

Creating a Culture of Reading in High School

Student Book Clubs Work

A Practical "How to" Workshop
for Teacher-librarians and English Teachers



Bonnie McComb
Teacher-Librarian, Parkland Secondary
bmccomb@sd63.bc.ca

Joan Saunders
English Teacher, SIDES
jsaunders@sd63.bc.ca

Introduction:

For over a decade, a core group of English teachers and the teacher-librarian at Parkland Secondary have fostered the love of reading through implementing book clubs in their classes.

Each year, we add new or recently published books to our book club sets. We often add books that teachers have loved in their own book clubs or that students recommend. The result has been an astonishing increase in our library circulation as some books become "viral" and students hear about and want to read what their friends are reading. There is nothing more exciting than seeing a class of students rush to sign up for certain books or offer to buy their own books if we don't have enough copies.

Book clubs are not for everyone. It requires giving up a certain amount of control and believing in the process. This How-To Guide is an amalgamation of a variety of strategies from many years of fine tuning and experimenting.

BIOS:

Bonnie McComb has been the teacher-librarian at Parkland for over 20 years. She loves turning non-readers into readers and promoting reading. Her own book club is one of the highlights of her life. She would like to thank Saanich English teachers for their willingness to experiment, collaborate, and share in our book club journey.

Joan Saunders has taught Acting, English, Literature 12, Musical Theatre, Journalism, and Writing. She has successfully integrated book clubs into all her English classes for many years. Depending upon the students in her class, she provides more or less structure and scaffolding. She belongs to her own book club and is a voracious reader. She recently became a teacher at South Island Distance Education.

What Are Book Clubs?

(aka Literature Circles)

...literature circles are a form of independent reading, structured as collaborative small groups, and guided by reader response principles in light of current comprehension research.
(Daniels, 2002, p. 38)

Harvey Daniels, one of the early implementers and influential proponents of literature circles, believes an authentic literature circle will manifest most of these 11 key features:

1. Students *choose* their own reading materials
2. *Small temporary groups* are formed, based on book choice
3. Different groups read *different books*
4. Groups meet on a *regular, predictable schedule* to discuss their reading
5. Kids use written or drawn *notes* to guide both their reading and discussion
6. Discussion *topics come from the students*
7. Group meetings aim to be *open, natural conversations about books*, so personal connections, digressions, and open-ended questions are welcome
8. The teacher serves as a *facilitator*, not a group member or instructor
9. Evaluation is by *teacher observation and student self-evaluation*
10. A spirit of *playfulness and fun* pervades the room
11. When books are finished, *readers share with their classmates*, and then *new groups form* around new reading choices (2002 18).

Why DO Book Clubs in High School?

A Teaching Perspective

by Joan Saunders

1. Book clubs are an excellent teaching and literacy strategy
2. Book clubs are fun. Students love them!
3. Book clubs give students choice:
 - a. Choice of the book to read
 - b. Choice of book club style
 - c. Choice of what to talk about in the book club meeting
 - d. Choice in what to share with the class about their book
4. Book clubs meet individual student reading needs. In a class of 30, not everyone wants to read or enjoys the same book. With book clubs, students can join up with other with similar tastes.
5. Book clubs introduce students to a range of discussions topics. For example, World War II or II, Stockholm Syndrome, schizophrenia, social problems, mountain climbing.
6. Book clubs can be adapted to a teacher's teaching style or the type of class. Some classes need more structure; some students are mature enough to have more freedom.
7. Book clubs are easy to implement. The key to success is a good book the student wants to read.
8. Book clubs introduce students to at least 6 or 7 good books by the end of the unit, not just one that has been over-analysed *ad nauseum*. This has had a huge impact on increasing reading because students often come in to the library to check out the books they have heard about in class or make a list for the summer.

Book clubs were endorsed by the National Council of Teachers of English (1996) and identified as one of the best classroom practices in the teaching of reading and writing.

How TLs Can Initiate and Support Book Clubs:

What do I do? How Do I Get Started? What comes first?

1. Start small. Remember that significant change takes 3 to 5 years.
2. Provide in-service. Host a mini-workshop at an English faculty meeting (Daniels' book provides two step-by-step examples at the back for teachers and parents).
3. Ask if someone is willing to experiment with you. Collaborate with teachers who are open to the idea. Find teachers who are in their own book clubs. Book clubs just make good sense to them. It just takes one to start.
4. Initiate the purchasing of book clubs sets. Figure out how book clubs can support the curriculum and teachers in your school. For example, if a teacher does a genres unit, suggest purchasing a variety of titles to support one of the genres. If students read a core novel in the curriculum, suggest book club sets that connect thematically. Suggest to social studies teachers that they encourage students to read one historical novel related to their course then purchase titles with a range of reading levels.
5. Offer to do a book talk for one English class then buy the books the students choose to read as a book club. This is a very powerful thing to do because students get very excited about having input and choosing books. When books are purchased for them, they feel as though their opinions matter and they feel a deep ownership of their choice.
6. Host a professional book club using Harvey Daniels' *Literature Circles: Voice and Choice in Book Clubs & Reading Groups* or *Mini Lessons for Literature Circles*.
7. Start a student book club as a co-curricular activity at lunch time. Serve tea and cookies.
8. Keep up with new and award winning fiction. Students and teachers who love to read will be delighted when you recommend titles to them. Teachers then promote these titles to students.

Some Challenges and Solutions

Challenge:

The idea of giving up a single text and using book clubs can be quite intimidating and scary at first. It means that teachers need to give up the role of literature expert and using one text to giving students autonomy to use multiple texts with multiple meaning. It means teachers have to give up control and facilitate a student-centred classroom.

Solutions:

Teachers who are in their own book clubs often find it easier to try book clubs because they have experienced rich conversations themselves. Teachers need to integrate book clubs into their classroom in their own way to fit their own teaching style but it really helps if they have a book club workshop or a mentor to guide them. Our English teachers share their handouts for book clubs with new teachers who then adapt them.

Challenge:

Some classes have challenging personality combinations and students who hate reading or won't do work.

Solutions:

Even the most experienced teachers sometimes have groups that don't work or lessons that are less than successful. This is the nature of teaching. Like any teaching strategy, teachers need to give it a try and not get discouraged by some of the bumps along the way.

Teachers should start small. They can try the strategy with poems or short stories first. Harvey Daniels books both have excellent chapters on troubleshooting things such as what do I do if the student comes unprepared, what I do if students finish at different time, etc. etc.

When students get to read something they choose themselves and have an opportunity to read and discuss it with their peers in an open conversation, many students who say they hate reading become engaged and enthusiastic. Choice is a powerful motivator.

Example of How One English 12 Teacher¹

Organizes Her Book Clubs

Overview and Schedule:

Attached is the schedule for the next 4 weeks. We will be working on three separate but connected units: book clubs, poetry, and essay writing.

You will have a choice of a number of books and will be put into a group depending on the top three books that you choose. You are guaranteed to be in a club for one of your top three choices. The book club will then decide on your reading schedule for each of the meeting days.

Your book club will also keep a file folder with the information recorded from each of your in-class meetings, including attendance and notes taken on the discussion. Marks will be given to your group for each of your meetings on the quality and clarity of the notes. Each session will be marked out of 6 for a total of 30 marks.

Book club discussions will not be for the entire class as scheduled but for part of the class (30 minutes) as we will be studying poetry as well.

The final two book club meetings will be to plan your presentations on your book to the class. Criteria for this will be given separately.

Semester System: Daily 80 minute classes; 15 minutes silent reading per

day

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
April 24	25 Get books Set deadlines	26	27	28 Meeting 1
May 1	2 Meeting 2	3	4	5 Meeting 3
8	9 Meeting 4	10	11	12 Final meeting Book is read
15	16	17	18 Time to work on presentations	19 Time to work on presentations
22 Pro-D Day	23	24 Book Club Presentations	25 Book Club Presentations	26 Book Club Presentations

1

Joan Saunders has used and shared the following student handouts with her colleagues and her students.

LITERATURE CIRCLES/BOOK CLUBS

OVERVIEW:

You will have a choice of a number of books and will be put into a group depending upon the top three books that you choose. You are guaranteed to be in a club for one of your top choices. You group will then decide on your reading schedule for each of the meeting days. In your groups, you will be responsible for setting deadlines, coming to class prepared for a discussion and compiling a portfolio of your discussions and impressions of the book:

Your book club meeting dates are:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Presentations will be on:

_____	_____
-------	-------

For each book club meeting, you must come prepared with

- The agreed upon chapters/pages read
- Ideas on what you liked/disliked/or are not sure about to help bring focus to your discussions and clear up any questions you have
- The book itself so you can find passages/information discussed
- If you have a comment/passage you would like to look at or discuss, mark the page with a post-it note

Meeting Portfolio/Folder:

At each meeting you will be compiling the ideas and comments from your group. One person should act as a recorder of the comments made and the main topics of discussion. Attendance will be taken and recorded at each meeting by the group. Portfolios must stay in the classroom. Marks will be given to your group for each of your meetings on the quality and clarity of the notes. Each session will be marked out of 6.

At the end of each meeting, your group will write down three things about your meeting that either went well or that need to be worked on. You will then adopt a specific goal for improvement for your next discussion (e.g. "Ask more questions" or "Prove it with the book" or "We need to listen to each other better" or "We need to focus more on ...")

Group Presentation:

Your final project will be to present the book to the class in a form chosen by your group. The presentations should be approximately 15-20 minutes long.

BOOK CLUB PRESENTATIONS

Your final project will be to present the main ideas about the book to the class in a form chosen by your group. The presentations should be approximately 15-20 minutes long.

Some ideas for presenting your book-

- Panel discussion
- Artwork interpreting the book
- An advertising campaign for the book
- Interviews with characters from the book
- Fictionalized interview with the author
- Pros and cons of the book
- Any other way of presenting the themes or the characters

You want to think about-

- Would we recommend this to others in the class to read? Why or why not?
- What did we like about the book? Didn't like?
- How do we get this across to the class?
- How can we evoke the moods, themes, important information, or events of the book?
- Some people in presentations have brought in food, music, read parts of the book, shown video clips, etc.)

Marking Criteria:

- Well-organized, spoke clearly, clear introduction and conclusion
- Clearly focussed on the themes and important information from the book
- Creative and informative; kept class interested
- Each group member was involved and knew his/her role

Book Club Presentation Evaluation

Names of Group Member: _____

Book being presented: _____

Criteria/Comments

Well organized, clear introduction and conclusion, good speaking skills /6

Clearly focussed on the themes and important information from the book /6

Creative and informative; kept class interested /6

Each group member was involved and knew his/her role /6

Book Club Presentation Evaluation: 2

Names of Group Member: _____

Book being presented: _____

Criteria/Comments

Introduction and conclusion clearly organized /6

Storyline/main themes and ideas presented well /6

Recommendations made? For whom? Why or why not? /6

Overall organization of presentation
Roles set out and members what who is doing what when. /6

Other comments:

Total: /24

**BOOK CLUB/LITERATURE CIRCLES
TOP THREE BOOK CHOICES**

Please fill out and give to me today. You will be guaranteed to have one of your top three, depending upon the other students' choices. Book clubs will have 4-5 students in each depending upon the books chosen.

NAME: _____

TITLE: 1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

**BOOK CLUB/LITERATURE CIRCLES
TOP THREE BOOK CHOICES**

Please fill out and give to me today. You will be guaranteed to have one of your top three, depending upon the other students' choices. Book clubs will have 4-5 students in each depending upon the books chosen.

NAME: _____

TITLE: 1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

**BOOK CLUB/LITERATURE CIRCLES
TOP THREE BOOK CHOICES**

Please fill out and give to me today. You will be guaranteed to have one of your top three, depending upon the other students' choices. Book clubs will have 4-5 students in each depending upon the books chosen.

NAME: _____

TITLE: 1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Book Club Fair

On _____, the class will be holding a Book Club Fair. Your groups will set up a display that presents your group's book in such a way that allows others to capture the essence of the story. Your display should include the following elements:

- Strong visuals (poster, models, art, signs, symbols, items, artefact)
- Your book on display
- Food/drink to share (if it is related to your book...extra brownie* points...ha!)
- Quotes that highlight the essence of your book
- Costumes (come in character)
- Demonstrations of elements of your book

During the Fair, we will have free time to walk around the room and peruse your group's display. There will also be an opportunity for each group to formally present its book and display as an introduction to the Book Club Fair.

Assessment: 24 marks

- Creativity/Effort: Is the display engaging and interesting?
- Thoroughness and content: How well do you know and display your material?
- Visuals: Did you include some form of visual information?
- Organization: Was the display well organized with equal participation in an orderly and systematic way?

*pun intended

Alternative Texts: Beyond the Everyday

For the next two weeks, we will be working on writing and analysis by looking again at poetry, prompts, and short stories as we lead up to the final exam. However, as part of the unit, we will also be reading, in small groups, your choice of alternative texts. These include graphic novels, as well as prose poem novels and picture books.

We will booktalk each book and give you a chance to pick the one you would prefer. Once your group has selected a book and signed it out, you have only two deadlines to read the text. You should be half finished the book by Wednesday, June 8th, and finished the following Tuesday, June 14th. Presentations on the main themes/elements of the text will be on Thursday and Friday, June 16-17. You will have some time in class on the 14th and 15th but definitely not the whole class.

Here is the catch! For your presentations, you have to do something 'alternative'...no powerpoints, nothing that you would normally do. Think beyond the regular. What about a puppet show, a talk show, an interpretive dance, an advertisement, a poetry reading with props, a game? Be creative.

Criteria:

- Creativity
- Clear introduction and conclusion
- Themes/main ideas clearly presented
- Each person has a role
- Organized
- How the form of the alternative text contributes to or tells the story is well explained

Monthly Book Club Approach (Semester System)

Schedule based on-

- Semester system: 90 minute classes from February to June
- Students read silently for the first 15-20 minutes of every class
- Students meet every Friday for book clubs
- Students select a new book and a new group each month
- Students complete 4 book clubs in each year level

Book Club Organization:

1. Students form groups of 4 to 6 based on a book they want to read.
2. Each month students select a new book and a new group of students
3. Fridays are devoted to book club:
 - First Friday: Choose book and group
 - Second Friday: Discuss the book
 - Third Friday: Discuss book and plan presentation
 - Fourth Friday: Present the book to the class.
4. Each month will focus on a different theme so students can select the same book as a previous group but focus on a different theme:

February:	Characters
March:	Plot
April:	Conflict
May:	Theme

Presentations:

- Presentations should be 10 minutes long. How you present your book is up to you
- Include a brief synopsis of the book
- Discuss the character, plot, conflict, or theme
- Include a creative activity or product: poster, debate, interview with characters, dramatization, etc.
- Rate the book for the rest of the class

Assessment:

At the end of each Friday (excluding Presentation days) your group will be responsible for handing in a brief outline of your groups' activities that day. Please include which members were present, what you talked about, and what decisions you made.

Book Club for ESL Students

Overview:

Over the next few weeks you will be working in partners or small groups, reading and exploring a novel of your choice, and using a book club format for discussion. Your book club should consist of between 2 to 4 students. You will be responsible for 3 entries in your response journal every Friday, a one page record of your notes from your Friday discussion group, and a group classroom presentation about the book.

Book Club Discussions

You will have 3 scheduled meetings in class to discuss your book. As a group, you decide how much you will read for each meeting, Individually, you are responsible for having your reading done and taking 3 questions, observations, or ideas to the meeting. At the end of each meeting, you group must submit at least one page of notes that record the main ideas in the meeting. (10 marks each week)

Reading Response Journal

You are responsible for completing response journal entries each week in your journal from the list of Journal Ideas. (15 marks each week)

Class Presentations

When you finish the book, share your reading experience with the class. As a group, you decide how best to present the material. Give your audience something of value. The presentation should include

- An introduction to the characters and plot (not the whole story)
- Discussion about the aspect of the book you most enjoyed
- An excerpt from the book
- Discussion about some of the big ideas about life or issues in the book or as an extension to the book.
- A visual display of some kind (poster, storyboard, object, etc.) It's up to your group! Be creative! (25 marks)

DUE DATES:

In possession of the book

First Friday meeting

1st Journal entry due
one page group notes

Second Friday meeting

2nd Journal entry due
one page group notes

Third Friday meeting

3rd Journal entry due
one page group notes

Presentations

Reading Response to Prepare for Your Discussion: Use Sparingly as Scaffolding When First Introducing to Students

Title: _____

Name: _____

Some connections I made...

Find connections between the book and you and/or between the book and the wider world. This means connecting the reading to your own past experiences, school or community, to stories in the news, to similar events at other times and places, to other people or problems that you are reminded of. You may also see connections between this book and other texts or movies on the same topic or by the same author.

A few questions I had...

Write down a few questions that you have about what you have read. What were you wondering about while you were reading? Did you have questions about what was happening? What a word meant? What a character did? What was going to happen next? Why the author used a certain style? Or what the whole thing meant? Just try to notice what you are wondering while you read and jot down some of those questions either along the way or after you're finished.

A line or passage I liked and why...

Locate a few special sections or quotations in the text for your group to talk over. The idea is to help people go back to some especially interesting, powerful, funny, puzzling, or important sections of the reading and think about them more carefully. As you decide which passages or paragraphs are worth going back to, make a note why you picked each one. Then jot down some plans for how they should be shared. You can read passages aloud yourself, ask someone else to read them, or have people read them silently and then discuss.

A sketch, picture, diagram, chart....

Good readers make pictures in their minds as they read. Draw some kind of picture related to the reading you have just done. It can be a sketch, cartoon, diagram, flowchart, or stick-figure scene. You can draw a picture of something that happened in your book, or something the reading reminded you of, or a picture that conveys any idea or feeling you got from the reading.

Adapted from Harvey Daniels (2002). *Literature Circles: Voice and Choice in Book Clubs & Reading Groups*.
Portland: Stenhouse.

Reading Response

Name: _____

Date: _____

Book Title: _____

From page _____ to _____

Write or draw your response

CONNECTOR: Some connections I made...

QUESTIONER: A few questions I had....

LITERARY LUMINARY: A line or passage I liked and why...

ILLUSTRATOR: A sketch, picture, diagram, chart....

Parkland Book Club Fiction: A Selection

Adams, Douglas	Hitchhiker's guide to the galaxy
Adiga, Aravind	The White Tiger
Anderson, Laurie Halse	Speak
Anderson, Laurie Halse	Wintergirls Note: Disturbing content for some students
Asimov, Isaac	I, Robot
Atwood, Margaret	Handmaid's Tale
Atwood, Margaret	Cat's Eye
Austen, Jane	Pride and Prejudice
Bank, Melissa	Girls' Guide to Hunting and Fishing
Bauer, Joan	Rules for the Road
Birdsell, Sandra	Russlander
Black, Sandra	Tithe: A Modern Faerie Tale
Blundell, Judy	What I Saw and How I Lied
Bowering, Marilyn	To All Appearances a Lady
Boyden, Joseph	Three Day Road
Bradbury, Ray	Fahrenheit 451
Bronte, Charlotte	Jane Eyre
Bronte, Emily	Wuthering Heights
Brooks, Geraldine	Year of Wonders: A Novel of the Plague
Bruchac, Joseph	Code Talker
Buck, Pearl S	The Good Earth
Burgess, Anthony	A Clockwork Orange
Card, Orson Scott	Ender's game
Cassidy, Anne	Looking for JJ
Chbosky, Stephen	Perks of Being a Wallflower
Clare, Cassandra	City of Bones
Cleave, Chris	Little Bea
Collins, Suzanne	The Hunger Games, Catching Fire, and Mockingjay
Conrad, Joseph	Heart of Darkness
Crichton, Michael	Next
Crichton, Michael	Airframe
Crutcher, Chris	Whale Talk
Crutcher, Chris	Staying Fat for Sarah Byrnes
Culleton, Beatrice	In Search of April Raintree
De Goldi, Kate	10 pm Question (New Zealand author; similar to Curious Incident)
De Rosnay, Tatiana	Sarah's Key
DeWitt, Patrick	The Sisters Brothers
Diamant, Anita	The Red Tent
Dickens, Charles	Great Expectations
Doctorow, Cory	Little Brother (good companion to Orwell's 1984)
Donahue, Emma	Room
Doyle, Arthur Conan	The Hound of the Baskervilles
Du Maurier, Daphne	Rebecca
Eddings, David	Pawn of Prophecy: Book One
Edugyan, Esi	Half Blood Blues
Edwards, Kim	Memory Keeper's Daughter
Esquivel, Laura	Like Water for Chocolate

Farmer, Nancy	The House of the Scorpion
Faulks, Sebastian	Charlotte Gray
Faulks, Sebastian	Birdsong
Fleishman, Paul	Whirligig
Follett, Ken	Eye of the Needle
Forman, Gayle	If I stay
Fowler, Karen Joy	The Jane Austen Bookclub
Frazier, Charles	Cold Mountain
Gaarder, Jostein	Sophie's World
Galloway, Steven	The Cellist of Sarajevo
Godfrey, Rebecca	Torn Skirt
Golden, Arthur	Memoirs of a Geisha
Gowda, Shilpi Somaya	Secret Daughter
Gruen, Sara	Water for Elephants
Gulland, Sandra	Many Lives and Secret Sorrows of Josephine B.
Hale, Shannon	Book of a Thousand Days
Hale, Shannon	The Goose Girl
Harris, Joanne	Blackberry Wine
Heinlein, Robert	Starship Troopers
Heller, Joseph	Catch-22
Highway, Tomson	Kiss of the Fur Queen
Hill, Lawrence	Book of Negroes
Holubitsky, Katherine	Tweaked
Hornby, Nick	High Fidelity
Hosseini, Khaled	The Kite Runner
Hosseini, Khaled	A Thousand Splendid Suns
HaworthAttard, Barbara	Theories of Relativity
Hrdlitschka, Shelley	Dancing Naked
Hrdlitschka, Shelley	Sister Wife
Hughes, Dean	Soldier Boys
Jones, Lloyd	Mr. Pip
Kingsolver, Barbara	The Prodigal Summer
Kingsolver, Barbara	The Poisonwood Bible
Kinsella, Sophie	The Undomestic Goddess
Kogawa, Joy	Obasan
Lamb, Wally	She's Come Undone
Lamb, Wally	I Know This Much is True
Lawson, Mary	Crow Lake
MacDonald, Ann-Marie	The Way the Crow Flies
Martel, Yann	Life of Pi
McCaffrey, Kate	In Ecstasy
McCaffrey, Kate	Destroying Avalon
McCall Smith, Alexander	The No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency
McCarthy, Cormac	All the Pretty Horses
McCarthy, Cormac	No Country for Old Men
Mead, Alice	Year of No Rain
Moggach, Deborah	Tulip Fever
Morgenstern, Erin	The Night Circus
Muchamore, Robert	The Escape

Myers, Walter Dean	Monster
Niffenegger, Audrey	The Time Traveller's Wife
Niffenegger, Audrey	Her Fearful Symmetry
Nolan, Han	Born Blue
Nolan, Han	If I Should Die Before I Wake
O'Neill, Heather	Lullabies for Little Criminals
Oppel, Kenneth	This Dark Endeavour: The Apprenticeship of Victor Frankenstein
Oppel, Kenneth	Skybreaker
Palahniuk, Chuck	Fight Club
Park, Linda Sue	When My Name Was Keoko
Patchett, Ann	Bel Canto
Pfeffer, Susan Beth	Life as We Knew It
Picoult, Jodi	Nineteen Minutes
Picoult, Jodi	My Sister's Keeper
Plath, Sylvia	Bell Jar
Proulx, E. Annie	The Shipping News
Pullman, Philip	The Golden Compass
Pullinger, Kate	The Mistress of Nothing
Quinn, Daniel	Ishmael
Ravel, Edeet	The Saver
Rees, Celia	The Sorceress (sequel)
Rees, Celia	Witch Child
Riordan, Rick	The Lost Hero
Riordan, Rick	The Lightning Thief
Ruiz Zafon, Carlos	The Shadow of the Wind
Schlink, Bernhard	The Reader
Sebold, Alice	The Lovely Bones
Setterfield, Diane	Thirteenth Tale
Shan, Darren	Cirque du Freak (good for reluctant readers)
Shelley, Mary	Frankenstein
Sherman, Alexie	The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian (Good for BCFN)
Stockett, Kathryn	The Help
Soueif, Ahdaf	The Map of Love
Vonnegut, Kurt	Breakfast of Champions
Vonnegut, Kurt	Slaughterhouse-five
Westerfeld, Scott	Peeps
Whyte, Jack	The Skystone
Wilson, Jack	And in the morning
Wilson, Jack	Flames in the Morning
Wilson, Jack	Four Steps to Death
Wittlinger, Ellen	Hard Love
Wright, Ronald	A Scientific Romance
Yolen, Jane	Devil's Arithmetic
Zusak, Markus	The Book Thief

NOTE: This list is an example of the variety. Some books are perennial favourites; others date; and some never ever get chosen. Choose books that reflect the tastes of your students and teachers.

Parkland Book Club Nonfiction: A Selection

Ambrose, Stephen	Band of Brothers	WWI infantry; esprit de corps
Armstrong, Lance	It's Not about the Bike: My Journey Back to Life	Surviving cancer and winning
Bauby Jean-Dominique	The Diving Bell and the Butterfly	Paralyzed man writes with flicker of his eyelid
Beah, Ishmael	Long Way Gone: Memoirs of a Boy Soldier	Child soldiers; redemption
Berton, Pierre	Vimy	WW I
Blatchford, Christie	Fifteen Days	True stories from Afghanistan
Bowden, Mark	Black Hawk Down	Warfare/peacekeeping Somalia
Brown, Rachel Manija	All the Fishes Come Home to Roost	Biography growing up in an ashram
Brunt, Stephen	Gretzky's Tears:	Hockey, Canada, and the Day Everything Changed
Capote, Truman	In Cold Blood	True crime;
De Vries, Maggie	Missing Sarah	Murdered sister; prostitution
Doidge, Norman	The Brain that Changes Itself	Brain plasticity
Ferguson, Will and Ian	How to Be a Canadian	Satirical view of Canada
Fleury, Theo	Playing with Fire	Hockey biography
Foer, Joshua	Moonwalking with Einstein	How to improve memory
Frank, Anne	Anne Frank: Diary of a Young Girl	Holocaust
Fuller, Alexandra	Don't Let's Go the the Dogs Tonight	Biography growing up in Africa
Fuller, Alexandra	The Legend of Colton H. Bryant	Wyoming cowboy
Gilmour, David	The Film Club	Father son biography
Gladwell, Malcolm	Blink	Intuition
Gladwell, Malcolm	The Tipping Point	Sociology; Influencing others
Gladwell, Malcolm	Outliers: The Story of Success	
Godfrey, Rebecca	Under the Bridge	Death of Reena Virk; teen violence
Greene, Melissa	Last Man Out	Springhill Mine Disaster, N.S.
Harrer, Heinrich	Seven Years in Tibet	Mountaineering
Hillenbrand, Laura	Unbroken: A WWII Story of Survival, Resilience, and Redemption	A young man's journey into extremities
Jacobs, A. J.	The Year of Living Biblically	Author follows biblical rules
Jacobs, A.J.	The Know-It-All	Author reads whole encyclopedia
Juby, Susan	Nice Recovery	Overcoming alcoholism
Krakauer, Jon	Under the Banner of Heaven: A Story of Violent Faith	Mormon Fundamentalism; polygamy
Lindstrom, Martin	Buy-ology	Marketing
McCourt, Frank	Angela's Ashes	Poverty; family relationships
McDougall, Christopher	Born to Run: A Hidden Tribe, Superathletes, and the Greatest Race the World Has Never Seen	Top ultra-runners race against the Tarahumara people in Copper Canyon
McGregor, Ewan and Charley Boorman	Long Way Round: Chasing Shadows across the World	Adventure
Mortenson, Greg	Three Cups of Tea	One man changes the world
Myers, Walter Dean	The Greatest: Muhammad Ali	Boxing; Biography
Patchett, Ann	Truth & Beauty: A Friendship	Memoir of Lucy Grealy
Pink, Daniel	A Whole New Mind: Why Right Brainers Will Rule the Future	Six fundamentally human abilities essential for professional success

Rawicz, Slavomir	The Long Walk: The True Story of a Trek to Freedom	Rawicz and his companions cross an entire continent by foot
Roach, Mary	Stiff: Curious Lives of Human Cadavers	Macabre humour about uses of cadavers for research
Robinson, John	Look Me in the Eye: My Life with Aspergers	Memoir
Sacks, Oliver	Uncle Tungsten: Memories of a Chemical Boyhood	Memoir
Saviano, Roberto	Gomorrah	Organized crime in Naples
Sheff, Nic	Tweak	Cocaine addiction (mature)
Simpson, Joe	Touching the Void	Mountain climbers
Spiegelman, Art	Maus: A Survivor's Tale	Holocaust
Sullivan, Robert	Rats: History and Habitat of the City's Most Unwanted Inhabitants	Humorous and squeamish
Tammet, Daniel	Born on a Blue Day: A Memoir	Biography (aspergers)
Thompson, Hunter S.	Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas	Drugs; (Warning: Mature)
Walls, Jeannette	The Glass Castle	Poverty; family relationships
Weisman, Alan	The World without Us	How long would it take to erase all signs of human life
Wiesel, Elie	Night	Holocaust; biography
Wright, Ronald	A Short History of Progress	Human patterns of progress and disaster
Ye, Ting-xing	My Name is Number 4	Biography (Chinese girl)

Parkland Book Clubs: Alternative Texts

Applegate, Katherine	Home of the Brave	Prose Poem
Bouchard, Herve	Harvey: How I Became Invisible	Graphic Novel (Loss of father)
Bronte, Charlotte	Eyre, Jane	Graphic Novel
Bronte, Charlotte	Jane Eyre	Graphic Novel
Brown, Chester	Louis Riel: A Comic Strip Biography	Graphic Novel
Chaltas, Thalia	Because I am Furniture	Prose Poem
Chantler, Scott	Two Generals	Graphic Novel (WWII)
Crew, Gary	Watertower	Picture book; no words, Australian
Dawson, Willow	Hyena in Petticoats	Graphic Novel (Nellie McLung)
Dicken, Charles	Great Expectations	Graphic Novel
Fairfield, Lesley	Tyranny	Graphic Novel (anorexia)
Glenn, Mel	Split Image	Prose Poem
Herrick, Steven	The Simple Gift	Prose Poem (Australian)
Hesse, Karen	Witness	Prose Poem
Hesse, Karen	Out of the Dust	Prose Poem
Hinds, Gareth	The Odyssey	Graphic Novel (excellent artist)
Hinds, Gareth	Beowulf	Graphic Novel (excellent artist)
Hopkins, Ellen	Crank	Prose Poem
Hugo, Victor	The Hunchback of Notre Dame	Graphic Novel
Hwa, Kim Dong	The Color of Earth	Graphic Novel (mature)
Kuipers, Alice	Life on the Refrigerator Door	Prose Poem
Lemire, Jeff	Essex Country	Graphic Novel (hockey; Canada Reads)
Little, Melanie	The Apprentice's Masterpiece: Story of Medieval Spain	Prose Poem
Marsden, John	The Rabbits	Picture Book
Medley, Linda	Castle Waiting	Graphic Novel (Feminist fairy tale)
Melville, Herman	Moby Dick	Graphic Novel
Phillips, Wendy	Fishtailing	Prose Poem
Porter, Pamela	The Crazy Man	Prose Poem
Roriguez, Spain	Che: A Graphic Biography	Graphic Novel
Satrapi, Marjane	Persepolis: The Story of Childhood	Graphic Novel
Sendak, Maurice	Where the Wild Things Are	Picture Book
Sfar, Joann	The Rabbi's Cat	Graphic Novel (cat narrator; mature)
Shelley, Mary	Frankenstein	Graphic Novel
Silverstein, Shel	The Giving Tree	Picture Book
Small, David	Stitches: A Memoir	Graphic Novel (so sad!)
Spiegelman, Art	Maus I and II	Graphic Novel (Holocaust)
Stoker, Bram	Dracula	Graphic Novel
Tamaki, Mariko & Jillian	Skim	Graphic Novel (mature)
Tan, Shaun	The Arrival	Graphic Novel (no words)
Tan, Shaun	Tales from Outer Suburbia	Graphic Novel
Van Allsburg, Chris	The Polar Express	Picture Book
Wiesner, David	Tuesday	Picture Book (no words)
Wolff, Virginia	True Believer	Prose Poem
Yang, Gene Luen	The Eternal Smile	Graphic Novel
Yang, Gene Luen	American Born Chinese	Graphic Novel

Yolen, Jane

The Ballad of the Pirate Queens

Picture Book

Two Best Resources:

Daniels, Harvey. *Literature Circles: Voice and Choice in Book clubs & Reading Groups*.

Markham: Pembroke, 2002.

This is an excellent guide to forming, managing, and assessing literature circles. It includes a summary of the research, four different models, teaching stories, and many practical strategies. It is important to use the 2002 edition (not the 1994 edition) because Daniels has significantly revised his position on role sheets after observing literature circles for 10 years.

Daniels, Harvey and Nancy Steineke. *Mini-Lessons for Literature Circles*. Portsmouth:

Heinemann, 2004.

If you can only buy one book, buy this one. Designed for busy teachers, it has 45 mini- lessons with many practical tips about how to make things work and avoid common problems. There are word-by-word instructions for students, reproducible forms, and recommended reading lists.