

Stepping into the Literature Circle

ACTIVITY
2.11

Learning Targets

- Analyze elements of the structure and content of a text using text evidence with a Literature Circles strategy.
- Evaluate Literature Circles as a strategy to facilitate close reading and collaborative discussion of meaning in a text.

LEARNING STRATEGIES:
Literature Circles, Discussion
Groups, Collaborating

Introducing the Strategy: Literature Circles

A Literature Circle is made up of a group that all reads the same text and then participates in a discussion of that text. Each person in the group takes on a different role, with the roles rotating to each group member. The group discussion roles are Discussion Leader, Diction Detective, Bridge Builder, Reporter, and Artist.

Literature Circle Roles

Each role within a Literature Circle group has specific responsibilities. Performance of the roles rotates so that each person in the group has an opportunity to serve in each role.

Discussion Leader: Your job is to develop a list of questions you think your group should discuss about the assigned section of the book. Use your knowledge of Levels of Questions to create thought-provoking interpretive and universal questions. Try to create questions that encourage your group to consider many ideas. Help your group explore these important ideas and share their reactions. You will be in charge of leading the day's discussion.

Diction Detective: Your job is to carefully examine the diction (word choice) in the assigned section. Search for words, phrases, and passages that are especially descriptive, powerful, funny, thought-provoking, surprising, or even confusing. List the words or phrases and explain why you selected them. Then, write your thoughts about why the author might have selected these words or phrases. What is the author trying to say? How does the diction help the author achieve his or her purpose? What tone do the words indicate?

Bridge Builder: Your job is to build bridges between the events of the book and other people, places, or events in school, the community, or your own life. Look for connections between the text, yourself, other texts, and the world. Also make connections between what has happened before and what might happen as the narrative continues. Look for the characters' internal and external conflicts and the ways these conflicts influence their actions.

Reporter: Your job is to identify and report on the key points of the reading assignment. Make a list or write a summary that describes how the setting, plot, and characters are developed in this section of the book. Consider how characters interact, major events that occur, and shifts in the setting or the mood that seem significant. Share your report at the beginning of the group meeting to help your group focus on the key ideas presented in the reading. Like that of a newspaper reporter, your report must be concise yet thorough.

My Notes

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My Notes

Artist: Your job is to create an illustration related to the reading. It can be a sketch, cartoon, diagram, flow chart, or other image. It can be of a scene, an idea, a symbol, or a character. Show your illustration to the group without any explanation. Ask each group member to respond, either by making a comment or asking a question. After everyone has responded, then you may explain your picture and answer any questions that have not been answered.

Preparing for Discussion

1. Your teacher will assign roles and put you in Literature Circle groups to practice close reading and discussion of texts with a classic fairy tale. Review the directions for your role on the previous page. Also review the skills you learned in the following activities, where you were actually practicing the skills needed for each role:

Discussion Leader (Activity 2.7)

Diction Detective (Activity 2.8)

Reporter (Activity 2.9)

Bridge Builder (Activity 2.10)

Artist (Activity 2.10)

Create a placecard to use during the meeting. Include the role title and a symbolic visual on the front. On the back, write a brief description of your role.

Discussion Instructions

2. Keep a double-entry journal with notes that will help you prepare for your role. Remember to copy or summarize important passages on the left side of your journal. On the right-hand side
 - The Discussion Leader will keep track of questions to ask.
 - The Diction Detective will record interesting words and phrases, especially figurative language.
 - The Reporter will take notes on the setting, plot, and characters, especially shifts or changes.
 - The Bridge Builder will take notes on predictions, connections (text to self, text to text, and text to world) and conflict.
 - The Artist will take notes on how to create a visual representation.
3. Meet with the other students who are also preparing for the role you have been given. Share the notes that you took and discuss how you can use them in your Literature Circle meetings.
4. When your role is prepared, go back to your Literature Circle group. Review the guidelines for communicating in discussion groups, which you made in Activity 2.7.

Participating in a Discussion

- 5. At your teacher’s direction, team up with another group to use the Fishbowl strategy. While the inner circle is discussing the text, the outer circle will take notes on the Discussion Group Note-taking Graphic Organizer. After the first discussion, switch places so that the inner circle becomes the outer circle for the second discussion.
- 6. Give each circle (inner and outer) a chance to respond to the discussion, commenting on the strengths and challenges that each group had in its analysis of the text. Fill out the Group Meeting Reflection Chart on the following page. Reflect on what you can improve on during your Literature Circle meeting for the upcoming Embedded Assessment.

My Notes

Discussion Note-taking Graphic Organizer

An Interesting Point Made by a Member of the Discussion Group	Support the Person Provided	My Thoughts

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Group Meeting Reflection Chart

	Challenges	Goals
Speaking		
Listening		
Understanding the Text		

My Notes

Check Your Understanding

Reflect on your discussion group experiences and how Literature Circle discussions contributed to your close reading of text and your ability to analyze meaning and make connections to ideas within and outside of the text.