

Choosing a Good Book: Modeling Text Choices

Some students have difficulty choosing a good book to read—one that they can manage and one that they will enjoy. Sharing the ways in which you choose books to read can show them some things to think about as they approach the task.

Bring in a stack of books to use as examples. These might be books you have just read or books you plan to read. They may be books others have recommended or ones you discovered for yourself. You may wish to include different genres—short stories, poetry, and nonfiction as well as novels. Present a mini-lesson in which you show each book and talk about why you might read it—or why you might choose not to. Show students how you use the cover information and the title page to help you decide. Think about opening the book to a spot in the middle and reading a paragraph or two to help you decide. Expand the conversation to ask students to share their strategies for choosing books.

Other techniques teachers have found helpful:

- Cover a box with attractive paper, fill it with tried-and-true, grade-appropriate favorites, label it “Good Books,” and place it in the library corner where students can browse.
- Begin a chart paper list of “Good Books” and ask students to list titles and authors when they have read a good book.
- When you know a student is enjoying a book, ask him or her to give an informal booktalk to share the title with the class.