

## Offering a Getting to Know You Preview Stack From a Distance

As we adjust to the changing conditions in our schools, we may need to be prepared to reach some of our students at home remotely. In doing so, we must prioritize reserving adequate time for independent reading and make sure they have a steady stream of high-interest books to read. So before we dive into the preview stack strategy, let's look at the big picture—supporting voluminous reading with the ACT framework: Access + Choice + Time = Volume.

- **Access: How do students access books?** Students must be able to find physical and/or digital books—and those with limited access and who are striving need to be first in line for our attention, time, and resources. You may need to do a combination of recorded or livestreamed demonstrations showing students and their families how to access and borrow or download books from sources such as the public library or a curated digital collection, such as Scholastic Literacy Pro.
- **Choice: Do students have agency in choosing books they truly want to read?** Book-sharing strategies ensure students have books they want to read now and later. Those strategies might include book talks presented by you and their peers and targeted book matching opportunities such as the preview stack conference, which is explained below.
- **Time: Do students have enough time to read every day?** Our students will only get better at reading with lots of practice. Be sure your reading plan includes plenty of time for students to read. That may mean a different plan for each student, so it's important to learn when and where each family allows quiet time for reading. Keep in mind, some students may need a caregiver or older sibling to be a reading guide—someone to read to them and/or with them.

With the ACT framework in focus, let's take a closer look at a powerful strategy for supporting your striving readers' voluminous reading at home—the preview stack for matching them with just-right books.

### If students have a device of their own:

- Prioritize several readers who need the most support. Schedule a 10-minute video call to confer with each one.

- Before the conference, gather a few books you think the student may be interested in based on his or her previous reading, including books he or she can access from a library or eBook collection.
- When you meet with a student, hold up each book one at a time or screen-share the cover and any interesting features you can access. Briefly and nonchalantly introduce the book, making it clear that you are trying to help the reader choose a just-right book.
- Encourage the student to respond honestly so you can learn exactly what appeals to him or her and what doesn't. Organize the books into "yes," "no," and "maybe" piles. (If you have the print copies, the books can be separated in physical piles, but if you're working with digital copies, you might sort them by title in a shared on-screen document.)
- When the student rejects a book or says "maybe," ask why and record his or her responses (e.g., it looks too long, the story sounds boring, there aren't enough pictures) to help you refine your recommendations as you go.
- By the end, hopefully, you will have made a match that the student is excited about. But if not, you'll at least have the information you need to research more titles. Getting in touch with your school or local librarian to hunt for a book that meets genre, topic, length, and other criteria is a great next step.
- Before you close the conference, have the student set a realistic goal for daily reading, given the time and space he or she has to read. If you haven't already done so, check in with the student to ensure he or she has quality time to read his or her choice books: Is anything getting in the way of focused reading?
- Send a follow-up email, call, or text the next day to see how the reading is going. Is it, in fact, the right book? Has the student found a time and space to read it?
- You might want to have the student post a "Books I Want to Read" list on the learning platform you use or in a shared document that you both can refer to the next time you meet. Having a "next-up" book keeps students' reading volume high!

**If students have limited or no online access:**

Put together Preview Stacks from the classroom or school library to send home. Once the books arrive, follow up with a phone call to help the child make a reading plan.