

# Novel Ideas

Grades 4-6

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## Table of Contents

At A Glance .....	2
Overall Expectations.....	4
Teacher Input Suggestions .....	4
Reading Conference - Sample Questions.....	6
List of Activities .....	7
Weekly Reading Log.....	8
Word Study Activities .....	9
Writing Activities .....	23
Brainstorming Activities .....	35
Creative Activities .....	46
Drama Activities .....	58
Graphic Organizers .....	69
Blank Activity Card .....	80



## Overall Expectations

Students will:

- use language to learn and communicate ideas in social interaction and group activities
- use gestures and tone of voice to communicate in more complex oral forms
- use a variety of strategies to read and respond to texts
- write to communicate information, and describe feelings using a form and organizational approach to the audience
- increase their knowledge of words and the ways in which they are formed and connected

## Teacher Input Suggestions

The activity cards in this resource may be used to guide students' work after reading. They are intended to form a part of your literacy program. You may wish to include the following components in your program:

- silent reading time
- response journal writing time (for ideas, see the "Response Journal" section on this page)
- teacher-read storytime followed by a mini-lesson or modeling session
- activity card time (see p. 5)
- group discussion
- student-teacher conferences (see p. 5)
- sharing time (see p. 5)

Have a variety of reading materials available in the class. Encourage students to bring books from home to share. Make extension use of the school library for book selection.

Encourage the class to read different types of books (e.g., fantasy, mystery, historical fiction, adventure, biography). You may do this by focusing the students towards particular types when selecting books. This is also an opportunity for integrating other subjects areas (e.g., when studying stars and constellations in science, you may want to look at mythology books). Ensure that students are aware of different book types by having them classify the books that they are reading. Hold a scavenger hunt in the library, instructing students to find titles and authors for each of the identified types. Have students contribute to a bulletin board display by creating book covers for each of the types identified by the class.

You may wish students to make a reading folder for all their work. Have students complete a daily reading record sheet (see page 8). This is a useful tool for monitoring each student's progress.

### Response Journal:

The "Personal Response Journal" or "Reading Response Journal" is the students' vehicle for compiling thoughts, feelings, expectations, and questions about their daily reading. Students should be writing in this journal several times a week. It is a way for students to bridge their personal experience with what they are reading. It is not intended to be private and confidential, and this should be made clear to the students.



Initially, students may have trouble with writing entries in their journal and will need some guidance and modeling. At first, you may want to read each journal entry and discuss the entry with them. Group discussions with the class before a journal writing session may be useful. Another good strategy is to have students with particularly insightful or thoughtful responses read their passages aloud to the class. Be careful not to give students a checklist of possible response ideas, as they tend to treat them like comprehension questions and answer them as such.

The ideas below can be used for discussion purposes or to help a student who is experiencing great difficulty with this concept.

- Describe the feelings that you experienced while reading the story.
- Write about people and incidents that you are reminded of when you read the story.
- Write about what you think will happen next in the story.
- Write questions that come to mind while you are reading the story.
- Make connections with main characters or argue with them.
- Give your opinions of events or decisions in the story.
- Write about topics or problems that are discussed in the story.

### **Sharing Time:**

Have the students share their work with the rest of the class. This can be done on a daily or weekly basis. You may want to set up a schedule for sharing by having a group of students present each day. This will serve two purposes: it gives students an audience for the work they have done, and it promotes the books that students have read.

### **Teacher-Read Storytime:**

Choose a book to read aloud to the class. Use this oral reading as a vehicle to model the tasks on the activity cards or as a springboard to teach a mini-lesson on a particular skill.

### **Activity Cards:**

Activity cards are grouped according to type of activity (e.g., writing, drama, word study, etc.). Activities in each group utilize different learning styles and range in complexity according to Bloom's taxonomy (knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, evaluation). The main Bloom's taxonomy level(s) addressed is indicated at the top of each page. Within each type of activity, exercises are arranged in approximate order of increasing complexity. The cards are designed to allow student choice, but you may want to guide their selections to ensure students exercise different modes of expression and different aspects of critical thinking. For example, you may instruct students to complete one card from each group, or complete a total of three cards from different groups. Students should work on the activities while reading the novel. Most of the activities do not require the student to have finished reading the novel.

### **Student-Teacher Conferences:**

Conferencing is a useful tool for the classroom teacher to assess the students' progress. The conference may be formal or informal. The important factor is recording observations. You can also use this time to discuss the activities that the students have chosen to complete for the book.

Sample questions that may be used to guide the reading conference are included in this resource (see p. 6).



## Reading Conference - Sample Questions

Choose one or two questions from each section to begin a dialog with the student. The best way to begin the conference is, “**Tell me about your story.**”

### Appropriateness:

1. Why did you choose the book? Was it a good choice?
2. Was it easy or hard to read? What made it easy or hard? Were there places where you got mixed up?
3. Would you choose a similar type of book again? One by the same author?
4. What did you learn about from reading this book?

### Enjoyment:

1. Compared with books you have read recently, how would you rate it?
2. Was this a good book? Why or why not?
3. Would you recommend this book to other students in the class? Why or why not?

### Comprehension:

1. Tell about a few of the high points of the book.
2. Who is the hero or main character of the story? What is he or she like?
3. Do you admire any of the characters in the book? Why or why not?
4. Tell about the setting of the story. Would you like to go there? Have you ever gone anywhere like it?
5. Did you come across any interesting facts that you didn't know before? What did you learn?
6. Is this book like any others you have read? How is it similar or different?
7. What do you think the person who wrote this book was trying to say to you? Was there a lesson in the story?
8. Why did the author choose this title? Is it a good one? What would you suggest for a title?