books that were at higher levels than district year-end benchmarks demanded! By favoring the already-thriving readers, this mismatch exacerbated the Matthew effects we describe in Chapter 1 and left many strivers in de facto book droughts.
- **Customize the collection for the readers you meet,** using what you know about kids' interests to acquire high-interest topics, formats, and genres. Stock and renew the shelves, keeping these points in mind:
 - ▶ **Kid recommendations:** Tap all your readers, especially strivers. Anticipate high-interest tie-ins for movies and TV shows (e.g., books based on animated favorites such as *Frozen* and *Coco*). These high-currency titles provide big bang for the buck, even if they self-destruct after repeated, joyful readings. McGill-Franzen and Allington (2010) found that books featuring pop-culture personalities and characters (e.g., Lil' Romeo, Britney Spears, Pokemon, Captain Underpants) were the most highly sought titles by children in their summer slide prevention study.

A NOTE ON TEXT LEVELS

We advocate for paying attention to text levels but strongly believe those levels are a teacher's tool, not a child's label! (Parrott, 2017) Paying professional attention to levels behind the scenes enables us to de-emphasize levels when conferring with students, because it ensures the bulk of the collection is well suited to the majority of them.

CUSTOMIZE THE COLLECTION FOR THE READERS YOU MEET

Second-grade teacher Arelys Vieira used her district allocation to purchase books featuring characters from *Frozen* and *Moana* at the peak of their popularity and to beef up her collection of sports-trivia books, based on student demand. Noticing that several kids were aspiring master chefs, she also fed the class's interest with cookbooks.



- ▶ **Niche acquisitions:** If you receive an allocation from your school or district, use it to purchase books that match students' assessed interests, particularly striving readers'. For example, as fourth-grader Layna was considering books Maggie offered in a Preview Stack, she rejected a how-to book on hairstyling but acknowledged that she would be interested in a how-to book on skateboarding. In other words, she was intrigued by Maggie's choice of format, but not of topic. So Maggie found a how-to book on skateboarding and ordered it for Layna, knowing that it would likely jump-start her reading.
- ▶ **Seasonal, timely satellite collections:** Borrowing books from school and public libraries is a no-cost way of augmenting your collection to match students' passing interests. For example, in Olympics years, kids love reading about the Games: their history, popular and lesser-known sports, and medal-winning athletes. Also, coffee (or "cocoa") table books are expensive to purchase but can be borrowed from the library for a rotating, high-interest classroom center.
- ▶ **Access to other libraries' collections:** Partner with school and public librarians to increase your students' access to high-interest titles. Once you've stoked demand for specific books through booktalks and read-alouds, you'll likely need to supply multiple copies to eager readers. Librarians can help you round up books through interlibrary loan so that kids can read and discuss them simultaneously, fueling social energy in your classroom.
- **Establish an ongoing cycle of weeding and expansion:** Following the initial weeding described above, periodically throughout the year remove dated and/or worn books from your collection and acquire new ones. Keep an ongoing "wish list" of titles you'd like to add. If you do not receive a book allocation—or if your school's purchasing procedures are cumbersome, speak with the appropriate administrator about the cost-effectiveness of targeted book-matching as a volume-building strategy. Share the essay entitled "Riverkeepers: Strategies to Keep Vital Streams of Books Flowing," contributed by Annie and Maggie to *Game Changer! Book Access for All Kids* (2018), which you can find at [scholastic.com/ReinventionResources](https://www.scholastic.com/ReinventionResources).

Tracking the Representation of People of Color in Children’s Literature

- In a 1965 *Saturday Review* article, “The All-White World of Children’s Books,” Dr. Nancy Larrick, founder of the International Literacy Association, contrasts population data with children’s book publishing statistics, and exposes a vast overrepresentation of white characters: “Integration may be the law of the land, but most of the books children see are all white.” This dearth harms children of color by depriving them of opportunities to see themselves in the books they read and in how they imagine their futures. It also harms white children. As Larrick puts it, “Although his light skin makes him one of the world’s minorities, the white child learns from his books that he is the kingfish. There seems to be little chance of developing the humility so needed for world cooperation.”
- Almost 50 years later, in response to a 2013 study by the Cooperative Children’s Book Center at the University of Wisconsin, author Walter Dean Myers (2014) published an op-ed piece in *The New York Times*, “Where Are the People of Color in Children’s Books?,” decrying the persistent problem. Myers describes his own path to literacy, including his adolescent disenchantment with reading because he didn’t see himself or others like him in books: “As I discovered who I was, a black teenager in a white-dominated world, I saw that these characters, these lives, were not mine. I didn’t want to become the ‘black representative,’ or some shining example of diversity. What I wanted, needed really, was to become an integral and valued part of the mosaic that I saw around me.”
- Alongside that piece, author Christopher Myers (2014), son of Walter Dean Myers, published an op-ed titled “The Apartheid of Children’s Literature,” in which he posits that for children of color, books function as maps: “[Children of color] are indeed searching for their place in the world, but they are also deciding where they want to go. They create, through the stories they’re given, an atlas of their world, of their relationships to others, of their possible destinations.” Citing the scarcity of books about and featuring people of color, Myers concludes, “Children of color remain outside the boundaries of imagination. The cartography we create with this literature is flawed.”
- In 2016 and again in 2019, Dr. Sarah Park Dahlen, associate professor in the Master of Library and Information Science Program at St. Catherine University, and Minnesota illustrator David Huyck published an infographic depicting data collected by the Cooperative Children’s Book Center at University of Wisconsin—Madison, about books published in those years depicting characters from diverse backgrounds. Staggeringly, the statistics reveal minimal progress had been made in half a century. Whereas 50 percent of the books published featured white characters and 27 percent featured animals and other nonhuman characters, only 1 percent featured American Indians, 5 percent featured Latinx people, 7 percent featured Asian-Pacific Islanders or Asian-Pacific Americans, and 10 percent featured Africans or African Americans. Note Huyck’s depiction of the small, warped, and/or broken mirrors held by characters of color in comparison to the myriad, favorable reflections of the white character, who is privileged to see himself from all angles as royalty, space traveler, athlete, and more.

DIVERSITY IN CHILDREN'S BOOKS

Percentage of books depicting characters from diverse backgrounds based on the 2018 publishing statistics compiled by the Cooperative Children's Book Center, School of Education, University of Wisconsin—Madison.

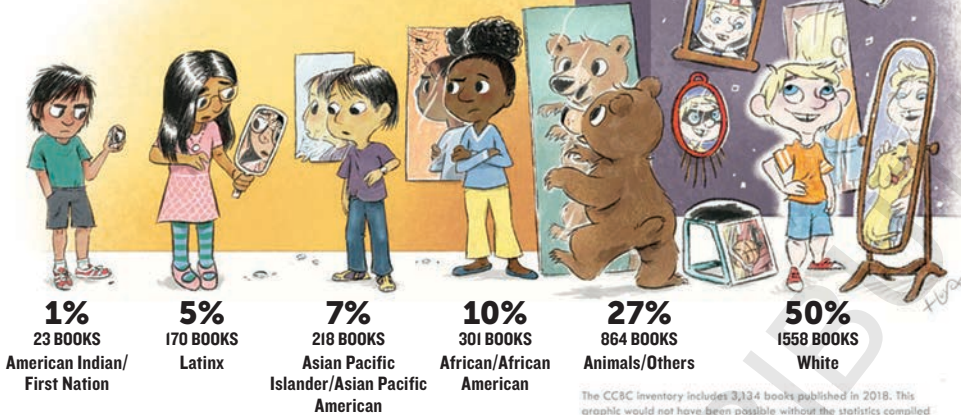


Illustration by David Huyck, in consultation with Sarah Park Dahlen
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The CCBC inventory includes 3,134 books published in 2018. This graphic would not have been possible without the statistics compiled by the CCBC, and the review and feedback we received from Edith Campbell, Molly Beth Griffin, K. T. Harrington, Debbie Reese, Ebony Elizabeth Thomas, and Madeline Tyner. Many thanks.

Illustration by David Huyck, in consultation with Sarah Park Dahlen • Released under a Creative Commons BY-SA license

- In a follow-up blog post (2019), Dr. Dahlen explains that she and Huyck “wanted this infographic to show not just the low quantity of existing literature, but also the inaccuracy and uneven quality of some of those books,” particularly those not written in #OwnVoices.
- In February 2020, educator and author Zaretta Hammond contributed a piece to the Research for Better Teaching’s newsletter, “Revisiting Your Library: Decolonizing, Not Just Diversifying.” Hammond argues that building a diverse collection is insufficient: “We add books with more brown faces, but we may still be perpetuating stereotypes.” For example, Hammond states that many so-called “diverse” books feature Black people in predictable roles. “Most often, they are about buses, boycotts, or basketball. They are storylines that are often about the challenges of ‘urban or inner-city’ living. Or those books center around a ‘Black Lives Matter’ social justice theme, depict African Americans during slavery or the civil rights era, focusing on ‘heroes and holidays.’ Lastly, a common stereotypical theme is Black kids and sports as a way to increase reading engagement, especially among boys.” Hammond emphasizes that those types of books have a place in a well-curated collection, but they should not rule. “In reality, Black life is diverse. The Black experience is diverse. Our classroom libraries should reflect that reality, too.” Hammond offers three questions to assess whether a book is worth including or not:

1. Does the book go beyond typical themes about characters of color?
2. Do the children of color look authentic?
3. Are the texts, especially fictional stories, “enabling”?

Echoing Nancy Larrick’s point from a half-century ago, Hammond concludes that those questions will help educators identify books that affirm African American students and “expand white students’ exposure to the everydayness of Black life in America and around the world.”

Viewing Books as Mirrors, Windows, Sliding Glass Doors... and Prisms

Few literary metaphors have been as apt, provocative, and lasting as ones coined by Rudine Sims Bishop in an essay in which she explains how books can serve as “mirrors,” “windows,” and “sliding glass doors” for readers:

“Books are sometimes windows, offering views of worlds that may be real or imagined, familiar or strange. These windows are also sliding glass doors, and readers have only to walk through in imagination to become part of whatever world has been created and recreated by the author. When lighting conditions are just right, however, a window can also be a mirror. Literature transforms human experience and reflects it back to us, and in that reflection we can see our own lives and experiences as part of the larger human experience. Reading, then, becomes a means of self-affirmation, and readers often seek their mirrors in books” (1990).

Those metaphors are apt to readers who have been jolted by seeing their own experiences reflected on the page or who have traveled beyond those experiences, thanks to a book. They are provocative because Bishop states plainly that nonwhite readers, too often, come up empty when they search for mirrors: “When children cannot find themselves reflected in the books they read, or when the images they see are distorted, negative, or laughable, they learn a powerful lesson about how they are devalued in the society of which they are a part.” Finally, the metaphors are lasting because they have been cited innumerable times over the last 30 years—albeit often without attribution.

In an article in *The Horn Book Magazine* (2019), children’s author Uma Krishnaswami revisits Bishop’s metaphors and asks, Why stop with windows and mirrors? She reviews several children’s books and suggests that they operate as prisms, shedding new light on readers’ lives and perspectives:

“A prism can slow and bend the light that passes through it, splitting that light into its component colors. It can refract light in as many directions as the prism’s shape and surface planes allow. Similarly, books can disrupt and challenge ideas about diversity through multifaceted and intersecting identities, settings, cultural contexts, and histories. They can place diverse characters at these crucial intersections and give them the power to reframe their stories. Through the fictional world, they can make us question the assumptions and practices of our own real world.”

Resources

Follow these individuals, organizations, and hashtags for current, reliable information to bring diverse and authentic texts to your students.

AMERICAN INDIANS IN CHILDREN'S LITERATURE (AICL)

americanindiansinchildrensliterature.net

Established in 2006 by Dr. Debbie Reese of Nambé Pueblo, American Indians in Children's Literature (AICL) provides critical analysis of indigenous peoples in children's and young adult books. Dr. Jean Mendoza is a co-editor at AICL.

Dr. Debbie Reese is on Twitter @debreese

EDITH (EDI) CAMPBELL

crazyquiltedi.blog

Edi Campbell is a reference/instruction librarian at Indiana State University committed to improving the representation of people of color and native/First Nations People in children's literature by addressing issues of bias, racism, inequity, and imperialism. An avid quilter, Campbell named her blog CrazyQuiltEdi, noting: "Crazy quilts are a unique type of quilt that combines fabrics of all shapes, sizes, textures, and colors into a unique piece of art.... When 'scraps' come together, they create a thing of beauty."

Edi Campbell is on Twitter @crazyquilts

COOPERATIVE CENTER FOR CHILDREN'S BOOKS

ccbc.education.wisc.edu

Established in 1963, the CCBC is a unique research library at the University of Wisconsin—Madison, School of Education. Its mission is to identify outstanding children's literature and bring it to the attention of educators and others interested in connecting children with great books. Director Kathleen T. Horning and librarians Merry Lindgren, Megan Schliesman, and Madeline Tyner post trustworthy resources, including Book of the Week reviews (archived from 1997) and an array of awards and best-of-the-year lists, as well as a detailed multicultural literature resource.

CCBC Librarians are on Twitter @ccbcwisc

THE CONSCIOUS KID

theconsciouskid.org/blog

The Conscious Kid is a multifaceted organization dedicated to reducing bias and promoting positive identity development in youth. Social worker and researcher Katie Ishizuka and educator Ramón Stephens, co-founders of The Conscious Kid, published a study in 2019, "The Cat Is Out of the Bag: Orientalism, Anti-Blackness, and White Supremacy in Dr. Seuss's Children's Books," as part of St. Catherine University's Research on Diversity in Youth Literature.

Ishizuka and Stephens are on Twitter @consciouskidlib

DISRUPT TEXTS

disrupttexts.org

Disrupt Texts is "a crowd-sourced, grass roots effort by teachers for teachers to challenge the traditional canon in order to create a more inclusive, representative, and equitable language arts curriculum that our students deserve." Tricia Ebarvia, Lorena German, Dr. Kimberly Parker, and Julia E. Torres, founders of the movement, connect with and support teachers committed to anti-racist/anti-bias teaching, and host a regular slow chat on Twitter with the hashtag #DisruptTexts.

Tricia Ebarvia is on Twitter @triciaebarvia
Lorena German is on Twitter @nenagerman
Dr. Kim Parker is on Twitter @TchKimPossible
Julia E. Torres is on Twitter @juliaerin80

DIVERSITY JEDI

Cynthia Leitich Smith, a member of the Muscogee Nation, coined the hashtag #DiversityJedi in 2015 after a white author called Dr. Debbie Reese, a scholar and librarian who is a member of the Nambé Pueblo nation, a "stormtrooper" in response to her criticism of children's books that misrepresent First/Native Nations' peoples, traditions, and histories. Reese, Smith, and others bestow the title "Diversity Jedi" on those who call out such misrepresentation. They also bestow it on those who call out "tone policing," which Edith Campbell says "happens during conversations or debates when one person, typically of greater privilege, thwarts a speaker's thoughts

or opinions by reacting to their emotional tone," as Reese's opponent did.

Search for #DiversityJedi

LATINXS IN KIDLIT

latinosinkidlit.com

The mission of this vibrant website founded by author and educator Cindy L. Rodriguez, which features contributions from Latinx educators, librarians, authors/illustrators, and researchers, is "to engage with works about, for, and/or by Latinxs; offer a broad forum on Latinx children's, MG, and YA books; promote literacy and the love of books within the Latinx community; examine the historical and contemporary state of Latinx characters; encourage interest in Latinx literature among non-Latinx readers; share perspectives and resources that can be of use to writers, authors, illustrators, librarians, parents, teachers, scholars, and other stakeholders in literacy and publishing."

Latinxs in KidLit is on Twitter @LatinosInKidLit

Cindy L. Rodriguez is on Twitter @RodriguezCindyL

LEE & LOW BOOKS

leeandlow.com

Lee & Low is the largest multicultural publishing house in the United States and one of the few that is minority owned. It was founded in 1991 with the simple mission to "publish contemporary, diverse stories that all children could enjoy." Lee & Low makes concerted efforts to publish and promote previously unpublished authors and illustrators of color. Among the many valuable resources available on its website is an interactive Classroom Library Questionnaire that enables teachers to build diverse, culturally responsive collections by identifying strengths and addressing gaps.

OWN VOICES

corinneduyvis.net/ownvoices

In a 2015 Twitter post, Young Adult author Corinne Duyvis suggested that people use the hashtag #OwnVoices to recommend and discuss books by authors who share the identities of the characters they create. In a FAQ section of her website, Duyvis explains, "It's common for marginalized characters to be written by authors who aren't part of that marginalized group and who are clueless despite having good intentions. As a result, many portrayals are lacking at best and damaging at worst." Duyvis is also the co-founder of the Disability in Kidlit blog at <http://disabilityinkidlit.com>.

Search for #OwnVoices

Corinne Duyvis is on Twitter @CorinneDuyvis

WE NEED DIVERSE BOOKS

diversebooks.org

We Need Diverse Books is "a 501(c)(3) non-profit and a grassroots organization of children's book lovers that advocates essential changes in the publishing industry to produce and promote literature that reflects and honors the lives of all young people." The WNDB Executive Committee includes co-founder and CEO Ellen Oh, a YA author, and COO Dhonielle Clayton, author and former teacher and librarian.

Search for #WeNeedDiverseBooks and #WNDB

We Need Diverse Books is on Twitter @diversebooks

Ellen Oh is on Twitter @ElloEllenOh

Dhonielle Clayton is on Twitter @brownbookworm

4 Provide Ample Time to Read Every Day, Across the Day

A seminal study by Anderson, Wilson, and Fielding (1988) found the amount of time kids read outside of school correlated positively with standardized reading test scores. Yet, when reading outside of school, particularly at home, children are often distracted by smartphones and other digital devices, scheduling conflicts, and the daily din of family life. Moreover, as noted earlier, many of our children in poverty lack access to texts at home. Those time and access barriers combine to create an “opportunity gap” that can manifest itself in inadequate reading development.

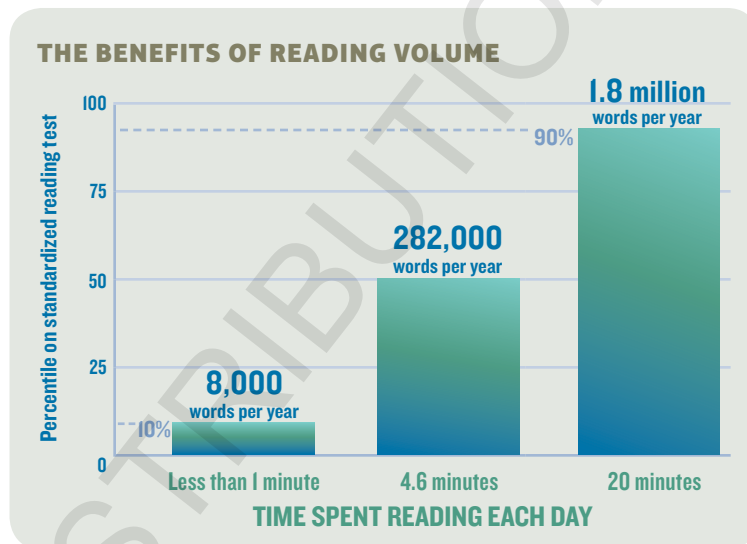
To close that gap, school needs to be the place where voluminous reading occurs. We simply must provide time to read every day in school to ensure equitable opportunities for all kids, regardless of their income levels. To that point, Allington and Johnston (2002) suggest that students should be reading extensively across the school day. In this section, we suggest ways to make that happen, including not only independent reading, but also content-area reading, because reading is a knowledge-building act that is particularly important for striving readers.

- **Begin the day with reading.**

Smokey Daniels and Sara Ahmed (2014) have taught us the power of “soft starts,” gentle transitions from home to school in which students settle in comfortably with one another and their teacher. Beginning the day with 10 to 15 minutes of independent reading enables kids to orient themselves and think about things that matter to them, while building volume.

- **Make sure your literacy block includes ample independent reading time.** We recommend prioritizing and safeguarding a minimum of 30 minutes each day following the mini-lesson for children to read books of their choice, while you kidwatch, confer, and monitor book-matches.

- **Reduce or eliminate nonessential accountability measures.** Ensure that virtually all the time for reading in your daily schedule is for students’ unfettered reading, rather than “volume thieves,” such as comprehension packets, phonics and vocabulary worksheets, and other inauthentic written responses.



Third-grade teacher Lena Wicker opens most days with a soft start, a soothing period of independent reading after students have arrived. Lena confers informally with them about their lives and book choices.

READING ACROSS THE CURRICULUM: WHY MAKING TIME FOR CONTENT-AREA READING IS CRITICAL

In reviews of the research, Cervetti and colleagues (Cervetti & Hiebert, 2015; Cervetti, Jaynes, & Hiebert, 2009) argue that “knowledge building is the next frontier in reading education” because “evidence is beginning to demonstrate that reading instruction is more potent when it builds and then capitalizes upon the development of content knowledge.” As students build knowledge by reading, they create a foundation that supports ongoing learning and understanding. When they comprehend what they read, they augment and enhance their knowledge base. In turn, they strengthen their comprehension and confidence with existing and new knowledge. The more content knowledge they have, the more likely they are to grow it (Harvey & Goudvis, 2017). Ultimately, content-area reading is a highly effective way to build knowledge, confidence, and capability.

Here are some tips for successful content-area reading.

- **Build robust content collections that invite choice.** Readers are far more likely to be engaged if they have access to texts they can and want to read. For content-area reading, we subscribe to Dick Allington’s (2009) notion of “managed choice.” We manage students’ choices by limiting the texts they choose to the content area under study, while offering a wide range of texts on that topic. Specifically, we assemble content collections that contain numerous engaging texts at a range of levels and in a variety of formats and genres, based on the curricular focus.
- **Teach annotation strategies while reading for learning, remembering, and understanding.** Sticky notes, margin annotations, and graphic organizers can all play a role in holding onto thinking while reading in the content areas. As they are reading content-specific texts, students take notes on both the information in the text and their thinking about that information. Typically, in a T-chart with the left-hand column titled “Information” and the right-hand column titled “Thinking,” readers record what the text says and their perceptions and questions about it. We need to send strivers the message that their thinking matters!
- **Teach comprehension strategies and show readers how we use them in science and social studies, as well as in literacy block.** Comprehension strategies are the striving reader’s superpower! Thinking while reading enables readers to build knowledge and understanding, and engage deeply in their reading. Strivers need strategies even more than proficient readers because they are more likely to encounter unfamiliar words and ideas. They can rely on those strategies to figure out difficult passages and hurdle the background knowledge gap. For more on comprehension instruction, see *Strategies That Work, Third Edition* (2017).
- **Encourage real-world reading. Make content-area reading relevant and fun.** Draw strivers in with new-car brochures when studying force and motion, maps for geography enthusiasts, pamphlets from historic sites when studying the American Revolution, etc. Check out *Inquiry Illuminated: Researcher’s Workshop Across the Curriculum* (2019) by Steph and her coauthor, Anne Goudvis.
- **Build interest and intrigue with source sets.** Explore content with visuals, videos, infographics, podcasts, and artifacts, in addition to text. When we add listening, viewing, and handling to the mix, all kids have access to information.

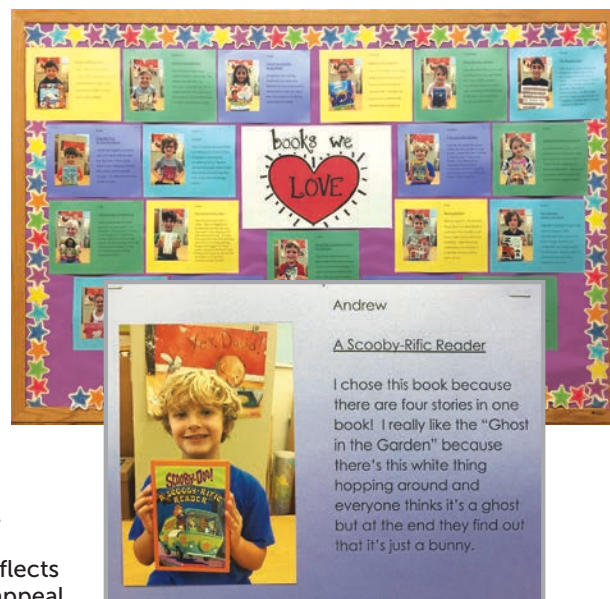
5 Build a Reading Community

Many years ago, as a fifth-grade teacher, Steph attended her first NCTE conference and hit the jackpot when she attended a presentation by the late educational scholar Frank Smith, who introduced her to his idea of the Literacy Club. In his seminal essay, “Joining the Literacy Club” (1987), Smith describes an inclusive, welcoming classroom community where no one is excluded. He shares that young children are admitted into the club as junior members. None of them are expected to be skilled, yet, but in the Literacy Club, the social energy is palpable. Members gain an understanding of reading and writing in the company of others who are engaged in literate acts. They share their thinking with one another. They learn as their teachers read and write to and with them. They pay attention to our print-centric world. The authors they read become their writing mentors. A new club member is not viewed as less capable, but merely less experienced.

We notice that when teachers model their classrooms on Smith’s Literacy Club, strivers begin to thrive. Here are some ways we build a vibrant reading community, where literacy is the main event—and all are welcome.

- **Create a print-rich, interactive environment.** As you flood the room with authentic, functional print, such as labels, signs, directions, schedules, and calendars, also consider creating learning walls where kids can share their poems, stories, research projects, and so on. If their work is not finished, let them stamp it “draft” or affix a sticky note to it that says “work in progress.” Leave sticky notes and pencils near the learning wall so those who read the work can post questions or comments about it. When students are immersed in authentic, functional print—print that they create or you bring in—they feel at home as readers. The first step to becoming a successful reader is to believe in yourself as a reader, and environmental print provides many “I can read” opportunities.
- **Share your own reading life with your kids.** Kids need to know that we are readers who have our own challenges, as well as successes and pleasures. So talk to them about the text you are reading. Share questions you have about it. Let them know when you are moved by a book, as well as when you are not and have chosen to abandon it. Strivers in particular need to know that even for adults, sometimes reading goes well, and sometimes it doesn’t.
- **Give booktalks routinely throughout the week.** When a new book comes in, share the cover, talk about the author, read the back-cover blurb and a few pages to fire kids up. When we honor books in that way, kids flock to them. Keep in mind the lessons about book snobbery described earlier and share a far-reaching array of books to reel in as many readers as possible.
- **Recognize that good book recommendations for kids often come from kids—and that sharing recommendations is a way for them (and you!) to learn about their reading preferences.** In addition to your booktalks, invite kids to recommend favorite

Bernadette Tyler’s first graders endorsed books they loved on a well-trafficked bulletin board. Andrew’s selection of *A Scooby-Rific Reader* reflects Bernadette’s openness to books with high kid appeal.



books on a regular basis. Remember to pay particular attention to strivers, who may lack the confidence to recommend books. You may need to provide them with additional encouragement and support.

- **Spotlight authors; engage in author and/or series studies.**

Let kids suggest authors and series to study. Strivers frequently fall in love with a certain author or series and want to read them exclusively, which can be a powerful driver of their development. Series books in particular are effective at building confidence because readers are familiar with the characters, settings, and plot lines—making it easy to conjure up the background knowledge they need for the next book in the series. Author and/or series studies can be done with the whole class, small groups, or individual readers.

- **Incorporate authentic forms of response to books.** Our most natural and authentic response to what we're reading is to simply talk about what we have read. So, in addition to the student-led booktalks mentioned above, build in time throughout the day for students to share their thinking around reading. For a written record of that thinking, have kids write book reviews, which are published and read in the real world, rather than book reports, which aren't.

A NOTE ON POPULAR SERIES

The viral popularity of certain series at each grade level can pose challenges for striving readers, who may not yet be capable of reading them successfully. Seek out and consider reserving high-interest, mature-looking, but accessible series, such as those in the Scholastic Branches and Acorns imprints, for children in the upper grades.

6 Make Nightly and Weekend Reading the Main Event

Assigning homework—what we assign and how much—is controversial, but one thing is certain: The more we clutter children's backpacks with busywork, the less we support their independent reading at home. We need to make reading the main event, rather than something kids turn to only at bedtime when they are tired. In *No More Mindless Homework*, Kathy Collins and Janine Bempechat assert, "It's important that reading at home gives children a chance not only to practice reading, but also to grow a self-directed reading life, positive attitudes toward reading, and highly functional reading habits" (2017). We need to clear the deck and make room for reading at home.

- **Capitalize on momentum.** Kids are more likely to stay interested in a book and make headway through it when there is continuity between home and school. Through book-matching, you help striving readers find a compelling book. Make sure they tuck that book in their backpack every day and continue to read it at home. We mean this literally; make a point to check that kids have their books with them at the end of each school day, because this simple action is a powerful momentum builder, and strivers often miss out.
- **Reduce homework.** We send a mixed message when we call for 30 minutes of independent reading each night but send home a sheaf of worksheets to be completed, too. In our experience, teachers (including us) underestimate the amount of time it takes children to complete "paperwork homework." Meanwhile, parents prioritize it because of its tangibility. As one parent commented, "What's in the folder is what gets done." We therefore urge that you minimize other homework and help children and parents understand that nightly reading builds confidence and capability.

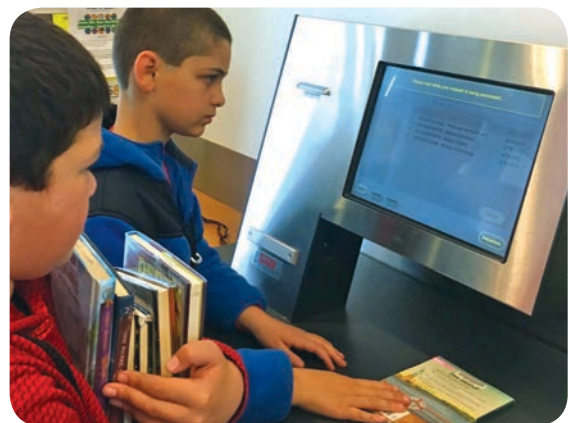
- **Engage families.** Communicate with families about books going home and the importance of reading at home. Make sure they understand that increased reading time will lead to growth. Urge families to designate a time and quiet place for students to read every day.
- **Reconsider traditional reading logs.** Given the importance of reading volume, we must know *that* kids are reading, *what* they are reading, and *how much* they are reading. Traditional reading logs, in which kids record each day the title, author, and pages they read, are one way to do that, but they may impede children’s motivation to read. In our work with teachers, we’ve found several efficient and valuable alternatives to tracking reading, such as having students capture that information on their Next-Up Book List each time they read a book on that list. Another alternative is a laminated “What We’re Reading” class chart (illustrated here) on which kids record with a dry-erase marker the author and title of the book they are currently reading so that you can monitor book matches, note how long children are taking to read their books, and form reading partnerships. It also enables kids to see at a glance what their peers are reading and learn of appealing new titles. (See Rethink Reading Logs, page 171, for additional considerations and alternatives.)



7 Encourage School and Public Library Patronage

The most robust classroom library does not have the vast and diverse collection of a school or community library, no matter how well funded it is. We believe that the school library is the beating heart of the school and the public library is the beating heart of the community. To offer students the widest possible selection of compelling books, we must tap the school and public libraries. Furthermore, librarians are invaluable allies. Partner with school and community librarians to determine kids’ interests, book-match relentlessly, and maximize circulation. Make sure kids know that libraries and librarians are a never-ending resource they can tap regularly for recommendations, guidance, and publications of all kinds, in print and digital formats.

- **Teach students how to check out, reserve, and renew books.** Make sure each of your students has a public library card. Perhaps your school or district identifies a grade level at which to register children for cards. If it doesn’t, register any of your students who don’t already have cards. To ensure that library visits become a regular habit rather than a one-time experience, take students on a series of field trips to the library so they learn how to navigate the collection, use the electronic catalog, reserve and/or locate books, and check out and renew them.
- **Abolish circulation limits and eliminate fines in school libraries.** Many libraries are understaffed, and without personnel to process and reshelve books, they



These kids are using the electronic catalog to reserve and check out books.

often limit the number of books a student can check out. Likewise, due to budgetary concerns, many school libraries don't allow students to check out new books if they have any overdue, unreturned books. In Mamaroneck, we studied the effects of that policy closely and found that it was disproportionately affecting our children in poverty. What could have been a vital lifeline for those children was not. For true equity and in the interest of all students, we need to do away with such policies.

- **Take advantage of digital options.** Teach students how to reserve, check out, and renew library books online. Also inform them about ebook options. With an ebook app, such as Libby, installed on their device, students can access electronic books anywhere, anytime.
- **Track library usage patterns.** While reviewing data from the Follett Web Circulation System, Annie and her colleagues noted a pattern that striving readers checked out books mainly during scheduled library periods, whereas thriving readers did so not only during those periods, but also before school, after school, and at lunch. Library patronage is an important agentive habit that can be taught and tracked. So, teach striving readers to avail themselves of the library whenever time allows—and track their visits and choices. Intervene with any children who are not yet active library patrons, as we'll describe in Chapter 3.
- **Create satellite collections, curated stacks, and special shelves.** Ask your school or community librarian to create a classroom “satellite collection”—an array of books on a



Murray Avenue library teacher Lauren Geertgens has a shelf set aside where she places stacks of books she has curated for specific striving readers. Those kids drop by the library and hone in on Lauren's picks.

particular topic, by a particular author, or in a particular genre or format. Invite the librarian to come in and present the collection, making a personal connection with your students in the process. Invite your school librarian to a wheel cart of tempting titles to your classroom regularly, book-talk them, and leave the satellite collections behind temporarily to augment classroom libraries, as Mamaroneck middle and high school librarians Kelsey Cohen and Tina Pantginis do. Confer with librarians about striving readers' interests. Ask them to curate stacks of books for those children to consider on library visits, as elementary librarian Lauren Geertgens does here. Nothing fancy is needed—just a special bin or a spot on a shelf and the gift of the librarian's attention.

8 Promote a Leap, Not a Loss: Summer, Holiday, and Weekend Reading

In addition to ensuring that students have copious amounts of time to read when they are with us in school, it is vital that we set them up to read at home on weekends, school vacations, and over the long summer break. The phenomenon of “summer slide,” whereby the reading progress of children from low-income homes stalls or regresses over the summer, is well documented. In fact, 80 percent of the achievement gap between middle-income and lower-income children accrues during the summer (Alexander, Entwisle, & Olson, 2007). We prefer to call it what it is—an opportunity gap—and eradicate it by ensuring that every child has access to appealing books when school is not in session for any extended period of time. What follows are some of the ways we do that:

- **Have students make vacation reading plans.** Long weekends and school holidays offer productive stretches of time for independent reading. Engage kids in planning ahead: get them talking about what they would like to read and where they will get copies (books or ebooks). Provide children with a blank calendar so they can make personalized reading plans that work for them. Confer with kids, particularly strivers, to learn about and support their interests and intentions. Teach kids how to find copies of their chosen books in school and public libraries, and consider procuring copies for kids whom you suspect lack access.

JAKE'S VACATION READING PLAN

When Steph visited Mamaroneck a few days before a school vacation, she guided fourth graders to make reading plans after modeling her own using the template she and Annie had developed. Not only did students leave the lesson with a workable reading plan, teachers gleaned valuable information to inform their teaching. Like Jake, many students had specific Next-Up books in mind and knew where and how they would find them. But also like Jake, some kids had an inkling of the kind of book they would like to read ("something like *In Harm's Way: JFK, WW2, and the Heroic Rescue of PT 109*") but sought book-matching assistance. Jake wrote "No idea" for the source, noting, "I like that it was about JFK, a survival story, and the photos/maps in the book," enabling his teacher to assemble a Preview Stack of on-target suggestions in time for vacation.

Using a blank calendar, Steph modeled how to plot specific and realistic reading opportunities around other commitments day by day, then invited kids to do likewise. Jake's plan revealed several interesting things that his teacher filed away for future book-matching: agency (demonstrated by his ability to select and download articles of interest from Newsela onto a family iPad), a book access stream (Grandma); and the ability to read in the car on long family drives. For more information on this topic, see "Making a Reading Plan" at scholastic.com/ReinventionResources.

Vacation Calendar with Reading Moments

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
			19 Free Afternoon Start Survivor diaries research	20	21	22 Family Picnic Newsela articles
23 Drive to Canada Canada Year by Year	24	25	26 There is a lot to read in this	27	28	29 Drive Home from Canada Newsela articles

Vacation Reading Plan

Name: Jake

I plan to read...

Text	Source	Notes
Survivor Diaries Avalanche, Dust storm	Library	I read Survivor Diaries Lost and overboard. I want to read the others in the series.
Canada Year By Year	My grandma bought it for me	I'm half Canadian and I'm going to visit my grandma in Ottawa, Canada
Something like <i>In Harm's Way: JFK, WWII, and the Heroic Rescue of PT 109</i>	No idea	I liked that it was about JFK; a survival story and the photos/maps in the book
Articles About History and war	Newsela on my e-reader	Because I can read these on the go

- **Send students home with books.** The surest way to ensure access to books over school vacations is to send students home with a stack of reading material. Take time to book-match with your striving readers, drawing from your classroom library, and send each one home with their personalized collection, to be returned following the break.
- **Keep school libraries open over the summer.** Even if you send striving readers off with a personalized collection, it still makes sense to keep your school library open for them—and all students—during summer vacation so they can refresh or expand their collections. Perhaps a TV program has piqued their interest in a new topic, or a friend has recommended a good book. Also, for a variety of reasons, it may be simpler for your students to access the school library than the community library. To entice them to come in, host special events, such as an ice-cream social.
- **Organize book swaps.** If you have the time and wherewithal to curate donations, a book swap is a great way to circulate books without spending a dime. Put out a call for gently used copies of high-interest titles and set out collection bins. Plan to sort through what is submitted. In our experience, many donated books will need to be discarded for the reasons we describe on page 29. Once you've winnowed donations to books with currency and high kid-appeal, set up an attractive display in an accessible area with signage that invites families to take what interests them. Avoid “take a book, leave a book” language since there should be no condition for taking a book.
- **Promote book ownership through giveaway programs.** In a three-year study, Allington, McGill-Franzen, and colleagues demonstrated that book giveaway programs—with no accountability strings attached—are more effective than summer school in preventing summer slide for children from low-income homes (2010). Swayed by these powerful findings, the Mamaroneck Board of Education funds an annual summer slide prevention book fair, enabling all children eligible for free or reduced lunch to select and keep 12–15 high-interest books for summer reading. The Mamaroneck team has been tracking the impact of this initiative for years by conferring with participants and assessing their reading levels and are proud to have replicated the results of Allington and McGill-Franzen’s study. In addition to mitigating potential slide, the initiative results in kids developing home

libraries over time and taking pride in owning books that they love, that they chose for themselves, that they can access whenever they want, and rereading their favorites.



Students select high-interest books for summer reading from a year-end book fair.

9 Read, Know, and Share the Research on Reading Volume

Parents, and even some educators, often do not believe that kids get better at reading by reading. They never doubt that kids get better at soccer by playing it, or at dance by dancing, but somehow they have trouble equating voluminous reading with successful reading. It simply seems too good to be true. We must tirelessly promote independent reading and make sure parents and educators understand how crucial it is to reading development. Here are some ways to do that.

- **Share the positions of literacy organizations and publishers.** NCTE and ILA have produced research-based papers on the value of independent reading that are cogent, convincing, and readable. *The Scholastic Kids and Family Reading Report* contains essential information on reading volume, as well as other areas of interest to families.
- **Familiarize yourself with the research.** Encourage administrators or the school librarian to subscribe to print and/digital editions of periodicals such as *Reading Teacher*, *Language Arts*, and *Educational Leadership*. Pay particularly close attention to articles on volume and share what you learn with staff members and families. Divide and conquer; have teams across your school read different journals and share highlights at faculty meetings.
- **Read literacy blogs and follow educators on Twitter and other social media platforms.** Many routinely share research on reading volume and strategies to support striving readers. In addition to the suggestions on pages 35–36, we urge you to join Dr. Mary Howard and her wise band of literacy educators every Thursday night on Twitter at #G2Great to discuss literacy topics, especially those related to strivers.
- **On back-to-school night, present information about the power of reading volume.** Let parents know that their children will be reading a great deal in school every day and will be coming home with books to read each night, on weekends, and over vacation. Distribute handouts to parents on the research that supports voluminous, high-success reading.
- **Make sure your administrators understand the importance of independent reading for all kids, especially strivers.** Let them know that your students will be reading extensively and that much of your instruction will happen in one-on-one conferences with them, while they are reading. Share the research on volume so that they know the rationale for having kids read prolifically in school, every day.
- **Seek to duplicate the effects of research in your own practice.** Mamaroneck has successfully replicated Allington and McGill Franzen’s summer slide prevention study. Track data of accelerated growth resulting from volume-based interventions such as book-matching and share with administrators.

By taking the actions described in this chapter, you create the conditions for voluminous, high-success reading. While it’s likely that most of your students will thrive, some will require more support and qualify for supplemental interventions. In the next chapter, we describe how to use what you know about individual children to devise authentic and meaningful ways to amp up their access to books, choice, and time to read. By doubling down on those foundational elements, you foster students’ confidence, reading identity, and agency.