

Creating a Personalized Reading Profile



In this lesson, students will create a personalized reading profile that they can use to help them choose books that they will enjoy reading. Using the reader's profile graphic organizer as a guide, students will identify books, authors, and series that they have loved, as well as determine their reading preferences, personal hobbies, and interests. Finally, they will draw some conclusions about themselves as readers based on their reflection of past reading experiences.

Why is this lesson important?

According to Margaret K. Merga, author of *Reading Engagement for Tweens and Teens*, "sustained expectations can be important for fostering continuous engagement in reading, though they should not be exerted without responsive strategies such as knowing children's interests" (2019, 29).

It is no surprise that when readers are given choice and control over what they read, they are likely to be more inclined to choose to engage in the activity of reading. However, when given the opportunity to choose whatever they want to read, many students have very little idea of what or how to choose.

"The lack of strategy for choice was a barrier when some teens sought a book to read for pleasure. I found that many respondents had poor or ineffectual strategies for choosing books...difficulty in finding an engaging book was identified as a barrier to reading more, highlighting the importance that this skill be explicitly taught...ideally in the library. Where young people are not highly motivated to read, helping them to find a book that meets their interests is very important" (Merga 2019, 89).

Merga's research validates what librarians have always known—it is imperative to help readers develop and nurture their reading identities. Creating a personalized reading profile is one strategy that can be used to do this.

SUBJECT:

English/Language Arts

GRADE LEVEL:

Middle School

OBJECTIVES:

Students will reflect on their past and current reading lives.

Students will identify personal interests that may help them choose high interest books.

Students will draw conclusions about the type of reader they currently are in order to explain what types of book features, genres, authors, and topics they may prefer

MATERIALS:

[Blank Reading Profile \(PDF\)](#)

[Blank Reading Profile \(Google Slide; students can make a copy of this and complete digitally\)](#)

[Completed Reading Profile Example](#)

TIME NEEDED:

1-2 class periods

INSTRUCTIONAL PROCEDURE

Note: The lesson could take place in either the classroom or the library, keeping in mind that the collaboration between the classroom teacher and the teacher librarian is the important aspect. Bringing together the knowledge of the students that the classroom teacher possesses and the knowledge about books and authors that the teacher librarians possesses combines for a powerful collaboration.

How do readers decide what to read? Ask students to turn and talk about any strategies they use to help them choose books. Go around and have each student share out something that was shared. Collect student thoughts on a sticky note and have them stick it to chart paper after they have shared. If you prefer digital, collect all responses on a tool such as Padlet.

Build on their ideas when you introduce the activity by explaining that regular readers have a good understanding about their reading preferences. When readers know their personal preferences and interests, they can apply those preferences when choosing which books to read.

Have students reflect on and answer the following questions on the graphic organizer (see Materials above):

- Do you remember any books that were read aloud to you by librarian, teachers, or family members?
- What are some of your all time favorite books or series? Try to come up with at least three. If you love Harry Potter, use that series as ONE of your choices instead of listing the first three titles in that series. *Note: If students have a difficult time coming up with three, this is an indication that they may not lead active reading lives and will need added scaffolding.*
- Are there any authors that you love? If you can't think of any, look up the authors of the books or series you listed and use those.
- Do you prefer specific genres?
- If you aren't sure, look at your favorite books, series, and authors—do they have anything in common?
- What are some of your interests or hobbies outside of school? When you have free time, how do you choose to spend it?
- What topics, people, or events do you find fascinating or enjoy learning and reading about? Think about events and people from history or current events that have captured your attention.

Now that students have reflected on their personal interests and reading lives, they need to draw some conclusions about reading preferences regarding types of characters, book features, and plot structures.

- Based on your favorite books, authors, and read alouds, what type of characters do you prefer? Consider different character traits such as extrovert or introvert, brave, funny, curious, risk-taker, sneaky, mysterious, etc.; physical characteristics; situations and/or obstacles they encounter.
- Do you prefer any unique book features such as novels in verse, multiple narrators and chapters with alternating points of view, plot twists, or having the story start with the ending?

After they reflect on the two questions above, they will articulate their reader's profile by completing the sentence, "So overall, I am a reader who enjoys..."

Have students share this with a partner. It can be both scary and powerful to share, but it is an important aspect that can help turn your class into a community of readers.

Optional extension: Have students type their "So overall, I am a reader who enjoys..." paragraphs and print them out to hang up in the classroom and the library. Encourage students to make recommendations (verbal or on a sticky note) to other classmates. A great follow-up lesson would be to have each student create a "Read-Alike" poster.

DIFFERENTIATION

Having a diverse range of books displayed can help students remember different books they may have loved but forgotten. Having these visual reminders is a useful strategy for students who may not have as active reading lives. Be sure to include all levels of text, including picture books.

ASSESSMENT

The completed reading profile will serve as a formative assessment. Pay close attention to section B of the profile to see how well students can articulate and synthesize themselves as readers.

In addition to the profile, having students self-assess can be valuable for teachers, students, and parents. On the back of their profile paper, have students answer the following questions:

- Would you be able to explain to a friend what types of books you like reading?
- Do you feel confident that you will be better able to choose books you will enjoy. Explain why or why not.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Merga, Margaret K. *Reading Engagement for Tweens and Teens: What Would Make Them Read More?* Libraries Unlimited, 2019.

Miller, Donalyn. *The Book Whisperer: Awakening the Inner Reader in Every Child*. Jossey-Bass, 2009.

National Teachers of English. "List of Character Traits." Read Write Think. Last modified 2005. Accessed November 30, 2018.

http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/lesson_images/lesson807/traits-list.pdf.

Serravallo, Jennifer. *The Reading Strategies Book: Your Everything Guide to Developing Skilled Readers with 300 Strategies*. Heinemann, 2015.

MLA CITATION

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