

Teaching the Novel: Pre-reading, Reading, and Post-reading Activities

Pre-reading Activities are generally designed to generate interest and assist students in approaching the text in question.

- Introduction of themes and issues, often through discussion, introduction of related literature or film with similar themes, etc
- Introduction of period or social context, often through research, documentary film, working with images from the period, etc
- Predictive strategies (e.g., collaborative or individual creative writing)
- Facilitation of engagement with complex language or structures that will be encountered in the text (e.g., an exercise with nonlinear writing may help students approach a text with an unconventional plot structure)

Reading Activities are related to the text and are scheduled throughout the time students are engaged in reading. These are designed to add interest and understanding, and to ensure various strands of the curriculum and learning styles are accounted for (i.e., reading, writing, listening, speaking, viewing, producing).

- Discussion groups
- Book sharing (book circles—avoid standard “book reports”)
- Response journals (personal, creative, analytical, etc)
- Vocabulary/language development
- Introduction of related literature, film, non-fiction, and so on
- Artistic renderings (e.g., illustrate a scene or book cover, set design, etc)
- Dramatization or adaptation for film (e.g., screenplay, storyboarding, etc)
- Simple forms of animation (e.g., “slowmation”)
- Drama games: <http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/irp/drama810/apg.htm>
- Process drama (involves students in examining the social issues inherent in a text through drama activities such as role playing)
- Readers' theatre or adaptation for radio drama
- Composition of music or selection of musical tracks suited to this literature (e.g., students may produce a “soundtrack” along with a commentary with respect to why they have made particular selections)
- Timelines or maps of locations
- Sketching or diagramming of social networks
- Creative writing (found poetry, extensions of the narrative, rewriting of scenes from different perspectives, writing in role [e.g., students write letters, emails, or postcards to each other in the role of a character; alternately they write the journal of a particular character], etc)
- Cultural focus days (students collect and share cultural artifacts or food discussed in the text)

Post-reading Activities are summative assignments and activities designed to synthesize learning, extend understanding, link to the next unit, etc.

- All of the above may be completed as post-reading activities
- Formal assignments (creative or analytical)
- Compiling of class resources and scheduling of a day or days for sharing of these resources