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Introduction

Good books can touch our lives like good friends. Within their pages are words and characters that can inspire us to achieve our highest ideals. We can turn to them for companionship, recreation, comfort, and guidance. They can also give us cherished stories to hold in our hearts forever.

With this in mind, *Activities for Any Literature Unit* has been designed for use with students in the intermediate grades. The lessons and projects may be used with a book you are reading with the class or be adapted to stories in your reading series. They are ideal for core literature and for partner and individualised reading. Even though students are reading different books, the same lesson can be applicable to all on a given day.

Ideas are developed to guide students in individualised as well as cooperative learning activities. There are eight sections:

- **Pre-reading Activities**
- **Reading Response Journals**
- **Vocabulary Ideas**
- **Book Report Ideas**
- **Graphic Organisers**
- **Multiple Intelligences**
- **Bloom's Taxonomy Activities**
- **Culminating Activity: "Q and A"** (adaptable to any book or story)

You will find generic activity sheets to provide simple and immediate instruction as well as creative ideas to address specific learning styles. The lessons are designed to teach and reinforce such skills as basic vocabulary, sequencing, and character and plot development.

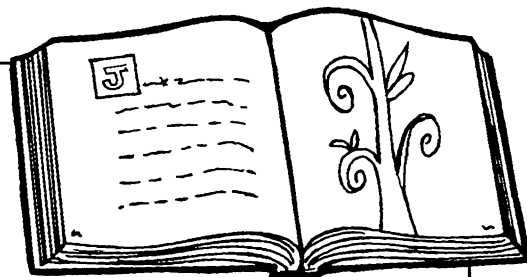
Moreover, specific suggestions are supplied for assignments geared to each of Bloom's levels of learning—knowledge activities, comprehension activities, application activities, analysis activities, synthesis activities, and evaluation activities.

Special attention has also been paid to Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences, leading to a series of suggested activities specially designed to appeal to each of seven types of intelligence.

It is the hope of the authors that *Activities for Any Literature Unit* will become an invaluable tool in simplifying your entire language curriculum.

Pre-reading Activities

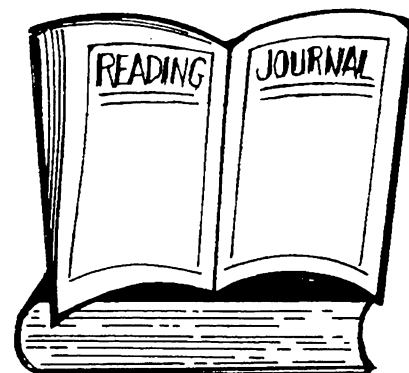
Before you begin reading your literature selection with your students, do some pre-reading activities to stimulate interest and enhance comprehension. Here are some activities that might work for your class, depending on the specific book or story selected.



1. What have you heard about this novel? What information do you already know?
2. Predict what the story might be about just by looking at the cover illustration.
3. Discuss other books by the author that students may have heard about or read.
4. Respond to the following:
 - Are you interested in . . .
 - stories about characters who have to be heroic?
 - stories with adventure and life-or-death struggles?
 - stories dealing with a young person having experiences that make him/her grow up?
 - stories that show a young person is capable of making important decisions and taking action?
 - stories that have both funny and sad incidents?
 - Why might young boys or girls be forced to live on their own without anyone taking care of them?
 - How can unusual occurrences change a young person's life?
 - What is it like being in a new and completely different environment?
5. Work in groups to create a factual and/or fictional story about a child who has exciting and strange adventures.
6. Write descriptions or brainstorm ideas about what makes a person strong or courageous.
7. Use a picture to introduce the literature selection to your class. The picture can also be used as a journal cover for reading response journals or as the centerpiece of a bulletin board display of student work. After the story has been completed, the picture may be used to stimulate discussion about the ending of the story.

Reading Response Journals

One excellent way to ensure that the reading of literature becomes a personal experience for each student is to include the use of reading response journals in your plans. In these journals, students can be encouraged to respond to the story in a number of ways. Here are a few ideas.



- Tell them that the purpose of the journal is to record their thoughts, ideas, observations, and questions as they read.
- Provide students with, or ask them to suggest, topics from the story that would stimulate writing. Specific examples of the following might serve as examples:
 - situations provoking strong emotions, such as anger, fear, or great admiration
 - situations which are ambiguous, unclear, or cause puzzlement and wonder
 - conditions, occupations, or subjects about which they like to know more, such as life at sea, veterinary work, crafts, electronics, flying, space—anything personally engaging an interest
- After the reading of each chapter, students can write one or more new things they learned in the chapter.
- Have students use a double-entry journal by writing one short quote that interests them from each chapter on the left of their paper. On the right side they should express their own ideas about the quote.
- Ask students to draw their responses to certain events or characters in the story, using blank pages in their journals.
- Tell students that they may use their journals to record “diary-type” responses that they may want to enter.
- Give students quotes from the novel and ask them to write their own responses. Make sure to do this before you go over the quotations in class. In groups they could list the different ways students can respond to the same quote.
- Allow students time to write in their journals daily.
- Personal reflections will be read by the teacher, but no corrections or letter grades will be assigned. Credit is given for effort, and all students who sincerely try will be awarded credit.
- Nonjudgmental teacher responses should be made to let the students know you enjoy their journals. Here are some types of responses that will please your journal writers and encourage them to write more.
 - *“You have really found what’s important in the story!”*
 - *“You write so clearly, I almost feel as if I am there.”*
 - *“If you feel comfortable, I’d like you to share this with the class. I think they’ll enjoy it as much as I have.”*

Vocabulary Activities

You can help your students learn and retain the vocabulary in the literature selection by providing them with interesting vocabulary activities. Here are some ideas to try.

- People of all ages like to make and solve puzzles. Ask your students to make their own **crossword puzzles** or **word search puzzles** using the vocabulary words from the story.
- Challenge your students to a **vocabulary bee!** This is similar to a spelling bee, but in addition to spelling each word correctly, the game participants must correctly define the words as well.
- Play **vocabulary concentration**. The goal of this game is to match vocabulary words with their definitions. Divide the class into groups of two to five students. Have students make two sets of the cards the same size and colour. On one set have them write the vocabulary words. On the second set have them write the definitions. All cards are mixed together and placed face down on a table. A player picks two cards. If the pair matches the word with its definition, the player keeps the cards and takes another turn. If the cards do not match, they are returned to their places face down on the table, and another player takes a turn. Players must concentrate to remember the locations of the words and their definitions. The game continues until all matches have been made. This is an ideal activity for free exploration time.
- Have your students practise their writing skills by creating sentences and paragraphs in which multiple vocabulary words are used correctly. Ask them to share their **compact vocabulary** sentences and paragraphs with the class.
- Ask your students to create paragraphs which use the vocabulary words to present **history lessons** that relate to the time period of the novel.
- Challenge your students to use a specific vocabulary word from the story at least **10 times in one day**. They must keep a record of when, how, and why the word was used.
- As a group activity, have students work together to create an **illustrated dictionary** of the vocabulary words.
- Play **20 clues** with the entire class. In this game, one student selects a vocabulary word and gives clues about this word, one by one, until someone in the class can guess the word.
- Play **vocabulary charades**. In this game, vocabulary words are acted out.