

# An ABC of Schoolwide Reading Week Activities

## Reading Week Ideas, Old and New, for Classroom and Library

**The Alphabet of School-Wide Reading Week Activities has been a part of the Reading Week Idea Book for many years. As in the past, this Alphabet is a mixture of new ideas and those from past years. You'll see some familiar ideas and, I hope, find some new ones that you can use or adapt to your own library or classroom.**

### **AUTHOR VISITS**

Invite authors and storytellers to visit your school. Local authors and storytellers are often easier to book, and their schedules may be more flexible. Well-known authors will expect an honorarium and reimbursement for travel and lodging expenses. For hints about scheduling and managing an author visit, see <http://www.nevadareadingweek.com/about.html> . Your local public library may be able to help you locate authors who live nearby.

### **A IS FOR APRIL – AND ABC BOOKS**

Begin by asking students to brainstorm as many aspects of April as they can think of. Include activities that are associated with spring or April days. Names of birds, trees, flowers, famous people born in April, events that have occurred or traditionally occur in April, holidays (Easter, Earth Day) or seasonal traditions are all possible topics. The topics may depend on the age of the students.

Next, explain that they'll need to do more research before they can create an April alphabet book. Information sheets for each pair of students with “\_\_\_ is for \_\_\_” at the top will help students decide what their topic will be and will provide a place to record the results of their research. At the end of the first research session, make lists of the student choices and see that all the letters of the alphabet are covered. If some are left (typically X, Y, Z, and Q), have students browse the dictionary or encyclopedias to find words that could be linked to the month of April, to spring, or to someone associated with April. Once the information sheets are completed, students can recopy and illustrate their work, then bind it to create an alphabet book.

### **BLOGS**

Blogs are the reflections of an individual – student or teacher – and usually allow others to comment. A wiki is an interactive space to which others may add content. Teachers can use a blog to pose a question, start a discussion, or comment on work done in class. Even young children can respond to a prompt. A Reading Week blog can reflect the annual theme, or provide a way for teachers to ask a question about plot details or characters in a book and for children to respond. Check out the tutorials on [www.blogster.com](http://www.blogster.com).

## **BOOK ROUND TABLE GAME**

(Recommended for Grade 3 and up). The Book Round Table game can be used with any set of questions and answers, from library skills to author studies to book discussions. Prepare a set of questions and answers: you'll need about half as many questions as there are students in the class (at the minimum). (See p. \_\_\_ for a Library Skills Book Round Table Game designed by Lynne Farrell Stover in *Library Sparks*.) For Nevada Reading Week, you might match characters with books that students are familiar with (Nevada Young Readers Award books, for example) or ask questions about plot details in a book read in class. Prepare the game cards: type the questions and answers on strips of paper that can be glued to index cards, a question on the front and an answer on the back. **THE ANSWER ON THE BACK SHOULD NOT MATCH THE QUESTION ON THE FRONT.** With students seated in a circle, pair students up and give each pair one card. Standing, the first pair of students asks the question; the pair of students with the correct answer stands and reads the answer, then asks the question from the front of the card. Continue until all students have participated. (This is also a good way to review for a test in any topic.)

## **CREATE A COMMERCIAL**

Students work together to create a commercial for a book. Create a jingle, write a script, act out a part or model the commercial on familiar television advertising. (What else can the gecko do?) Use props as necessary. When the commercial is complete, use a flip video or even a cell phone to film the performance. The video can be transferred to a flash drive (also known as a thumb drive, a Cruzer mini, or a variety of other brands) and shown in the library or for other classes. This works especially well with students who have participated in literature circles, since they'll all have read the same book.

## **COMICS BLOG**

Check out Good Comics for Kids at [www.schoollibraryjournal.com/blog/540000654.html](http://www.schoollibraryjournal.com/blog/540000654.html), a blog devoted to news and titles for younger readers.

## **CULTIVATING CURIOSITY**

*Adapted from an article by Carol Thompson, LibrarySparks, January 2009*

Let students explore their knowledge of video games and create an interest in research with a Curiosity Quest. Each morning during Nevada Reading Week, or once a week during your Nevada Reading Month, pose a question of the day on the school's intercom. Students can research answers and turn in the results; correct answers can be put into a drawing for end-of-the-month prizes.

To begin this project, choose a question to be answered during library time. Make sure that the question is not one that could easily be answered using general knowledge. Use this question to model ways of researching and using non-fiction and reference books (but not the Internet) to find an answer.

Sample questions:

- Using an almanac, find the best-selling video game of 2009.
- What was the top selling game of 1997?
- Electronic games or video games are controlled by a tiny computer called a \_\_\_\_\_.

- Besides relating to video games, what is another definition of the term *arcade*?

As you devise your own questions on your own topic, make sure that questions have only one good answer, are challenging enough to require some research, and are easily found in the reference and nonfiction materials at hand in the library.

### **DAILY DOUBLE - READING THAT ROCKS**

Kids love to know that the books they choose are somehow special. Get two single bookstands and make signs that designate them as the “Daily Double” (the “book of the day” choices). Every day, choose two new books to feature. At least one should be something that a student has enjoyed or recommended, but you might also use the Daily Double to introduce new books, two at a time. The key to encouraging checkouts is to keep the number small (only two at a time), to display your Daily Double near the checkout desk, and to know enough about each of the books to be able to recommend them. When a book is checked out, you can either replace it with a new title immediately or leave the bookstand empty until the next morning, when the next Daily Double will be chosen and displayed.

### **EARTH DAY**

The first Earth Day was celebrated on April 22, 1970. As the discussion of global warming becomes more frequent, Earth Day has taken on a different sort of importance. Encourage students to think about and discuss Earth Day by displaying books related to conservation, the environment, ecology, renewable energy, and “green” ways of living. Check out Wisconsin’s Environmental Education for Kids at <http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/eeek>. For ways kids can get involved in Earth Day and environmental activities, try the PBS Kids site at <http://pbskids.org/zoom/activities/action/ways.html>.

### **FAMILIES**

There are many children’s books that emphasize extended families, especially grandparents. For a picture book with a musical touch, read *Banjo Granny* by Sarah Martin Busse (2006). First, read the book aloud so that children can enjoy the illustrations. Then, following the hints from p. 9, create a Reader’s Theater presentation using the characters of Granny, Mother, and three Narrators. (You can find a script ready for use in the November 2010 issue of *Library Sparks*.) The book includes the music for Owen’s Song.

Another book link is *My Grandma Lived in Gooligulch*, Graeme Base’s first book. It’s set in Australia and tells the story of Grandma’s travels in verse and pictures. When the book ends, Grandma is being swept out to sea, but the author suggests she may have reached a new country where she’s living still. Students can work in small groups to decide where she might be, and to write an ending to the book. To extend this activity, assign each group a different country and ask them to research the new country or city (San Francisco?) and predict what Grandma’s life might be like when she arrives.

## **GAME DAY**

Pick up a selection of simple board games (watch for garage sales or after-Christmas sales) for the library or classroom. Chess and checkers sets are popular, but because pieces are easily lost, pick up extra playing pieces whenever possible. Board games make a good rainy-day pursuit in the library at lunchtime, too.

## **GLOGSTER**

A GLOG is an interactive poster, created online to share with classmates or friends. Try <http://edu.glogster.com>. This site offers versions for sale, but there is a basic version for a teacher and fifty students that is free of charge. For Nevada Reading Month, students can create their own glogs to celebrate an author or a book. Students can use graphics, video, text, images, and sound or can draw their own pictures. As both teachers and students learn to use Glogster, it could also become an effective way for students to share research about a topic or create a group project.

## **GOOGLE DOCS**

Google Docs is a free Web-based service provided by Google. Word processing, spreadsheets, presentations, and data storage are all possible, and one of its greatest advantages is that it allows users to create and edit documents online in collaboration with others. Users can share documents and edit each other's content. For students, Google Docs is a way to make it possible for members of a group to work from home or for committee members to work together. The possibilities are endless!

## **GUEST READERS**

One of the most rewarding activities of Nevada Reading Week is to provide opportunities for students to listen to staff or community members read aloud from their favorite books. Invite your principal, school secretary, clinical aide, computer teacher, custodian, nurse, kitchen workers, counselor or other staff members to read from a favorite book or poem each day during morning announcements. Members of the community can read to large groups or visit classrooms. The librarian might help staff members to select an appropriate book, but it's more fun when the visiting reader selects a book he or she might have read as a child.

Guest readers may come from various professions. In keeping with this year's theme, you might consider musicians or band members, geologists or representatives from mining. Policemen, firemen, military officers and others in the public eye may be willing to come in uniform. Ask members of the college basketball or football team, perhaps the Reno Aces or the Bighorns, political figures, or the TV weatherman. If your school has a Partner in Education, there may be staff members who would be willing to read. Be sure to make arrangements well ahead of time, schedule the visits carefully, and follow up with thank-you notes to participating readers.

## **INTERNET SCIENCE CORNER**

*Adapted from Technology by Shonda Brisco, Library Sparks, October 2009.*

Creating an Internet Science Corner on your library website or as a document on a classroom computer with Internet access. Add themes or categories as the curriculum requires, adding to and changing the Internet Science Corner to keep it fresh. Check professional science periodicals (many available at the LRC) for links to wonderful resources for children. Journals of interest include:

- *Science and Children* - [www.nsta.org/elementaryschool/?lid=pub](http://www.nsta.org/elementaryschool/?lid=pub)
- *Science Books & Films* - [www.sbsonline.com](http://www.sbsonline.com)
- *Science Scope* - [www.nsta.org/middleschool](http://www.nsta.org/middleschool)
- *AIMS Magazine* - [www.aimsedu.org/Magazine](http://www.aimsedu.org/Magazine)
- *DOI Just for Kids* - [earthquake.usgs.gov/learning/kids](http://earthquake.usgs.gov/learning/kids)
- *EnviroKids* - [www.wessa.org.za/index.php/Publications/Envirokids.html](http://www.wessa.org.za/index.php/Publications/Envirokids.html).

Try

- *Effective Detective* – [www.ft.edu/effectivedetective/](http://www.ft.edu/effectivedetective/)
- *NASA'S Kid's Club* - [www.nasa.gov/audience/forkids/kidsclub/flash/index.html](http://www.nasa.gov/audience/forkids/kidsclub/flash/index.html)

If your school library subscribes to Follett's WebPath Express service, use it to search for related, educationally sound, grade-level appropriate sites to match topics of study.

To view an example of an Internet Science Corner and how it can work in your library or classroom, visit [www.internetsciencecorner.wikispaces.com](http://www.internetsciencecorner.wikispaces.com).

## **JOURNAL WRITING**

Student journals serve many purposes. They allow students to write spontaneously, expressing their ideas without worrying about conventions or complete ideas. Try Corbett Harrison's WritingFix Random Daily Writing Prompt Generator for quick, creative writing ideas at [http://writingfix.com/classroom\\_tools/dailypromptgenerator.htm](http://writingfix.com/classroom_tools/dailypromptgenerator.htm). (Example: "Whom did you hide from? Write about a hiding place that you haven't used for awhile." or "Why do you keep it? Tell the story of a keepsake you own that cannot tell its own story.")

Students can also respond to books they've read or listened to, create double-entry journals to track their reading and comprehension, or write about experiences at school or questions posed by teachers or other students.

Encourage students to include sketches and drawings in their journals. Sometimes a picture can express a thought, record a memory, or include an observation in ways that words cannot.

For your rock collecting or environmental or ecological units, make nature journals. Ideas for journal making : [www.kids.parks.ca.gov/pages/22743/files/blanknaturejournalpage.pdf](http://www.kids.parks.ca.gov/pages/22743/files/blanknaturejournalpage.pdf) or [www.ladybugmagkids.com/files/ladybug/jul-aug-ladybug-journal.pdf](http://www.ladybugmagkids.com/files/ladybug/jul-aug-ladybug-journal.pdf).

## **KIDS GET CAUGHT READING – AND THEY ROCK!**

Use a digital camera to take pictures of students reading or with their favorite books, and print them from a color printer (not necessarily on photo paper). Mount the snapshots on gray

or brown “rock” cutouts. Build a rockpile on a library or multipurpose room bulletin board, or a rock wall running the length of a hallway leading to the library. Teachers can rock too!

### **LOAN-LY BOOKS**

(Special for librarians): Create a special reading promotion to highlight those good books that never seem to be checked out. For example, Robert Newton Peck’s *Soup* books are funny and are great read-alouds, but may not catch kids’ attention on the shelf. Create a “club” or a rock band and make signs for the halls or library. Example: “Join the Soup Squad. See your librarian.” Keep the series of books in a special place, and make colorful music-oriented bookmarks to give to students who read them. Adapt to any series or group of books that you’d like to promote.

### **MAGIC BEANS**

Read a version of *Jack and the Beanstalk*. Stephen Kellogg’s 1997 version is fun, and the 2006 version by E. Nesbit and Matt Tavares enriches the original fairy tale with lots of details and twists, including a fairy who tells Jack the story of his father. Form teams of two to six students. Give each team bean seeds and pots with identical potting soil, but make the growing conditions different for each team. Vary the amounts of light or water, kinds or amounts of plant food, support for growing plants. Instruct just one team to sing to their plants... rock music preferred! Each team will keep detailed daily records of the plants’ growth. Which bean plants earn the title of the “magic beanstalk” and why?

### **MEET THE MUSICIAN**

Get high school and middle school music departments programs involved. (They’ll be surprised!) Work with the band or choral directors to bring a group of band members or individual musicians to school for part of an afternoon. Arrange performance sessions in the library – a jazz band, an Honor Choir performance, even an individual student with a guitar. Most musicians enjoy performing, and students will enjoy the music. If you’re able to find a rock band, an afternoon dance session would be a great culminating activity to your Nevada Reading Week celebration.

### **NEVADA YOUNG READERS AWARD**

Encourage students to participate in the Nevada Young Reader's Award program. By the time your Nevada Reading Week celebration is planned, it’s nearly time to vote on this year’s nominations.

This statewide program is designed to encourage the involvement of students and teachers in popular children's literature published in the last three years. Nevada students nominate, read, and vote for their favorite books in grade level categories. Awards are presented to the winning authors at the annual Nevada Library Association convention. Information about this program is available from your school library or local Nevada library, or from [www.nevadalibraries.org](http://www.nevadalibraries.org). See also the Conference handouts from Debbie Jacobs’ NYRA presentation (<http://www.nevadareadingweek.com/handouts.html>).

## **PERSONALITY PROFILES**

Build self-esteem and an appreciation for individuality with an easy art activity. Using an overhead projector, trace each student's silhouette on a large sheet of black construction paper, then cut out the tracing. Bring out a variety of discarded magazines, scissors and glue, and have students cut out pictures, words, or symbols that reflect their personality. Glue the pictures to the silhouette, creating an individual personality profile. Post the profiles in the classroom. An alternate project might be to ask teachers to create a similar personality profile that could be posted in the multipurpose room without a name and give students the opportunity to guess the identity of each silhouette.

## **PUPPET PLAY**

Invite students to form groups and adapt stories from *Silly & Silly* (or any similar group of stories) into puppet plays. Students can identify the characters, assign parts, and choose a narrator to read aloud any parts of the story not spoken by a character. A draped table serves as a puppet stage. Puppets can be made in a variety of ways; for ideas, including puppets made from paper plates, see <http://dragonsaretooseldom.com/category/puppet-center> . For a more elaborate presentation, see instructions at the same site for making a sock puppet. Plan a Puppet Show for an afternoon, ask parents or volunteers to bring refreshments, and invite parents and other special adults to an afternoon performance.

## **ROCKIN' RECESS READERS**

There are always children who would like to participate in Reading Month activities, but are not able to do so outside of school. Provide extra reading time during the school day by assigning children reading partners and providing time and a comfortable place to read in the library at recess. Fifth or sixth grade classes might partner with younger classes for the week. Children can read to their partners and initial each other's in-class reading log or reading certificate, allowing every student the chance to participate and feel a part of Reading Month. .

## **ROCK COLLECTING**

It's easy to forget sometimes that many children, especially apartment dwellers, have little chance to explore the out-of-doors. A short walk with a purpose can be a real journey of discovery.

Plan your walk at least a few days in advance. Look for an open area where children can look for rocks. Walk the route yourself, and if you intend to go beyond the boundaries of the school grounds, be sure that you check with your school administration first. It may be necessary to secure permission slips from parents or inform them in advance if you decide to visit a park or other facility.

As you walk, plan the things you'd like students to observe. Your focus will be on rock collecting, but there may be things along the way that demonstrate uses of rocks – as rock walls, pathways, even as part of a home. Consider integrating math by asking them to estimate how many rocks it takes to build a fence or a dry creek bed. While children may not care whether a rock is igneous or metamorphic, they should be able to observe differences in color, weight, and composition of the rocks they find. Remember that children are not always

good listeners while walking, so prepare them by talking about the things they will see before you go.

Read Byrd Baylor's *Everybody Needs a Rock* and talk about her ten rules for selecting a rock. (It might be a good opportunity to talk about what NOT to do while rock collecting too.) If all goes well, every child should bring back a single rock to the classroom. The next step (the next day) is to write about the rock, using their powers of observation. From a scientific standpoint, children might weigh or measure their rocks, compare color and density, or sort and classify their rocks. As a creative project, students can write short stories or poems with their rocks as a central character, or exploring the history of their rock with themselves as a main character.

### **ROCK STAR READERS**

Take pictures of students with favorite books for a display in the library or in the office. In tune with the Reading Rocks theme, encourage students to “rock” their hairdo for the photograph. Provide hair gel and a mirror, clips and ponytail holders, or let students know in advance when the photos will be taken so that they can prepare a hairstyle. Mount snapshots on colorful construction paper and place a few at a time on a bulletin board with a musical theme. Change pictures at least once a week, or replace pictures randomly. Pictures may be a way of rewarding and encouraging readers and at the same time promoting the books that they've chosen.

### **SCRAPBOOKING**

Capitalize on the interest in scrapbooking to promote books or increase student comprehension – some of both! The scrapbook would provide a culminating activity for literature circles, too. Have each child or a small group of students design a scrapbook about a book's main character. The first page should include an illustration depicting the chosen character, perhaps including any important information about the character. Remaining pages can focus on the character's interests or traits, and the third section should document important events from the story. Students can share their scrapbooks individually or in groups, and the completed scrapbooks can be displayed in the library for other students to peruse.

### **VIRTUAL CHAT WITH AN AUTHOR**

Begin by researching authors' websites to find those who welcome communications from readers. Before you introduce the activity, email the author to see whether he/she would be willing to participate in a discussion with your students. The discussion might involve a single email to which all students contribute a question, or several emails in an ongoing exchange, perhaps written as students read the author's book together.

If you have instant messaging software downloaded, and if the author is willing, consider setting up a virtual chat using instant messaging. Have students prepare questions or comments in advance, and practice before the prearranged date and time. Note that there may be a fee for a virtual chat; be sure that such arrangements are made clear in advance.

More and more, authors are proposing a “virtual” author visit using webcams and Skype. If you would like to explore this possibility, contact the author directly by email. The usual charge for an hour’s virtual visit is about \$200 - \$300.

### **WORDLE**

Wordle is a creative Web 2.0 way of creating “word clouds” from text that you provide. A word cloud is a display created from words of different sizes, fonts, directions, and colors. Try [www.wordle.net](http://www.wordle.net); have students enter reading-related words, titles of Nevada Young Reader Award books, characters from a book that they’ve read as a group, or any similar group of words. The more times you use a particular word, the larger its text will be.

### **WRAPPING UP AN AUTHOR VISIT OR A READING WEEK EVENT**

After an author visit or a special event, use these sentence-starters to enliven a discussion. These could also be used as a prompt for a writing assignment, or form the structure of a poem about the event.

I liked .....

I discovered ....

I learned.....

I was surprised that....

I think I will.....

I never knew ....

I still wonder...

All links checked for connectivity as of March 23,, 2011

## ***Nevada Young Readers Award 2011***

The following books, in four categories, have been nominated for the Nevada Young Readers Award for 2011.

### **Picture Books**

*Duck! Rabbit!* by Amy Krouse Rosenthal  
*Pingo* by Brandon Mull  
*The Pencil* by Allen Ahlberg  
*Two Bobbies: A True Story of Hurricane Katrina, Friendship, and Survival*  
by Kirby Larson and Mary Nethery  
*Duck at the Door* by Jackie Urbanovic  
*Darkness Slipped In* by Ella Burfoot  
*Houdini the Amazing Caterpillar* by Janet Pedersen  
*The Incredible Book Eating Boy* by Oliver Jeffers

### **Young Reader**

*Lawn Boy* by Gary Paulsen  
*Boys Are Dogs* by Leslie Margolis  
*The Curtain Went Up, My Pants Fell Down* by Henry Winkler  
*43 Old Cemetery Road: Dying to Meet You* by Kate Klise  
*Maze of Bones (39 Clues)* by Rick Riordan  
*The Magic Thief* by Sarah Prineas

### **Intermediate**

*Bull Rider* by Suzanne Morgan Williams  
*Science Fair* by Dave Barry and Ridley Pearson  
*Kaleidoscope Eyes* by Jen Bryant  
*Trouble* by Gary Schmidt  
*Stepping Up* by Mark Fink  
*13<sup>th</sup> Reality: The Journal of Curious Letters* by James Dashner

### **Young Adult**

*Because I Am Furniture* by Thalia Chaltas  
*Just Another Hero* by Sharon Draper  
*Little Brother* by Cory Doctorow  
*Swim the Fly* by Don Calame  
*The Knife of Never Letting Go* by Patrick Ness  
*Dope Sick* by Walter Dean Meyers

Find Book Reviews and bookmarks at

<http://www.nevadalibraries.org/Divisions/NYRA/index.html>

In March of each year, a new list of Nevada Young Readers Award books is chosen for the coming year. The list follows:

# NEVADA YOUNG READERS' AWARD 2012 NOMINATIONS

(Vote by May 15, 2012)

## **PICTURE BOOK CATEGORY**

*Art and Max* by David Wiesner (author, illustrator)

*Chick 'N' Pug* by Jennifer Sattler

*City Dog, Country Frog* by Mo Willems and Jon J. Muth, illustrator

*Clever Jack Takes the Cake* by Candace Fleming and G. Brian Karas, illustrator

*The Doghouse* by Jan Thomas

*I Need My Monster* by Amanda Noll and Howard McWilliam, illustrator

*Interrupting Chicken* by David Ezra Stein (author, illustrator)

*What the Lady Bug Heard* by Julia Donaldson, Lydia Monks, illustrator

## **YOUNG READER CATEGORY**

*Bad Kitty Gets a Bath* by Nick Bruel

*The Clockwork Three* by Matthew J. Kirby

*I Survived the Sinking of the Titanic, 1912* by Lauren Tarshis

*The Junkyard Wonders* by Patricia Polacco

*Suddenly Supernatural: School Spirit* by Elizabeth Cody Kimmel

*Stolen Children* by Peg Kehret

## **INTERMEDIATE CATEGORY**

*Confetti Girl* by Diana López

*Gone* by Michael Grant

*Malice* by Chris Wooding

*Ninth Ward* by Jewell Parker Rhodes

*Savvy* by Ingrid Law

*Skeleton Creek* by Patrick Carman

## **YOUNG ADULT CATEGORY**

*Clockwork Angel (The Infernal Devices, Book 1)* by Cassandra Clare

*The Help* by Kathryn Stockett

*The Last Song* by Nicholas Sparks

*Pop* by Gordon Korman

*Secret Story of Sonja Rodriguez* by Alan Lawrence Sitomer

*The Chronicles of Vladimir Todd: Ninth Grade Slays #2* by Heather Brewer

**Create your own crossword puzzles based on Nevada Young Readers Award books.** Generate a list of 10 to 20 words and clues; then create your own puzzle using *Eclipse Crossword*, a free puzzle software that can be downloaded from <http://www.eclipsecrossword.com/> Or use Discovery Education's Puzzlemaker Online at <http://puzzlemaker.discoveryeducation.com/> .