

Welcome

Dear LitCamp Leaders,

Welcome to LitCamp, a best-practices model for rich and engaging learning built upon a foundation of authentic, motivational texts. This unique experience is the result of a powerful partnership between Scholastic Inc. and LitWorld, a renowned literacy initiative led by author and literacy educator Pam Allyn.

Since 2007, LitWorld has run LitCamps and other signature on-the-ground programs with local leaders in over 20 countries, reaching thousands of children annually. LitCamps help trained mentors create safe and supportive communities where children learn to value their own and others' stories, become powerful readers, and use literature as a guide as they learn to navigate their lives and tell their own stories. Leaders have observed dramatic increases in children's reading and writing capacities, their civic engagement, and their sense of personal value.

Reading throughout the year is essential for children to retain or build upon their ability to read and comprehend texts. Yet, too many children do not read during the summer and other school breaks. These children experience a slide or loss of learning. LitCamp is designed to combat this slide by providing effective, engaging lessons that focus on developing each child's inherent strengths while assuring access to quality reading materials.

LitCampers benefit from the impact of robust instruction while experiencing the pure joy of summer camp. With roots firmly planted in powerful research, LitCamp's lessons offer

- diverse and cross-curricular texts for read-aloud and whole-group instruction;
- joyful, creative, literacy-building activities that use a whole-child approach to promote success and college and career readiness;
- dedicated time for children's independent reading as part of a community of readers.

With this powerful combination of lessons, camp routines, and quality texts, campers will avoid the literacy slide and instead leap ahead as readers, writers, and learners. In this guide you will find everything you need to launch your own LitCamp. Celebrate with your campers as they become stronger readers each and every day.

Enjoy the LitCamp experience!

Why LitCamp?

Time away from school can provide a vital opportunity for literacy growth, yet often children do not have access to texts that will inspire them during these important periods. Without the resources to read independently or participate in read alouds, children lose critical skills that they had developed during school time and return back to school at a disadvantage.

For example, research shows that more than half of the performance difference on standardized tests between students of lower and upper socioeconomic backgrounds is credited to a lack of summer learning (National Summer Learning Association, 2015). By the time children living in poverty reach fifth grade, they may have lost the equivalent of three years of education. This in turn affects the entire classroom, as teachers may spend at least a month reteaching students material forgotten over the summer (National Summer Learning Association, 2015). Several longitudinal studies conclude that the effects of a summer learning program can endure for at least two years after the student's participation.

LitCamp's confidence-building, friendship-focused model combines the best of what children love about camp with high-quality experiential learning workshops that provide access to engaging, transformative texts. LitCamp is designed to create a community of resilient readers: children who experience the joy of literacy throughout all areas of their lives.

Your LitCamp provides

- a comprehensive leader's guide with rich and lively lessons, implementation ideas, tips for EL support and resources for family engagement—all the resources needed to lead successful LitCamp sessions and celebrations;
- quality texts for daily read alouds: eight copies of 20 picture books per level for kindergartners through rising fourth graders and 15 copies of 10 texts per level for rising fifth and rising sixth graders, so campers can read along and revisit the texts with partners or on their own; campers may also take home copies of selected texts at the end of camp;
- 15 camper portfolios and 15 wristbands to help campers build a sense of pride and accomplishment as they forge their literacy identities.

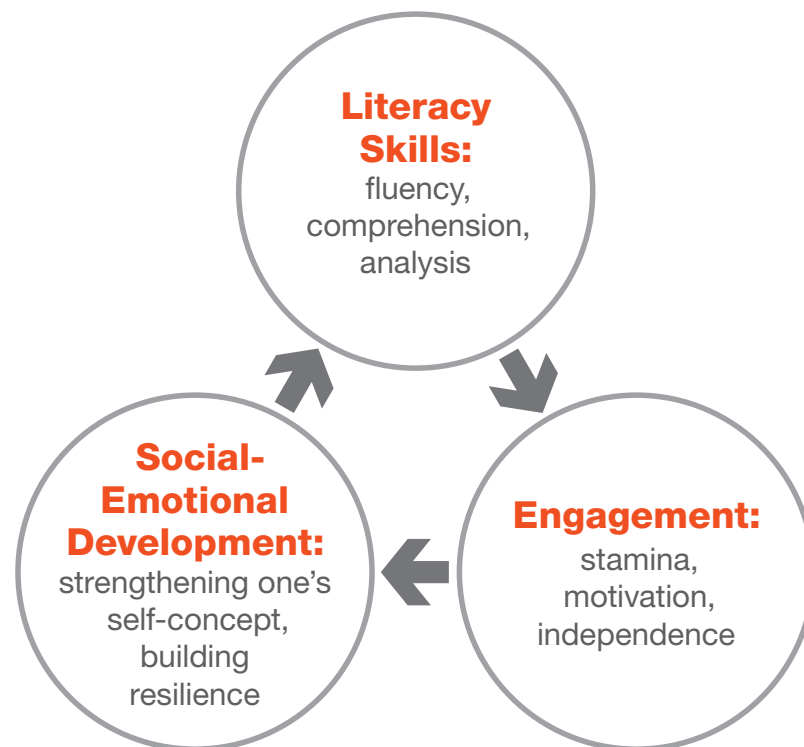
Originally conceived as a means to prevent the “summer literacy slide,” the LitCamp program can be used at any point during the year as an effective extended learning curriculum that builds students' confidence and aptitude for reading, critical thinking, and learning.

With a powerful combination of joyful, substantive lessons and quality texts, your campers will leap ahead—as readers, writers, and learners—closing the literacy gap and becoming strong and confident, with the skills they need to move forward.

The LitCamp Model

LitCamp's innovative model has reinvented summer camp to create joyful, high-quality experiential literacy learning. LitCamp lessons cultivate core capacities for learning to read, write, speak, and listen by taking into account the whole learning life of the child and by fostering resilience and can be incorporated at any time during the year to extend literacy learning. LitCamp has three interconnected outcomes:

- The **social-emotional development** emphasis increases campers' resilience, empathy, and positive sense of self.
- The **literacy skills** emphasis improves campers' fluency, comprehension, and analysis of text while also offering practice in essential listening, speaking, and writing skills.
- The **engagement** emphasis builds reading and writing stamina, motivation, independence, and leadership.



These core outcomes are integral to LitCamp. Research shows that the key to a child's resiliency in the face of adversity is the presence of at least one supportive adult figure (Walsh, 2015). LitCamp fosters the relationship between resilience building and literacy: resilient children become literate faster, and literacy helps build resiliency.

In order to develop the resiliency of each child, LitCamp is built around the 7 Strengths Model, a rich and purposeful framework that builds the confidence, curiosity, courage, hope, friendship, belonging, and kindness of each camper. Children flourish with the kind of supportive and stable leadership that encourages children to cultivate internal strengths within themselves for the tools to succeed in college, career, and a civic-minded world (Allyn & Morrell, 2016).

The 7 Strengths

The LitCamp curriculum uses a strength-based model to build children's literacy and resilience skills side by side. The LitWorld 7 Strengths are Belonging, Curiosity, Kindness, Friendship, Confidence, Courage, and Hope. These core ideas center literacy learning around children's own stories and connect reading and writing experiences back to students' own lives. By valuing and celebrating each child's strengths and stories, the LitCamp curriculum improves social-emotional development. This is essential for making LitCampers feel fully ready for success in school and healthy relationships, and builds engagement with a supportive community of readers and writers.

As you progress through the LitCamp curriculum, share your ideas about each Strength with your campers, and invite them to use these words and ideas each day. Connect each lesson's Strength to the day's activity, and affirm campers when they make these connections for themselves.

BELONGING: Identifying as a needed, loved, and respected member of one's family, community, and world

- Belonging refers to the individual's connection to a social and emotional community. Through literature we wrestle with the question: *What does it mean to be part of a community?* By sharing our inner voices with one another, we create a community of openness and respect. By listening to one another, we learn tolerance and creativity.
- Reading introduces us to the community of literacy—the genres of storytelling where we find our niche. Reading opens a space in our minds for us to belong as ourselves, to seek our greatest hopes and dreams while surrounded by a secure sense of safety.
- Children flourish when they feel safe and necessary. Both the classroom and the home should be places for comfort and growth, assuring the children of their stability while encouraging them to take risks.

FRIENDSHIP: Having close, trusting relationships with others

- Knowing how to cultivate and nurture relationships is key to a successful future. Great literature reflects the imperfections of relationships.
- While reading, children learn different answers to the question: *What does friendship look like?* By working with a text in groups, they can then put those lessons into action, creating connections with their peers that emulate the friendships in their favorite stories.
- Friendship is an equal playing field where two people share a connection that fosters in them a deeper understanding of themselves. It is hard to navigate friendship, and yet, friendship is a powerful tool that serves children well for the rest of their lives, whether at work or at home.

KINDNESS: Being tender toward others in the world who are in need, both near and far

- Kindness is often underrated. And yet, it prevents bullying, fortifies every single human, and powers us forward in the most challenging of times.
- Children internalize the lessons of kindness from the books they read. They learn that being considerate of others goes much further than simply looking out for yourself. A community *without* kindness will not succeed; it is only by working with one another, instead of against one another, that we can harness the positive energy of our combined agency.

CURIOSITY: Fostering a willingness to explore new territory and test new theories

- By leading active read alouds and discussion groups, you will teach your campers how to think critically and creatively about a text. Lesson plans focus on asking open-ended questions to cultivate children’s curiosity and an attitude of being “forever learners.”
- Children who ask questions are proactively engaged in their environments and learn to anticipate both problems and solutions. Building a stance of inquiry is crucial for college and career readiness, and using quality text to build that stance is a core element of LitCamp.

CONFIDENCE: Thinking independently and expressing ideas with assurance

- Confident people are able to approach any situation knowing that they have the tools for success within themselves.
- LitCamp is a praise-centric and inclusive environment that allows children to feel confident as readers, students, and learners. Children’s own voices, experiences, and life stories are central. Confidence can be practiced in small and daily ways.

COURAGE: The strength to do something that you know is right, even though it may be difficult

- We learn from the mistakes and adventures of the characters in literature. We celebrate their triumphs and mourn their losses. Then, we apply those lessons in our own lives, knowing that if we have the courage to take risks, to make ourselves vulnerable, it will pay off tenfold in positive results.
- Children who are active readers will internalize the journeys of their favorite characters, gathering courage from the texts they encounter in the classroom and at home. Courage can be practiced, and courage can be learned. It is far different from the popular idea of “grit” which sometimes seems to assume that if only a child will get tough, that child can overcome obstacles. The struggles children face, whether they are bullying or difficulty at home or just getting through a hard part of school, are very real and do require courage. Literature teaches them how to develop this strength.

HOPE: Thinking optimistically and believing that today’s efforts will produce good things in the future for yourself and for the world


- Reading has the power to give us our dreams, introducing us to possibilities for the future, reinterpretations of the past, and alternatives to the present. The transformative power of these stories gives us the power to hope for more, to pursue greatness in our own lives, and to look for inspiration in unlikely places.
- Children may read about a female president of the United States, living life on Mars, or having superpowers. They can travel to the edge of the galaxy or the bottom of the ocean; they can swim with dolphins or travel to the past and meet heroes who dreamed of a better world and fought for freedom and justice.

Lesson Overview

Each lesson gives you the flexibility to follow the script or use your own language as you see fit. The included aspects of vocabulary development, deep engagement with the daily text, and active connections encourage reflection and discussion among your campers. Singing songs and playing games (both literacy builders) are daily events for you and your LitCampers, with creative activities referring back to the Strength featured in the lesson.

A quick **introduction** to the featured book, the unit goal for developing the featured Strength, the literacy objectives for the lesson, and a listing of materials needed.

Read Aloud An interactive read-aloud experience. Discussion questions are designed to elicit campers' own voices as they analyze the text, and make connections to the 7 Strengths and to their own lives. (25 minutes)



Library Lion
by Michelle Knudsen • Illustrated by Kevin Hawkes

LESSON 3 UNIT

BELONGING

Library Lion

Lions do not belong in libraries! Or do they? Campers will come to better appreciate the theme of belonging as they explore the characters, setting, and key details in this story about a lion who proves to the people in the library community that he does indeed belong.

UNIT GOAL
Through books and shared experiences, campers will appreciate the importance of belonging and develop their sense of belonging to the camp community.

OBJECTIVES
Reading: Campers will use illustrations and details from the story to describe characters, setting, and key events.
Listening and Speaking: Campers will participate in collaborative conversations about the story, utilizing details from the text and illustrations.
Writing: Campers will create their own illustrations and sentences about a favorite story event.


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OPENING CAMPFIRE

WELCOME
Greet your campers by name as they enter. Invite them to put their personal items away and gather on the floor or other common area.

- 🎵 **OPENING SONG**
The Hello Song
- 👥 **COMMUNITY BUILDING ACTIVITY**
Bunk Identity
Explain to campers that their community is the LitCamp Red Bunk. As a group, create and display a banner that identifies the bunk. Teach or have campers customize a Bunk Cheer, which you might decide to use some days as an alternative to the transition song.
- 🎵 **TRANSITION SONG**
Now We're Ready

MATERIALS FOR THE DAY

- *Library Lion* by Michelle Knudsen (leader's copy and copies for campers)
- *Library Lion* Chart created on chart paper or whiteboard
- Timer for the game of Snapshot
- Independent reading book baggies or self-serve bins with books inside
- Campers' journals, pencils, and crayons



WORDS OF THE DAY

- **describe:** to tell what something or someone is like
- **library:** a place in the community where people can use books, computers and magazines
- **rules:** statements about what you are and/or are not allowed to do
- **story elements:** the characters, story events (plot) and setting

EL SUPPORT For children whose first language is Spanish: point out the similarity between *describir* and the English term *describe*. Discuss the connection between the Spanish word for book, *libro*, and the English word *library*.

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Opening Campfire A time to greet campers and gather them together. Each day begins with a song and a community-building activity, and supports vocabulary development with an introduction to the words of the day. (15 minutes)

EL Support A specific tip is offered on each page of the lesson, to help make camp more inclusive and instructive for all.

Bring the Text to Life Campers will do an activity that creatively “brings to life” and celebrates the read-aloud text and important ideas discussed. (20 minutes)

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READ ALOUD: Library Lion

INTRODUCE THE BOOK

Today is the first day of our new unit, Belonging. Belonging means feeling needed, loved, and respected in a place or community. As we read today's book, think about what it means to belong.

- Display *Library Lion*, noting the title, author, and illustrator. What can you tell about the lion character from the illustration on the cover?

EL SUPPORT Some children may not be familiar with how a library works. Explain that a library is a place where people can borrow books to look at. If possible, give children a tour of the school library, or encourage children's families to take them to a public library to apply for a library card.

DURING READING

As you read, pause for discussion as noted below. The first page of the text is page 3.

- **After Page 4:** Why does Miss Merriweather say that the lion can stay? What do you think she would have said if the lion had broken a rule? How do you know?
- **After Page 9:** How would you describe the lion? What do we know about him so far?
- **After Page 16:** How does the library community feel about the lion? What clues do you see in the illustration that support your thinking?
- **After Page 22:** Why is the lion leaving the library? What does this illustration tell us about the lion and Mr. McBee?
- **After Page 30:** How are the people feeling right now? What do you see in the illustration that tells you the people are hoping that the lion will come back?

AFTER READING

The author's words told us a lot about the characters, setting, and events. When we really studied the illustrations, we found even more information, especially about the characters!

- Why did Mr. McBee decide to go and find the lion even after the lion broke the rules?
- In the end everyone, even Mr. McBee, agreed that the lion belonged in the library. What did the lion do that made him a valuable member of the community?

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BRING THE TEXT TO LIFE: Act It Out!

INSTRUCTIONS: Invite campers to act out the story of *Library Lion*. Explain that each camper will have a chance to play one of the main characters.

Give campers the freedom to make signs or use other simple props to support the storytelling.

Ask for volunteers or assign the following roles: Lion, Miss Merriweather, Mr. McBee, the story lady, and a few children who use the library.

When the first actors are ready, say, *If you get stuck and forget what comes next, ask for help! Before we start,*

EL SUPPORT *remember that our camp community supports each other. Each of you belongs to this community, and in this community, we don't laugh at others if they make a mistake. Let's be supportive audience members by listening and showing kindness.*

If time permits, have campers act out the story several times. After each performance, ask the audience: *What did we love about that performance? Did we miss anything important? Is there anything we want to look back in the book for before we act it out again?*

🎵 **TRANSITION SONG**
The Cleanup Song

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LitCamp creates an important balance of “serious fun”: having a great time while learning a lot. LitCamps follow simple routines, making it easy for you to blend literacy learning, exploration of the 7 Strengths, and fun every day. Each of the 20 grade-specific lessons promotes deep engagement with the text and prompts reflection and discussion.

Reading Power A time for campers to learn something new about reading that will help them become stronger, more strategic readers. (25 minutes)

Community Lit Another active time for building literacy, especially speaking and listening skills, as well as a sense of community through games or camp chats. (15 minutes)

Writing Power Campers will engage in a writing activity that extends their learning about the read-aloud text and the 7 Strengths. (15 minutes)

READING POWER: Story Elements 25

TEACH: An element of the story is like an ingredient in a recipe. The characters, setting, and story events are the elements that work together to make the whole story. Details are the small pieces of information that tell us even more about a story element.

Share the “Library Lion” chart. This chart shows the characters, the setting, and two key events from the story. Today we’re going to practice describing these elements with details. Model how to complete a description by pointing out that you used examples from the book to support your thinking.

STORY ELEMENT	DESCRIPTION
Character: Lion	The lion likes being in the library. He likes to hear stories, and to help the children and Miss Merriweather. He’s caring because he breaks the rules to help Miss Merriweather when she is hurt, even when he knows it might get him in trouble.
Character: Miss Merriweather	
Character: Mr. McBee	
Setting: The Library	
Event: The lion becomes part of the library community.	
Event: Miss Merriweather gets hurt and the lion must help her.	

TRY: Today you’re going to work with a partner to describe the characters, setting, and key events from Library Lion. Each of you has a copy of the book, so you can turn back to important parts of the book for clues.

Give campers time to meet with a partner. Campers will use the elements listed on the chart and describe them with a partner, using the text for support. After campers have described the elements with their partners, bring them back together and add their thinking to the chart.

CLARIFY: Strong readers use details from the words and pictures in a text as clues to help them describe characters, setting, and events. We can always look back at the book for more clues.

BUNK TIME: Independent Reading 20

Before settling down for independent reading, have campers stretch, shake, or move in time to music. Campers will read independently for 10 minutes.

After the first 10 minutes, stop them and say, *Campers, now you’re going to have some time to read with a friend. I want you and your friend to sit next to each other with the book in between. Take turns reading each page back and forth. When you’re done with the book, choose a character, setting, or event from the book. Remember to go back to the text if you think you forgot anything about your story element.*

Select a few campers for reading conferences during this time.

Possible Areas of Focus for Conferencing

- Who are the characters in the book?
- Can you describe one element of the book with details (character, setting, story events)?
- Can you show me a nonfiction text feature in your book? (If the camper is reading nonfiction)

EL SUPPORT Use pictures from Library Lion or children’s independent reading books to review the meanings of feeling words, e.g., happy, sad, angry, excited, worried, before asking: *How are the characters feeling? How do you know?*

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Bunk Time: Independent Reading A time for campers to choose their own books and build stamina for reading alone. This time also includes opportunities to share a book with a partner and receive coaching from their leaders. (20 minutes)

COMMUNITY LIT: Play Snapshot 15

RULES FOR THE GAME: Today we’re going to play a game called Snapshot! You’ll close your eyes and I’ll choose three campers to pose in a snapshot, like a posed photograph, while the rest of you still have your eyes closed. Then I’m going to say, “Ready, Set, Snapshot!” and you can open your eyes. You’ll have 15 seconds to look at the pose, and then I’m going to say, “Time’s up!” and the campers who were posed will sit. Then we’re going to see how many details you can remember about the pose.

Note: If you have on hand some simple props such as hats, sunglasses, or toys that you can add to a “snapshot,” you can add to the fun of the game.

Encourage campers to be specific about what they observed in each “snapshot.” If needed, ask questions such as: *Who was sitting in the chair? Who was smiling?*

WRITING POWER: A Favorite Story Event 15

TEACH: Today we’ve been talking about using details when describing the story elements: the characters, setting, or events in a story we read. For your writing, you’re going to illustrate your favorite moment from Library Lion and tell or write a sentence to go with your picture. Include as many details as possible about the characters, setting, and event in your picture. The moment you pick can be one that is in the book such as when Library Lion breaks the rules by roaring, or a moment that isn’t in the book, such as what Library Lion does when he leaves the library after saving Miss Merriweather. Remember how much information we got from Kevin Hawkes’s illustrations? Try to make your illustrations as detailed as his.

TRY: What moment from Library Lion do you want to illustrate? Turn and talk, share the moment with a partner, then get ready to draw and write.

CLARIFY: You’re going to create an illustration for Library Lion. Remember to include details that give information about the moment you’re illustrating. Tell or write about your drawing, too.

SHARE OUT: Have volunteers share their pages.

EL SUPPORT Help ELs add labels to their pictures using English words and words from their first language. For example, if a child’s favorite scene is when Mr. McBee finds the lion in the rain, you might suggest labeling the umbrella.

CLOSING CAMPFIRE 15

WORD GAME: True or False?

Review the words of the day and then have campers stand in a circle. Explain that you are going to use the words in sentences. Campers should clap if a sentence is true. If it sounds false, they should stamp their feet! You may also want to give volunteers time to correct false sentences or make up new sentences of their own—and have other campers clap if they think the new sentence is correct.

A library is a good place to eat breakfast.
 “No running” was one of Miss Merriweather’s rules.
 When you describe something, you never give any details about it.
 The setting of a story, or where and when the story takes place is one kind of story element.

REFLECTION QUESTION: Turn knee to knee and discuss this question with your partner. *What did you learn about belonging from reading and discussing Library Lion?*

PRaise AND AFFIRMATION: Offer concrete praise and affirmation for reading steps or new things the campers have tried today and/or ways they have demonstrated one of the 7 Strengths.

SHOOTING STARS DANCE: Together with the rest of the group, throw shooting stars (pretend to throw a basketball into a hoop). The campers get to do a dance with the praise, or they can put it in their pocket.

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Closing Campfire Each day ends with a game related to words of the day and reinforces the day’s learning with opportunities for personal reflection and praise for what campers have achieved. (15 minutes)

Implementing LitCamp

Options for Implementation

Your LitCamp program has been designed for flexible implementation:

- Each of the 20 lessons in this guide provides options for 2-1/2 hours of learning and fun.
- The following models are the most common ways in which LitCamp is implemented:

SUGGESTED SUMMER MODELS	
4-Week Model	One lesson daily for 4 weeks.
5-Week Model	4 lessons a week, with the 5th day per week either <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A free day (no camp or summer school) or a day reserved for field trips or other activities• A day to customize learning through more independent reading and pursue LitCamp related reading and projects (See pp. xii–xiii of this guide for suggestions.)
8-Week Model	LitCamp lesson split over two days <ul style="list-style-type: none">• First day includes first two pages of a lesson plus independent reading• Second day includes second two pages of a lesson plus independent reading
SUGGESTED AFTER-SCHOOL MODELS	
After-School Models	LitCamp can be used flexibly as an after-school solution. Depending on your program, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1 lesson a week, as an after-school club, for 20 weeks• 5 lessons a week, as after-school club, for 4 weeks• 1 lesson a week for 20 weeks, combined with homework time in regular after-school program• 2 lessons a week for 10 weeks, combined with homework time in regular after-school program• 8-week model as above, with each lesson split over 2 days

LitCamp Best Practices

In every lesson, you will see a recurring pattern of LitWorld best practices. Descriptions of these practices follow. Review them prior to starting LitCamp. These rituals and routines provide LitCampers with a sense of security and empowerment and help all members of the LitCamp community develop realistic expectations of the daily lessons.

Reading Aloud

Listening to read-aloud books is the single most important activity for developing campers' reading success and, as such, is central to LitCamp lessons (Duke, 2014). Every child enrolled in LitCamp will participate daily in this high-joy, high-impact activity along with a group discussion to model close reading and deep thinking.

- The read aloud is how we make the work of reading “visible.” You may need to practice, too. We provide online support for how to read aloud effectively on our YouTube site, [youtube.com/litworld](https://www.youtube.com/litworld).
- Reading aloud is an art, and the more effective you are, the more your campers will respond. Encourage your campers to engage in active listening. Ask open-ended questions throughout the read aloud (e.g., “I’m wondering what you’re thinking . . .” “Why do you think . . .” “What is your hunch about . . .”).
- As you read aloud, hold your copy of the book and make pages visible to campers, as appropriate.
- Distribute additional copies of the read-aloud text to campers so they can read along individually or in pairs.

Building Academic Vocabulary

In each LitCamp lesson, the Words of the Day section includes academic vocabulary from the texts. A word game that reinforces learning these words is also included at the end of each lesson. Here are more ways to enhance vocabulary learning during LitCamp:

- Create a routine for introducing Words of the Day for the first time, such as defining the words as you add them to your word wall where campers can see the vocabulary grow through the duration of the camp. You can also have campers create personal dictionaries in which campers can record their new words and take the dictionaries home at the end of camp. Near the end of day, you will have a suggested vocabulary game using the words from this list.
- While leading the lesson, model the words of the day by using them in your natural speech as much as possible. If needed, use your one-on-one time with campers to help build better understanding of the words of the day by explaining further, using in other contexts, drawing pictures, and/or looking online.
- Utilize your word wall by pointing to words as you use them. Encourage your campers to seek out their new words during their independent reading and to actively use them during Writing Power time. Remember to give praise (shooting stars, knuckle bump, high five, or any other praise signal) when you observe a camper using the power words verbally or in writing!

Turn and Talk

Rather than asking a question and inviting *one* camper to answer, pose a question and ask *all* campers to reflect upon possible responses. Then, have campers turn and talk to a designated partner.

- This practice keeps all campers actively engaged, involved, and accountable in the instruction. When we ask campers to turn and talk, they are able to practice a skill, strategy, or behavior with your assistance while giving you the opportunity to assess camper understanding (Serafini, 2009).
- Give campers only a couple of minutes to talk with a partner. It is a quick chance to try out new learning. Make sure the “Turn and Talk” partnerships change often to give campers a chance to talk with a variety of peers. It is a great opportunity for them to practice what it feels like to speak and listen to varied audiences in more intimate settings.

Camp Chats

Camp Chats are included in every other lesson throughout LitCamp. These small-group discussions provide a time for campers to talk about and share their reading.

- This is a good opportunity to model excellent speaking and listening skills for your campers. Conversation starters such as “I’d like to build on that idea...” or “I am wondering if you can say more about...” will help your campers build strong literacy skills.
- Ask and encourage campers to ask open-ended questions that can’t be answered with a simple yes or no. These questions encourage the sharing of ideas in a safe setting.
- Leaders and campers will be guided to set their Camp Chat routine early on in LitCamp.

A “Camp Chat Rules” list suitable for reproducing and sharing with campers is provided on page 115 of this book.

Independent Reading

LitCamp is an environment that prioritizes deep engagement with texts through independent reading. Designated daily independent reading time values every minute campers read and allows them to develop a strong reading identity as well as the stamina and fluency that lead to a lifelong love of reading. At camp, it will be ideal to have a classroom library in addition to the camp books. Consider creating a few large bins of texts gathered from your own collection or from the public library.

As the camp leader, your role is to facilitate Independent Reading time as a space where active reading is cherished. Some campers may need help selecting books that will round out a complete reading life, from books that challenge their thinking to books that feel just like cozy sweaters. Gently guide campers to books they will enjoy and understand. While campers are reading, you can confer with individuals, emphasizing process (the building of reading identities or building stamina) or strategy (comprehension and fluency) in your conversation. Questions for conferring are included in every lesson to help you connect your one-on-one conversations to the daily objectives.

If your community has the resources, please consider providing each child in your camp with take-home copies of read-aloud texts you have shared or with other take-home books to make sure that independent reading extends to time at home and to help each camper experience the pride of building his or her own home library.

As you plan for independent reading, keep these points in mind:

- Campers need access to a wide variety of diverse texts that are at their reading levels, but also that are “downhill” and “uphill” texts. Having variety and the affirmation that it is good for one’s reading development to read at all these levels are crucial. Campers need the opportunity to make choices based on more than levels, to explore their passions, interests, favorite authors, and genres. In celebrating the variety of what they read independently, you will help them build stamina, engagement, and identity as readers.
- When campers choose their own texts, they experience the power of a reading life. The text may not be an award winner or even at the level of that child’s assessed ability, but it may help to build the child’s stamina to read and reread the chosen text, and it may help the child to feel a further sense of identity and belonging to a reading community.
- Your role is to coach and support the readers as they navigate through book choices and to connect those choices back to the instruction in a way that feels natural, not forced. For example, if you are talking about character and theme in a lesson, you can talk across this thread when your campers make their independent reading selections.
- Independent reading should be a time of active learning for both you and your campers, as you work together to build their engagement, motivation, and dynamic academic achievement. Strong independent readers will curate their own ever-growing, ever-changing reading collection. They will show interest in learning new words and phrases, building their reading stamina as they become lost in the world of their texts. Strong independent readers both drive community discussions around reading and participate in active listening, generating their own high-level inquiry questions and answering inferential questions with textual evidence.
- While reading, campers should practice process and strategy while connecting to central themes of the day’s lesson. They should explore a variety of genres and texts that they can comprehend and participate in conversations about the text.

Quiet Bubble and One-Inch Voice

The language “working in a quiet bubble with a one-inch voice” is useful to describe what the classroom sounds like during independent reading and writing time. Campers will not naturally know what this means, but we can teach them how to do this. Here is a sample script:

I am going to teach you a way that can help you remember how to read quietly so that your friends can concentrate and so I can work with each of you every day as readers and writers.

Show a picture of a bubble from a book or one that you have drawn. *This is a bubble. Think about what it would be like to be inside this bubble. Do you think it is really noisy or really quiet? If it was noisy inside, the bubble would pop! When you are reading today, pretend you are inside a quiet bubble. Make sure you are extra quiet so the children around you can’t hear you and you can focus on your book from inside your quiet bubble.*

The goal is to use a one-inch voice inside your quiet bubble, a tiny voice. Remember, your reading work today is to read inside your quiet bubble using a one-inch voice. The children who read quietly in their quiet bubbles will get a quiet bubble reading award! The best way to become a strong reader is to concentrate and read inside your bubble!

- We can't expect young children to be completely silent as they read and write. However, we can work together to create a working buzz or productive hum—one that allows campers to focus on their reading and writing work.
- The term “one-inch voice” is also extremely helpful. Campers will understand the visual of one inch and they can show you with a finger and thumb precisely how big that is. It helps them to have a visual because when adults say “Be quiet!” children often think they ARE being quiet! A reminder of the one-inch voice helps campers visualize just what you mean by quiet.

Hand Signals

To encourage active listening and a strong sense of community, teach your campers to use hand signals during LitCamp.

- If campers have a question, they can raise two fingers together (index and middle) to let the speaker know that when he or she is finished, they have something to add.
- If campers want to express that they feel the same way about what another person is describing, or have had the same experience, they can use the “me too” hand signal. In this case, campers make a fist, but hold out their pinkies and thumbs. The campers then move their hands back and forth with their thumbs facing inward.
- Another hand signal you can use is “spirit fingers.” When campers get happy or excited while listening to a person speak, they can hold their hands up by their shoulders with their palms facing out and fingers pointed up, and wiggle their fingers.

Be Sensitive and Humanely Alert

Remember that some topics may be highly sensitive for campers. Even seemingly simple questions about family members or living situations could make some children feel uncomfortable. This was considered when the lessons were written, but it is impossible to anticipate every situation. You can be humanely alert. The more you know of your campers' backgrounds, the more successful you will be as you navigate these complex waters.

- Stay positive in your talk and actions. A strong sense of community is crucial for LitCamp and can be achieved by referring to campers by name, giving praise and affirmation for hard work, and making sure all campers feel included in activities.
- Working one to one with you is a key component to a child's sense of safety and security every day, even if it is just a few minutes. Celebrate your campers as readers by honoring each small step.

Celebrations

Your LitCamp program provides specific lessons that are intended to celebrate campers' progress. In addition, each day, be sure to find something you admire about at least five of your campers. By the end of the week, each camper will have heard from you at least once about something specific to his or her growth as a reader or writer. Be as specific as you can be. “Malik, I so loved how you worked with your partner.” “Sarah, I really liked how you got comfortable quickly in your reading spot this week.” You will also learn about your campers by reflecting on what you most readily notice about them.

- Celebrate weekly, even for five or ten minutes on the last day of camp each week. Hold a small gathering to honor the week of work.

- Whenever you have celebrations, make use of LitCamp resources. For example, you may want to personalize for each camper the Certificate of Achievement on page 120 of this guide. Each camp bunk will also have LitCamp wristbands that can be distributed as part of any celebration.
- Larger celebrations can happen by including families. Invite them to come visit during lessons 10 and 20, or anytime, to discover campers' favorite reading moments, share in their favorite texts, or share their own stories that relate to the LitCamp experience.
- You may also wish to have campers take home copies of books they have chosen at the end of camp.

Praise and Affirmation

You will set the tone of LitCamp and model for the campers how to positively interact with one another. Be sure to learn every camper's name and always use names when you are speaking to each other. Smile as often as possible. Commend campers throughout the lesson on their contributions, questions, writing, and artwork.

Affirmation and praise are crucial aspects of LitCamp. Affirmation involves a quick, often immediate recognition of a camper's positive behavior. Praise, however, is more thoughtful and specific. Praise is generally longer than an affirmation and involves recognizing and encouraging a positive behavior. Introduce your campers to two useful affirmations: Shooting Stars and Marshmallows.

- Shooting Stars are an excellent way to demonstrate praise in your LitCamp, and are featured at the end of each LitCamp lesson. The first step is to bring the group together and recognize the campers for great things they did that day. Once you are finished sharing, all of the campers will pretend to throw a basketball into a hoop. Then, campers can either do a dance to celebrate or act out putting the praise in their pockets.
- Marshmallows are another fun way to celebrate and praise someone. This time, when you offer praise to a specific camper, everyone in the group will face that camper, hold their hands out, and squeeze an invisible marshmallow! Keeping their hands a few inches apart, each person will switch off between "squeezing" the sides and the top and bottom of his or her marshmallow. After the marshmallows have been "squeezed" and shaped, members should mime tossing them to the recipient of the praise. In return, the recipient of the praise will pretend to catch the marshmallows midair and eat them.
- You and your campers may come up with and create your own enjoyable affirmation and praise routines. If so, please let us know!

Be a Role Model

Be sure to share your thinking with the campers whenever you ask them to share. Demonstrate your own connections ("My favorite moment was . . ." "A moment when this story came alive for me was when . . ."). Participate in the activities with the campers and enjoy each day together.

Supporting English Learners

In this wonderfully diverse world in which we live, our classrooms and communities will be rich with multiple languages and cultures. This is an asset to the LitCamp experience. We want our English learners to feel fully engaged, motivated, and inspired by the LitCamp world. And we want all campers to benefit from the perspectives and language-learning strategies of our ELs. Each LitCamp lesson includes options for EL support on every page.

In addition, here are some of our best tips for how we reach our ELs as literacy learners, but you may have more. Keep adding to this list and remember: children's literature is a key way to energize discussion and ensure that our ELs are not only reading and writing but also speaking and listening in all the languages they know and are learning.

TIPS FOR ENGLISH LEARNERS

PARTNER WISELY: Make sure children have fluid and flexible partners to turn and talk to so they can practice developing English skills with many different kinds of speakers and listeners.

USE VISUALS: As you read aloud, be sure children can clearly see the images on the pages. If possible, consider a smart board or ELMO to display the images as you read on the wall or screen. Value the children's interpretations of the art and the photographs. It's all part of their reading development.

CELEBRATE "MISTAKES": English learners are making very wise errors. They are usually scaffolding from their native languages, a natural part of the language learning process. Encourage with praise and affirmation when you see this happening. Rereading is a positive: ELs need time to process. Rereading a text or revisiting a familiar text helps to embed the language structures for a child. Have partners reread the read aloud to each other.

CONVERSATION MATTERS: Help our ELs to scaffold their thinking by modeling conversational "turns." For example, you can make a chart that says: Conversation moves include:

- "I'd like to add to what you are saying."
- "I'd like to build off what _____ said."
- "I am wondering about what you said."

WRITING AS THINKING: ELs are not all struggling writers! For some, writing is a real gift to help them feel more confident speaking aloud. Provide sticky notes, index cards, and technology where possible to have campers "think off the texts."

CREATE WORD BANKS: Focus on academic language and words that trigger longer, complex oral thought such as "however" and "in addition."

Family Engagement

Our children go between home and school often feeling as if there is a wide gulf between the two. LitCamp is designed to help children learn lifelong literacy-identity skills that can empower them to bring that literacy learning home more actively. If possible, supplement your work at LitCamp by providing take-home copies of the books read at camp or other texts so that no child will be at home without the nearness to text that is so essential for development.

Families can be extraordinary partners with us in the work to inspire all children to become literacy learners. Remember: literacy is defined as reading, writing, and speaking and listening. Whether families can read well or not, they can be amazing literacy ambassadors for their children.

TIPS FOR FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

HONOR HOME CULTURES AND LANGUAGES. Have children share stories about their home lives and families during camp time, making connections to the texts that resonate with their own experiences.

COMMUNICATE ON A REGULAR BASIS. Update families on their children's progress and also to celebrate the daily happenings via whatever mode works best for families (text messaging and social media in addition to more traditional modes).

ENCOURAGE FAMILIES TO READ WITH THEIR CHILDREN. Define reading in the following ways, especially for families in which adults may not be fluent readers themselves: reading aloud to children, reading with children, reading through the pictures and retelling stories in the books together and, storytelling from the basic ideas in books.

INSPIRE FAMILIES TO ASK CHILDREN ABOUT THE LITCAMP DAY. Advise them to ask specific, yet open-ended questions such as: "What book did you read today?" "What was your favorite part of today?" "What wondering did you have about what you read today?"

INVITE FAMILIES TO VISIT AND TO BE PART OF CAMP ROUTINES. Use these opportunities to model best practices that are easy for families to replicate at home (read aloud through the pictures, storytelling, asking and responding to open-ended questions, affirmations for even the smallest steps forward).

Inviting families to be part of LitCamp by sharing stories, dropping in, and reading aloud (or having their children read aloud to them) both at home and at camp are all ways to make sure families are not only included but actively serving as partners and leaders in the raising of all children as literacy learners. This guide includes English and Spanish letters that you may wish to send home to families to help them support your work at LitCamp, as well as an invitation that you may wish to use to invite families to visit and join you for celebrations at camp.

LitCamp Family Visits

Welcome campers' families into the LitCamp community. Here are some ways to engage with families when they come to visit:

- Have children read aloud to families when they come.
- Have children share their favorite book that they've read aloud so far.
- Encourage families to tell their favorite family stories.
- Invite family members to read aloud.
- Select a favorite camp game and play it together.

Assessment

The LitCamp Assessment Rubrics are provided with this program. A developmental asset model is used to celebrate every child's literacy and resilience-building strengths and to help us identify areas of growth for each child. Use these rubrics as observational tools to help you focus on and evaluate the most important milestones on the developmental literacy continuum.

These rubrics are designed to offer you opportunities to study your LitCampers through the lens of the 7 Strengths as they participate in reading, writing, and speaking and listening activities. The focus of the Assessment Rubrics is on engagement, enjoyment, collaboration, community, and identity. These are typically not areas evaluated or addressed by summative yearly assessments, nor are they always addressed in formative assessments given during the school year. We have designed them to be a complement to your regularly scheduled yearly assessments to provide a deeper, richer analysis of what will help children move forward and what might be getting in their way.

Please use the Assessment Rubrics at the start of camp and at the end. Share campers' successes with their families and celebrate together. Share the outcomes with children's teachers for the coming year. These rubric results will be helpful not only in the short term but in the long term, too.

Final Thoughts

We learn to do well what we first love to do. LitCamp is a way to bring the joy of reading and the joy of community around reading to all children. It is inspired by the power of great and authentic texts, but also by your voices, hearts, minds, and ideas. If you do something special with your campers, or add some new ideas to the curriculum, please let us know. We want to hear from you. The work you do is so important. Your enthusiasm for LitCamp will make a world of difference and open a world of possible for every child.