

# ***Achieving a Balanced Reading/Writing Program***

## **Seminar 1 Teacher's Packet**

A KET professional development workshop for educators approved for Professional Development Training by the Kentucky Department of Education.

© Kentucky Educational Television, 1999

---

---

# ***Achieving a Balanced Reading/Writing Program***

## **Seminar 1**

---

---

### **Overview of the Series and Seminar**

**Targeted Audience:** Teachers, P-8

Starr Lewis of the Kentucky Department of Education and Muhlenberg County writing consultant Donna Vincent are featured in this three-part series on how to develop a balanced reading/writing program in primary through eighth grade. The series explores strategies such as literature circles and writing in response to reading, along with mini-lessons for teaching skills such as phonics, grammar, etc. Included in the series is extensive videotaped footage of elementary and middle school teachers and students demonstrating these strategies.

The first seminar begins with classroom footage of students reading, discussing, and responding to a piece of literature, with a particular emphasis on setting. Next, we see the same group of students collaborating on a short story in small groups. From here, the program moves to a group of students who are using an “Excitement Graph” to study plotting. Also discussed and demonstrated are writing to learn using open response questions in reading logs; discussion groups and sharing answers; role playing to learn about characterization; literary circles; and author’s studies. The children appearing in the videotaped segments include three classes of fourth-, fifth-, and sixth-graders, all students at Graham Elementary School in Muhlenberg County.

---

#### **About This Teacher Packet**

This packet includes an agenda for the program, brief biographies of the host and presenter, and specific materials related to seminar content. You’ll find more details in the table of contents on page 4.

#### **Seminar Format**

This 90-minute program was recorded in the KET distance learning studio. Any materials or information needed for participation in the seminar is provided in the videotape and/or included in the teacher packet.

## **Professional Development Credit**

**Stage of Participant Development:** Practice/Application

**The Kentucky Department of Education has approved all KET Star Channels Seminars for professional development credit if schools or districts choose to include them in their professional development plans. Districts or schools may choose to include preparation and/or follow-up time as part of professional development. For example, if a teacher participates in one 90-minute program and spends an additional 30 minutes in related activities, he or she could be awarded a total of two hours professional development credit.**

**Individual teachers who wish to use these videotapes for professional development credit should check with their school professional development chair or with their district professional development coordinator.**

**Professional development can also be used to satisfy requirements for the fifth year program. Contact your local university or the Division of Teacher Education and Certification at 502-564-4606 for more information.**

## Packet Contents

• Seminar Host and Presenter	5
• Seminar Agenda	6
• Circular Model for Integrated Learning	7
• Structuring the Readers' Workshop	8
• Dodecahedron (for elements of fiction)	9
• Excitement Graph	10
• What Kind of Character Are You Reading About, Anyway?	11
• Key Features of Literary Circles	12
• Management Strategies for Literary Circle Discussion Groups	13
• Roles for Literature Circles	16
• Open Response Questions for the Critical Reading of Fiction	19
• Acknowledgments	21

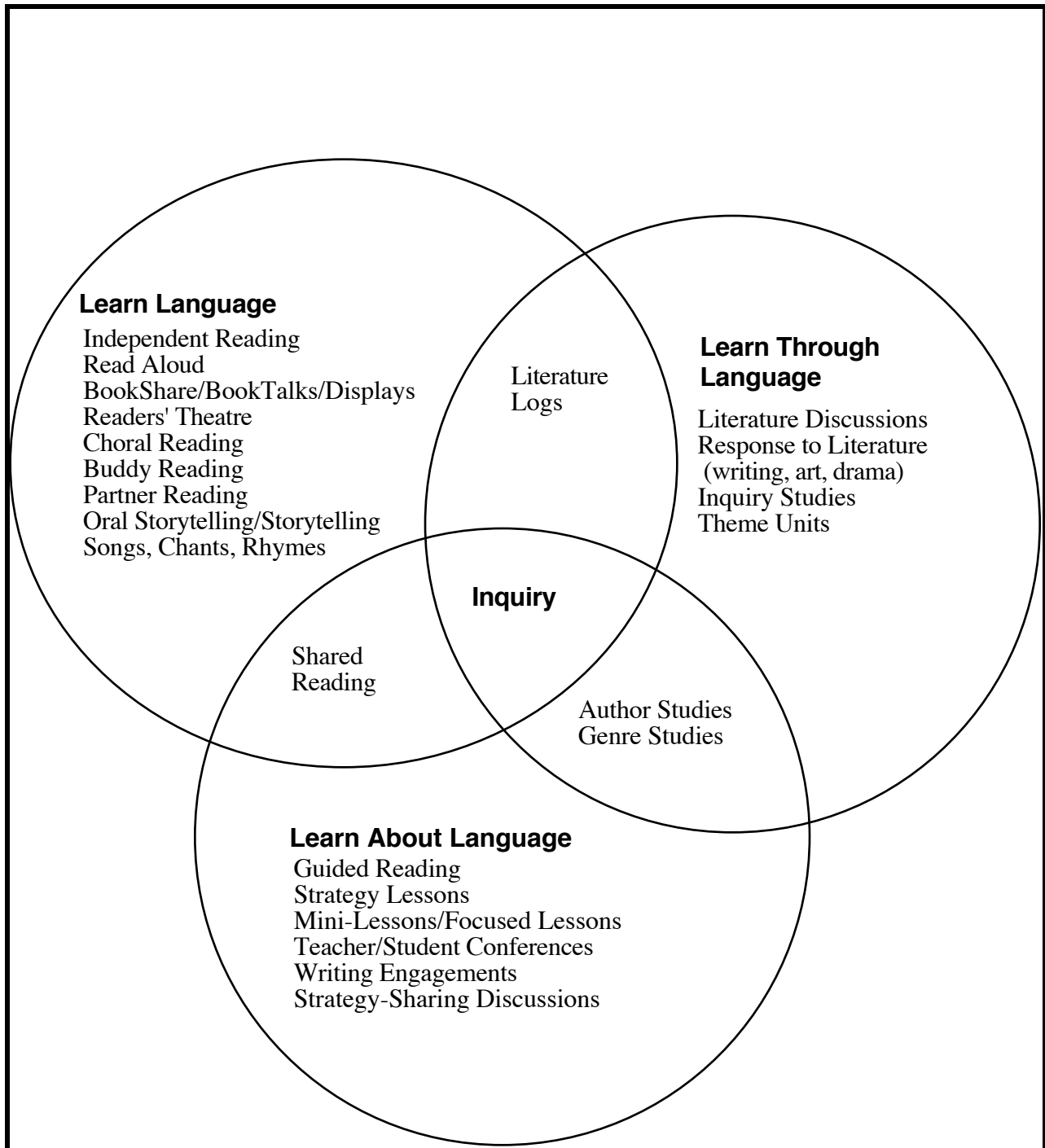
## **About the Seminar Host and Presenter**

Hosting the seminar is **Starr Lewis**, branch manager for the humanities at the Kentucky Department of Education. Among other responsibilities, Starr serves as director of the Kentucky Writing Program. She has also served as a writing portfolio consultant for the Department of Education and as a regional writing resource teacher. Starr's background includes 17 years of experience teaching high school English and psychology in Bullitt County, Kentucky. She has a degree in secondary education from the University of Kentucky and a master's in education from the University of Louisville.

Joining Starr is presenter **Donna Vincent**, district-wide writing consultant for Muhlenberg County Schools. For the past seven years, she also has served as co-director of the National Writing Project at Western Kentucky University. Before taking her job with Muhlenberg County, Donna was a statewide primary writing consultant. She has 16 years experience in elementary schools and is a KERA Fellow and a Writing Fellow. Donna has a Rank I from Western Kentucky University with a reading specialist endorsement.

# Seminar 1 Agenda

<b>Welcome and introduction</b>	Starr Lewis, Host
<b>Studying setting through reading and writing</b>	Donna Vincent, Presenter
<b>Studying characterization through writing fiction collaboratively</b>	
<b>Studying plot through an excitement graph</b>	
<b>Writing to learn via open response questions in reading logs</b>	
<b>Discussion groups</b>	
<b>Role playing to learn about characterization</b>	
<b>Setting up literary circles</b>	
<b>Author's studies</b>	
<b>Writing memoirs</b>	
<b>Concluding remarks</b>	Starr Lewis



### **Circular Model for Integrated Learning**

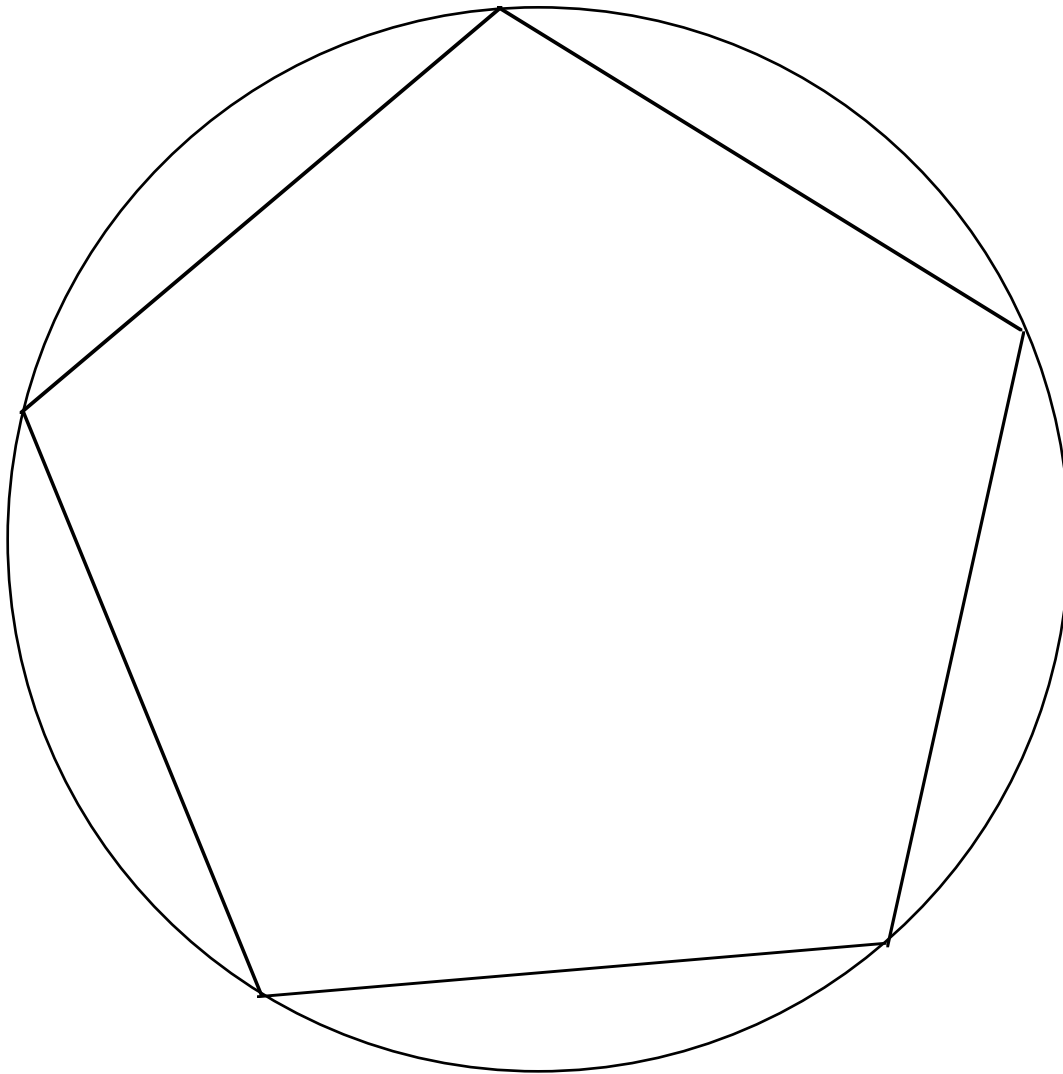
This graphic appeared in Kathy G. Short’s article “The Search for ‘Balance’ in a Literature-Rich Curriculum,” *Theory and Practice*, Volume 38, Number 3, Summer 1999. Copyright © 1999 College of Education, The Ohio State University. Reproduced with permission.

## Structuring the Readers' Workshop

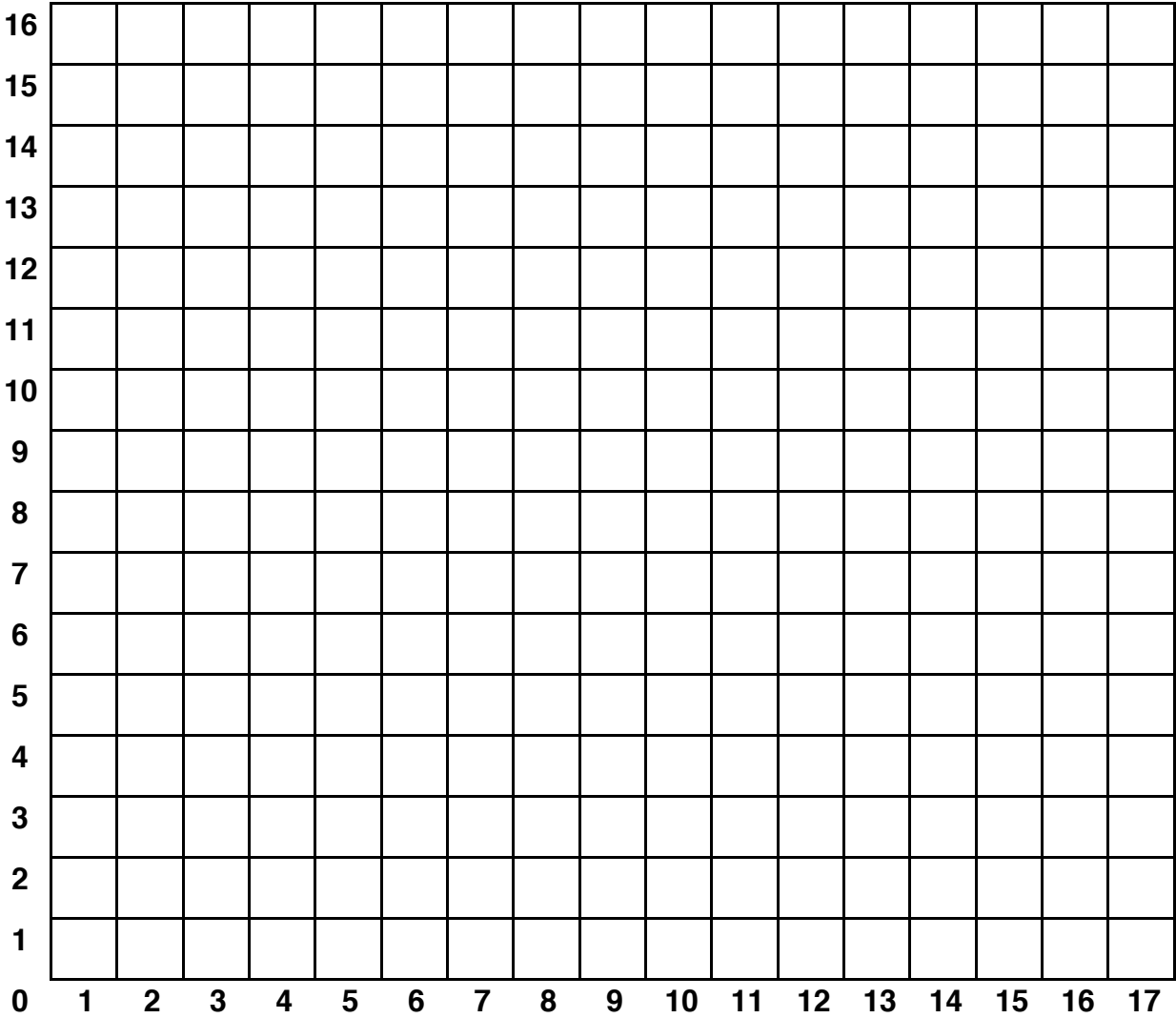
- **Time** to choose books, read, think about reading, and interact with others about what they have read.
- **Choice** about the books they read, their purpose for reading a particular book, and the strategies they use to help them comprehend.
- A sense of **responsibility** for their learning and their interactions with the teachers and fellow students.
- A classroom **structure** that allows them opportunities to work with the teacher, each other, and independently.
- A supportive **community** that fosters diversity and the development of self-confidence and self-esteem.

## **Dodecahedron: A solid figure with 12 plane faces (Use for elements of fiction.)**

**Instructions:** Give each child 12 circles. Next, design and color each one. Cut out the circles. Fold along each line. Staple the sides together and make two “bowls.” Now, staple the “bowls” together. Use for illustrating the elements of a story for a booktalk.



# Excitement Graph



Chapters 

Adapted from Templeton, *Integrating the Language Arts*

# What Kind of Character Are You Reading/Writing About, Anyway?

*Character's Name* \_\_\_\_\_ *Character's Age* \_\_\_\_\_

*Character's Weakness/Problem* \_\_\_\_\_

## Kinds of Evidence to Look For

## Evidence Found

**Dialogue** (the exact words out of the character's mouth)

---

---

---

---

**Body Language/Actions**  
(movements, mannerisms)

---

---

---

---

**Thoughts** (the exact words in the character's head)

---

---

---

---

**Physical Features/Style**  
(clothes, hair, etc.)

---

---

---

---

**Reactions of Others** (What they said, thought, did)

---

---

---

---

**Extremely** \_\_\_\_\_ **|-----|-----|** **Not** \_\_\_\_\_ **at all**  
(problem goes here) (problem goes here)

Place an X on the continuum to indicate the degree of evidence of the problem.

Donna Vincent  
Writing Consultant  
Muhlenberg County Schools  
dvincent@mberg.k12.ky.us

# Key Features of Literature Circles

Harvey Daniels, *Literature Circles: Voice and Choice in a Student-Centered Classroom*

- Students **choose** their own reading materials.
- **Small, temporary groups** are formed, based on book choice.
- Different groups read **different** books.
- Groups meet on a **regular, predictable schedule** to discuss their reading.
- Kids use written or drawn **notes** to guide both their reading and discussion.
- Discussion **topics come from students**.
- Group meetings aim to be **open, natural conversations about books**, so personal connections, digressions, and open-ended questions are welcome.
- In newly forming groups, students play a rotation assortment of task **roles**.
- The teacher serves as a **facilitator**, not a group member or instructor.
- Evaluation is by **teacher observation and student self-assessment**.
- A spirit of **playfulness and fun** pervades the room.
- When books are finished, **readers share with their classmates**, and then **new groups form** around reading choices.

# Management Strategies for Literature Circle Discussion Groups

If you're looking for ways to ensure that the time spent in literature circle discussion groups is productive, try some of the following strategies:

- **Flag It!**—Have students use Post-Its to flag what they want to remember when they get into groups. They can write themselves notes on the Post-Its. You might give them something to look for as they read—characterization, setting clues, action, transitions, etc.
- **Spinning a Yarn**—When the groups meet, to make them and you aware of the amount of discussing individuals are doing (or not doing), use a ball of yarn and some tape. Have the first speaker tape the end of the yarn to the table. (The yarn is stretched and taped without cutting.) Each time a person speaks, the ball of yarn and tape are passed to her so that she can unroll a bit and tape it to the table in front of her. People can talk more than once, but the yarn comes back to the speaker for taping every time. When the discussion is finished, the pattern on the table will show who talked and who didn't. It will also make those who dominate conversations aware of their roles.
- **A Penny for Your Thoughts**—Each person in the group takes a penny. Before a person can talk, he places his penny in the center of the table. He cannot speak again until all pennies are “spent.” At that point, picking up a penny when speaking reverses the process.
- **Reading Log Open-Ended Questions**—Provide each student with a reading log. These can be notebooks, folders with blank pages stapled inside, etc. Attach the enclosed list of open response questions for the critical reading of fiction. You or the students can select questions to answer in writing and to discuss in groups.
- **Assign Roles**—Using the enclosed role sheets or designing your own, assign roles for each group member to assume during reading and discussing.
- **Teacher at the Helm**—Join the groups as the discussion director when you're getting started.
- **Index Cards**—Provide each group with a set of index cards numbered one to 10. Place cards on the table with the “10” on top. As long as the group remains on task, each member received 10 points (bonus or group work points). As you circulate among the groups, if any member of the group is off task, one point is lost. Removing the top card indicates this. At the end of the activity, each group member receives the number of points showing at their table.
- **Tape Recording Sessions**—Place a tape recorder with each group to document that the time spent is productive.

- **Music**—Allow students to bring in cassette tapes of music of their choice (censor as needed). During group work, play the music at a volume set by you. If the groups get too noisy, turn the volume down a notch. The groups will have to get quieter to hear the music.
- **Listen-Think-Pair-Share**—Students listen to a question, thought, or idea. They are given time to think about their response. Students then share their idea with a person near them. Finally, students are asked to share their responses with the group.
- **Marathon Writing**—Teacher poses a question. All students respond to the question in writing. After a given time, students pass papers clockwise to the next person in the group. Students read what has been written and add new information. This process continues until students get their original papers back. The group then discusses and decides which paper will be shared.
- **Round Robin**—Students use this process to respond to a question, situation, or problem. First person responds with one answer, then each student has the opportunity to add to the answer, going clockwise around the group. Students may pass, if desired.
- **Circle Knowledge**—Groups of students brainstorm a given topic or question. One member records ideas. After a given time period, class ideas are charted. Each group shares one idea at a time, while teacher records, until all ideas have been charted.
- **Jigsaw**—Each group member gets a piece of the total information. Each student is responsible for learning her piece of the information and then sharing it with the rest of the group members. After the teaching, all group members are accountable for all information.
- **Numbered Heads Together**—Each group member has a number beginning with #1. Groups discuss a question for a given period of time. Teacher then randomly selects a number and calls on those individuals to discuss the question in front of the entire class.
- **Paraphrase Passport**—One group member starts responding to a question, topic, or idea by picking up the passport. The next person must pick up the passport and summarize the previous person's ideas before contributing his own. Continues until everyone has a turn.
- **I'm Quoting Now**—Give each student five index cards. Have them write one quotation from the reading on each, either during or after reading. Have them choose ideas that are new, exciting, or thought-provoking. Each student then rank orders her cards from most surprising to least. Readers come back together in a group and each one shares one quotation at a time telling why she chose it and encouraging discussion.
- **Focused Reflection**—After reading, students choose a topic, focus, or quotation from the text (any connection they made with the text). They are to write/list in their reading logs any thoughts, feelings, experiences related to the chosen topic.

- **Say the Last Word for Me**—Have students read individually. As they read, they record on index cards any words, phrases, or sentences that particularly catch their attention. They can be interesting, worthy of discussion, or things students agree/disagree with. Have them include page numbers. On the other side of the card, students write what they want to say about their own selection. The student who read the quotation then has “the last word” about his selected segment by sharing what he wrote on the back. Everyone gets a turn.
- **Say Something**—Readers choose a partner. Each pair is given a single copy of the reading selection. They decide if they will read aloud or silently. After they read the first several paragraphs, they are to stop and say something to their partners about what they have just read. Each partner takes a turn. They can comment on what was just read, make predictions about what will happen next, or share experiences and connections. Continue reading the text, stopping at natural or convenient places to talk.
- **Sketch to Stretch**—After reading a selection, students should think about what they read and then draw a sketch of what the selection meant to them. When sketches are complete, each person in the group shows his sketch. Group members study it and say what they think the artist is attempting to say. Once everyone has had an opportunity to hypothesize an interpretation, the artist gets the last word.
- **Written Conversation**—Readers find a partner. One person writes a question on a piece of paper that relates to the reading. The second participant reads the question, writes a response to it, and returns the paper to the first participant. The conversation continues.
- **Dual Log Entry**—Students do entries in their reading logs by drawing a vertical line down the centers of their pages. They use the left column to summarize the author’s main points. On the right, they put their personal responses.
- **Sentence Starters**—When students can’t think of where to begin a literary discussion, have sentence strips with the following sentence starters. They could draw one from the stack and finish the thought. *I think . . . , I feel . . . , I wonder . . . , I hope . . . , I worry . . . , I doubt . . . , I love . . . , I hate . . . , I suspect . . . , I predict . . . , I notice . . . , etc.*
- **Quite a Character!**—Students could pretend to be the characters in the book and discuss what has or will happen in the book from those points of view.

Adapted by Donna Vincent from several sources including *Pathways to Literacy*

## Literature Circles

Today's **Discussion Director** is \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_

Author/ Page #'s \_\_\_\_\_

**Discussion Director:** Your job is to develop a list of questions that your group might want to discuss about the book. Don't worry about the small details (table legs). Only focus on the big ideas (table tops). We are coming together to express our feelings and connections.

### Possible Discussion Questions:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

### Sample Questions (you may choose a couple of these):

- What was going through your mind while you read about \_\_\_\_\_ ?
- How did you feel as you read about \_\_\_\_\_ ?  
What details in the writing made you feel that way?
- Did today's reading remind you of any real-life experiences?
- What is the writer trying to teach us?

**Remember: You are to find good questions that make people think and talk.**

.....

## Literature Circles

Today's **Word Wizard** is \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_

Author/ Page #'s \_\_\_\_\_

**Word Wizard:** Your job is to be on the lookout for a few especially important words in today's reading. These words may be unfamiliar to you. If so, go to some type of source and find the definition to share. If there are words that stand out in your mind for other reasons, share those words, too. You may find the way the author chooses and places his/her words interesting. Let us know!!!

---

---

---

Reminder: Don't forget to jot down page numbers or helpful information to help you share with your fellow classmates.

## Literature Circles

Today's **Summarizer** is \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_

Author/ Page #'s \_\_\_\_\_

**Summarizer:** Your job is to give a brief summary of the story. Remember, a summary only gives the overview of the book. Keep in mind that a summary should only take a couple of minutes. Don't give all of the details from the book. Think about it this way—*If someone asked you what the story was about, what would you tell them?* (It's the main idea!)

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



## Literature Circles

Today's **Illustrator** is \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_

Author/ Page #'s \_\_\_\_\_

**Illustrator:** Your job is to draw some kind of picture related to the reading. It can be a sketch, cartoon, diagram, flow chart, or stick-figure scene. You can draw a scene from the book, something that the reading reminded you of, or a picture that conveys any idea or feeling you got from the reading.

**Presentation Plan:** When it is your turn to share, you may show your picture without comment to the others in the group. You may allow all members to comment on their outlooks on your masterpiece, and then you add the final comment on how you meant your illustration to be interpreted.

Reminder: Please, turn your information in with this form.

## Literature Circles

Today's **Connector** is \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_

Author/ Page #'s \_\_\_\_\_

**Connector:** Your job is to find connections between the book your group is reading and the outside world. You discuss any connections that you personally relate to through the story. There are no wrong answers here. Whatever the reading connects you with is worth sharing.

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

Reminder: These are connections you found between this reading and other people, places, events, authors . . .

.....

## Open Response Questions for the Critical Reading of Fiction

1. Discuss where and when the story takes place. Explain how you know. Create a different setting for the story. Describe how it would change the story.
2. Evaluate the lead of the story. Decide whether or not it is a good lead and support your opinion.
3. Decide if you think this writer created suspense in this story that made you want to read on. Defend your answer by describing two or three ways the writer created suspense or suggest some ways he/she might have done that.
4. Trace the main events of the story. Locate events that could be moved or left completely out without changing the story and support your answer, or explain why the events need to stay just as they are.
5. Design a new ending for the story and describe how the rest of the story would have to change to fit the new ending or explain why it would not change.
6. If your prediction for the end of the story was different than the actual ending, tell what your prediction was and how you came to expect that. If your prediction matched theirs, list three clues that led you to that prediction.
7. Identify the main character of the story and the problem he or she has. List two or three examples from the story that show the problem or help you understand the character's personality.
8. Name any characters that change in the story. State how they are different. Tell what you think changed them.
9. Some characters play small but important roles in a story. Name such a character. Explain why this character is necessary for this story.
10. Identify the teller of the story (the narrator). Choose another character in the story to be the narrator and describe how the story would change.
11. Describe the mood of the story. Explain how the author created that mood. Discuss any changes in mood and how they came about.
12. Discuss how this story made you feel. Describe two or three ways the author caused you to feel that way.
13. Summarize the lesson(s) the author wants the audience to learn. Tell how the author accomplished this.

14. Have you ever read a story or watched a movie like this one? Compare this story to it. Rank the two stories by telling which is your favorite. Explain why.
15. Compare a character in this story to one you've read about in another story, seen in a movie, or known in real life. (If it is someone you've known in real life, don't use the real name.)
16. Evaluate the title of the story. Explain why you do or do not like it. If you don't like the title, create a new one. Explain why it is better.
17. Many times, reading a story will make us think of new ideas. Did this story do that for you? Tell what idea(s) came to you as you read and how the author made you think of these ideas.
18. Discuss how the story connects to your life, your beliefs, and/or your experience.

Adapted by Donna Vincent from Regie Routman's list

# Acknowledgments

Thanks to the following individuals for their help in developing, planning, and producing *Achieving a Balanced Reading/Writing Program*. And special thanks to the Muhlenberg County students, faculty, and administrators who allowed KET to videotape in their classrooms.

Starr Lewis  
Kentucky Department of Education  
Frankfort, Kentucky

Donna Vincent  
Muhlenberg County Schools  
Greenville, Kentucky

## KET Project Staff

Darlene Carl  
Office Manager

Paul Petrey  
Director

Mary Duncan  
Writer

Lynda Thomas  
Evaluation

Marianne Mosley  
Producer