

## APPENDIX

# SAMPLE PLANNING GUIDES, FORMS, AND RESOURCES

Lesson Plan for Learning Clubs:  
Motivating Middle School Readers and Writers

Open Interest Inventory

Closed Interest Inventory

Learning Clubs Rubric

Literacy Learning Clubs Planning Guide for Teachers

Focusing Session Planning Guide for Teachers

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Literacy Learning Club Selection Form

Literacy Activity Inventory

Useful Resources

# Lesson Plan for Learning Clubs: Motivating Middle School Readers and Writers

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Grades:	6–8
Lesson plan type	Standard lesson
Estimated time	Six 45-minute sessions
Lesson Author	Heather Casey, Edison, New Jersey Suzanne Gespass, Lawrenceville, New Jersey
Publisher	International Reading Association

## PREVIEW

### **Overview**

In this lesson, students participate in learning clubs, a grouping system used to organize active learning events based on student-selected areas of interest. Guided by the teacher, students select content-area topics and draw on multiple texts—including websites, printed material, video, and music—to investigate their topics. Students then have the opportunity to share their learning using similar media, such as learning blogs.

### **From Theory to Practice**

Casey, H. K. (2008). Engaging the disengaged: Using learning clubs to support struggling adolescent readers and writers. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*, 52(4), 284–294.

- This article describes the use of learning clubs to motivate struggling students to engage in literacy events and foster literacy development.
- Effective teachers draw on the use of literature circles and book clubs to support learning across topics.
- The learning club structure motivates middle school students to draw on literacy as a tool for learning.
- Adolescents are engaging in multiple modes of texts outside of the classroom that have the potential to motivate learning within the classroom.

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Daniels, H. (2002). *Literature circles: Voice and choice in the student-centered classroom*. Portland, ME: Stenhouse.

- Students are motivated to read when given the opportunity to choose materials.
- Teachers retain control over the “menu” to select from as well as the formation of groups.
- Student-centered, constructivist group investigation around common texts necessitates the teacher carefully structure and organize the experience.

### STANDARDS

#### ***NCTE/IRA National Standards for the English Language Arts***

1. Students read a wide range of print and nonprint texts to build an understanding of texts, of themselves, and of the cultures of the United States and the world; to acquire new information; to respond to the needs and demands of society and the workplace; and for personal fulfillment. Among these texts are fiction and nonfiction, classic and contemporary works.
2. Students apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts. They draw on their prior experience, their interactions with other readers and writers, their knowledge of word meaning and of other texts, their word identification strategies, and their understanding of textual features (e.g., sound–letter correspondence, sentence structure, context, graphics).
3. Students adjust their use of spoken, written, and visual language (e.g., conventions, style, vocabulary) to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences and for different purposes.
4. Students employ a wide range of strategies as they write and use different writing process elements appropriately to communicate with different audiences for a variety of purposes.
5. Students conduct research on issues and interests by generating ideas and questions, and by posing problems. They gather, evaluate, and synthesize data from a variety of sources (e.g., print and nonprint texts, artifacts, people) to communicate their discoveries in ways that suit their purpose and audience.
6. Students use a variety of technological and information resources (e.g., libraries, databases, computer networks, video) to gather and synthesize information and to create and communicate knowledge.
7. Students participate as knowledgeable, reflective, creative, and critical members of a variety of literacy communities.
8. Students use spoken, written, and visual language to accomplish their own purposes (e.g., for learning, enjoyment, persuasion, and the exchange of information).

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## RESOURCES AND PREPARATION

### ***Materials and Technology***

- Computer with LCD projector capabilities for demonstration (optional but encouraged)
- Computers with Internet access (at least one per group)
- Blogger
- Magazines and books organized around topics of interest
- Learning log (folder with blank paper) as an alternative to blogs
- Paper and pencils/pens

### ***Printouts***

- Open Interest Inventory
- Closed Interest Inventory
- Learning Clubs Rubric

### ***Websites***

- IPL KidSpace
- 4Teachers.org
- KOL Homework Help
- CNN Student News
- Center for Media Literacy
- Field Trip Earth
- ALA: Great Web Sites for Kids
- History News Network
- Cobblestone and Cricket Publications

### ***Preparation***

1. Hand out the Interest Inventories to survey students about areas of interest. Use the Open Interest Inventory to have students generate their own topics within a particular content area of unit of study; use the Closed Interest Inventory to limit the specific topics available for selection. Potential topics may include:
  - Science (e.g., gravity or motion)
  - Social studies cultural exploration (e.g., customs or children's hobbies in local, state, national, or international area of exploration)
  - Math (e.g., use of geometry in the workplace)

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- Health (e.g., age-appropriate exercises, food guides, or air quality)
  - Alternatively, survey students about areas they are interested in learning more about and build groups based on the identified topics.
2. Form groups of no more than four students based on identified topics.
  3. Create initial “learning tubs” with magazines and books organized around topics of interest for students to begin their investigations.
  4. Bookmark applicable sites listed in the websites (and others you might find on particular topics) on your classroom computer or lab computers. If you do not have classroom computers with Internet access, reserve time in your school’s computer lab for Session 2. If you plan on having your students blog, reserve time in your school’s computer lab for all sessions.
  5. If you plan on having your students blog, create a basic blog at Blogger to model for students in Session 1. Possible postings may include a picture, a brief description of what you (as a model student) are looking forward to learning, and potential links that may help the students once they begin.
  6. If your students are unable to blog, make sure to provide a learning log (a folder with blank paper).

### INSTRUCTIONAL PLAN

#### ***Student Objectives***

Students will:

- Draw on literacy as a tool for learning by identifying multiple resources to support topics of investigation.
- Synthesize multiple types of texts and genres to gather information and support learning by working with varying modes of text and genres.
- Reflect on their roles as readers and writers across these texts through group conversation.
- Develop critical comprehension through investigations across texts
- Develop the ability to support individual and group learning goals by collaborating with peers in small-group settings

#### ***Session 1: What Does It Mean to Use Literacy to Learn?***

1. Discuss with students the characteristics of effective collaborations, such as listening to others, sharing ideas, and using conversation to encourage understanding. Model this by engaging with another student and/or colleague in a positive demonstration of effective listening and communicating. Also model a negative demonstration. Ask students to identify what worked and didn’t work, and use that to begin building a list of how to support each other’s learning in a group setting.

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2. Introduce students to learning clubs. Describe the role of learning clubs in the classroom. Explain that each learning club session will involve four steps. These include:
  - Class Meeting—a focused and short lesson to demonstrate using the materials to investigate learning.
  - Gathering Time—students locate information and work with their group to identify information around their topic.
  - Scribing Time—groups reflect in their learning logs or learning blogs about the content of the session as well as what supported and interfered with their learning. Groups using blogs to document and describe learning should switch the responsibility of the designated “scribe” at each session.
  - Group Meeting—members reflect on the session and establish goals for the next session. The group then discusses what they hope to achieve during the next session.
3. This session’s Class Meeting is a procedural one. Use this time to help students build their learning blogs and/or learning logs which will support their inquiry and become a tool for sharing their learning with others. Model the sample blog you built. As you model the building of the blog, groups can follow along on their computers. At this point, students’ blogs should include a framework for responses as well as their topic.
4. During Gathering Time, students should generate questions about their topic as well as potential resources. These resources may be web-based or print, such as books, magazines, and videos.
5. Have students respond to the question “What does it mean to use literacy to learn?” during Scribing Time. Possible guiding prompts include: “Review what you learned today. Has that learning been validated by multiple sources? If not, then think about where you can verify that information. What is left to learn? Write those items down in the form of a question to guide your work.”
6. If time permits, students may upload some visuals to describe their investigations as well as questions they have about their selected topic of inquiry. They can do this as part of their Group Meeting.

### **Session 2: Digital Literacies**

1. Class meeting—Explain to students that the focus of today’s class meeting is on using digital resources to support and demonstrate learning. Access a website that makes use of multiple media—including printed text and fixed and moving images—such as ALA: Great Web Sites for Kids. Using a think-aloud, demonstrate how to “read” these different texts to gather information. This is also an opportunity to model how to identify useful sources by identifying the author of the website. Potential questions to ask of students include:
  - “What do you think we trust more, information found on *National Geographic* or information discovered on a Facebook account?”
  - “How do we make decisions about whether or not what we read/see/hear is true?”

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Consider modeling for students how web addresses can be deceiving. A potential website to explore is Museum of Hoaxes. This can invite conversations on how to be critical consumers of text we find on the Internet.

2. Gathering Time—Invite students to navigate the Internet using the sites you bookmarked to begin building their understanding of their topics.

**Note:** Other sites may be added as the project continues. This should be encouraged and will shift depending on what students identify about their areas of interest. The sites provided in the websites list are broad and cover a range of topics typically found in middle school curriculums across the content areas.

3. Scribing Time—Ask students to gather into their groups to share information. You might say something like: “Now that you have had an opportunity to investigate independently, let’s come together and talk about what we have learned. Begin by sharing what you have learned. As you listed to one another, think about how what you studied connects to what your group members studied. After you have finished sharing, think about how you are going to represent what you learned today. Are there pictures and video clips that can demonstrate what you learned? How will you write about your learning today? Will you write a poem, an article, or an editorial, perhaps? What genre makes the most sense for you?”
  - Have the group scribe post information about their learning on the students’ blogs. Model how to find and embed multimedia. Invite students to embed links within their text to video clips, additional websites, and photos that describe their learning for others.
  - If you are using a learning log, have students share their learning within their individual logs. Students should still be encouraged to incorporate still images and multiple genres where appropriate.
4. Group Meeting—Groups should develop a plan for the next session. Prompt the discussion by asking the following questions: What are we still interested in learning more about? How did you use literacy to learn today?

### ***Session 3: Magazines and Periodicals***

1. Class Meeting—Explain to students that the focus of today’s class meeting is on using magazines and periodicals to navigate learning. Using models from each of the learning tubs, demonstrate how as a reader we make use of the different texts to support learning. Encourage students to use the print materials along with the digital resources to expand their learning and to answer remaining questions they might still have from last session’s Group Meeting.
2. Gathering Time—Invite students use the print resources to build upon the information they have already gathered about their topics.

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3. Scribing Time—Have groups add to and/or revise information from the previous session to their learning log or learning blog. Circulate around the room to answer any questions.
4. Group Meeting—Ask students to review material and learning over the past two sessions. Gather student responses to the following questions: “What have we already learned about our topic that we didn’t know before we began?” “What questions do we still have about our topic?” “How will we answer these questions at our next session?” “How have we been working together as a group?”

### **Session 4: Books**

1. Class Meeting—Explain to students that the focus of today’s class meeting is on using books to navigate learning. Begin by offering a text as an example and inviting students to ask questions that the text may answer. Using these questions, model how to use a table of contents and an index to identify information and help focus reading.
2. Gathering Time—Invite students to use the print resources to build upon the information they have already gathered about their topics.
3. Scribing Time—Have groups add to and/or revise information from the previous session to their learning log or learning blog. Circulate around the room to answer any questions.
4. Group Meeting—Ask students to review material and learning over the past three sessions. Gather student responses to the following questions: “What questions do we still have about our topic?” “How will we answer these questions at our next session?”

### **Session 5: Putting the Puzzle Together to Make Meaning**

1. Class Meeting—Explain to students that the focus of today’s class meeting is on how we synthesize the tools shared at each session to make meaning, and how we use these multimodal resources to demonstrate understanding. Demonstrate these using the learning blog. Ask students to think about audience and about how they are going to use their blogs or learning logs to create a place where others can learn about a specific topic. When looking at pictures they have included, students should ask if other viewers will understand the image; if not, they should add a caption. They should do the same with their written text.
2. Gathering Time—Ask students to identify how they are going to synthesize the information they have learned so that others can understand their topic of investigation. Circulate around the room as students work. As you meet with different groups, ask them to revisit the questions/ideas posed in the Class Meeting as a tool for organizing their ideas. Organization will vary according to the topic and task.
3. Scribing Time—Have groups revise and add to their blog or log to make the information accessible to their peers. Students should be encouraged to make this interactive. For example, you can invite students to post questions or embed links for readers of their

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## Lesson Plan for Learning Clubs *(page 8 of 8)*

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blogs. If students are using logs, invite them to use sticky notes to offer a place for other students to respond to their work.

4. Group Meeting—Ask groups to review their work. You might pose the following questions:
  - “What did you learn about your topic during this time?”
  - “How did your work in the group support and/or interfere with your learning?”
  - “What would you do differently if you were given this opportunity again?”

These questions can be responded to individually or as part of a group discussion. If you have students, record their responses; this can be a useful assessment tool for the project.

### ***Session 6: An Interactive, Multimodal Learning Fair***

1. Explain to students that this session is for a demonstration of learning using the multimodal tools built throughout the learning process. Students have the opportunity to interact with each of the group’s blogs or logs. The nature of the interaction will be guided by the presentation of the information and the decisions the groups make about presentation. Give students 10 minutes to explore each blog or log. Ask them to talk about what they learn from each one. Before they move to the next station, they should write down or post something they learned about from the visit and something they would still like to know. Encourage them also to offer compliments to each other.
2. Have students rotate through each station either by group or individually.

### ***Student Assessment/Reflections***

Upon completion of the experience, students can be invited to reflect on the following questions as an assessment of the project and an assessment of learning.

- “What did you learn from this experience?”
- “What tools did you use as a reader and a writer during learning clubs?”
- “What did you discover about yourself as a reader and a writer during these sessions?”
- “What did you discover about reading and writing during these sessions?”

This reflection, as the experience itself, may be multimodal, including a podcast, a personal narrative, or a presentation to another class. You may choose to offer options or require the use of mixed media to report on the experience.

Complete the Learning Clubs Rubric for each group. The rubric includes open categories to add information particular to your topic of study.

# Open Interest Inventory

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

What are you curious about? What do you wonder about? Think about what you have been learning in your classes. What would you like to revisit? What came up in discussions and/or readings that you didn't have the opportunity to explore further?

We are about to begin an investigation of topics that our class is interested in learning more about. Before we can begin, however, we need to know more about what you want to learn. Please list topics that you are curious about below. There are two columns. In the first column please indicate what you are interested in exploring. In the second column, please indicate why you are interested in that topic. Topics should be placed in order of interest.

<b>What I am interested in learning more about . . .</b>	<b>Why I am interested in this topic . . .</b>
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	

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# Closed Interest Inventory

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Below is a list of topics that we will be investigating in our next unit of study. Please indicate your preferences for each topic. For example, the topic that is of greatest interest is #1, and the topic of least interest is #5. Please also indicate why you feel that way about the topic.

Topic of study	Level of interest with explanation

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# Learning Clubs Rubric

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Group members:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Topic: \_\_\_\_\_

This blog or learning log . . .	4	3	2	1
Uses multiple sources to document learning				
Was written so that it demonstrated understanding of topic				
Has visuals that demonstrate understanding of topic				
Synthesizes across modes and genres				
Demonstrates successful collaboration				
Other:				
Other:				

4 = Excellent

3 = Good

2 = Satisfactory

1 = Unsatisfactory

**Note to readers:** It is useful to use this both as a form of self-assessment for students and as a final assessment for the teacher.

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# Literacy Learning Clubs Planning Guide for Teachers

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Grade level: \_\_\_\_\_

Content area: \_\_\_\_\_

Curriculum content: \_\_\_\_\_

Content-area standards: \_\_\_\_\_

How many meetings are planned? \_\_\_\_\_

When will students meet and for how long? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What topics are available for students to choose from? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What special grouping considerations need to be made? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What types of resources (consider print and digital) are needed to support student work?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

How will student learning be assessed? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What will need to be modeled or demonstrated for students in order to scaffold their investigations? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Focusing Session Planning Guide for Teachers

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1. Meeting Number \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_
  
2. Objective: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  
3. Standards: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  
4. Materials: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  
5. Content to be modeled/demonstrated: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  
6. Plan for students to move to literacy learning clubs: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  
7. Other considerations: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Think-Aloud Planning Guide for Teachers

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1. What literacy skill/strategy am I modeling/demonstrating? \_\_\_\_\_

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2. How does understanding this skill or strategy help students access the content they are studying? \_\_\_\_\_

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3. What resources do I need access to in order to model/demonstrate? \_\_\_\_\_

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# Literacy Learning Club Meeting Planning Guide for Students

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Preplanning guidelines to allow for a productive meeting:

1. Today at literacy learning clubs I plan to: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. The resources I will likely need are: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. The people I will need to work with/consult include: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Keeping organized during the work:

4. I am learning that: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. The literacy strategies I am drawing on are: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Preparing for the Focusing Finish

6. The methods most useful in sharing what I have learned will be (group share, a digital document, a written narrative, etc.). This will vary according to the discipline and structure of the literacy learning club. Write your method for sharing here:

# Literacy Learning Club Student Exit Slip A

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Complete at the end of a literacy learning club session and hand to the teacher.

• What did we learn today? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

• How did we come to this new information? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

• What are we still uncertain about? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

• How will we access the information/knowledge still needed? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

This will help you make good use of your next meeting!

# Literacy Learning Club Student Exit Slip B

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Today during literacy learning clubs I:

\_\_\_\_\_ used the Internet to locate sources.

\_\_\_\_\_ read a book.

\_\_\_\_\_ posted on the class site.

\_\_\_\_\_ created a video.

\_\_\_\_\_ other.

Today I learned: \_\_\_\_\_

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Next time I plan to: \_\_\_\_\_

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# Literacy Learning Club Preassessment Form (Sample)

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## LITERACY LEARNING CLUBS TO INVESTIGATE *Body Systems*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please write down what you already know about the following:

1. *The circulatory system*

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2. *The respiratory system*

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3. *The immune system*

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4. *The skeletal system*

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5. *The nervous system*

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6. *The muscular system*

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# Literacy Learning Club Selection Form (Sample)

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Order the areas you are most interested in learning more about below.

1 = most interested

6 = least interested

*The circulatory system* \_\_\_\_\_

*The respiratory system* \_\_\_\_\_

*The immune system* \_\_\_\_\_

*The skeletal system* \_\_\_\_\_

*The nervous system* \_\_\_\_\_

*The muscular system* \_\_\_\_\_

Secret password (e.g., your birthday or a pet's name) to be used to access our website:

\_\_\_\_\_

# Literacy Learning Club Selection Form

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Order the areas you are most interested in learning more about below.

1 = most interested

6 = least interested

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

## Literacy Activity Inventory

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This is useful for learning more about your students' literacy habits to help you inform your planning.

Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

We are interested in learning more about what students do inside and outside of school. Please circle the answers to some of the questions, and write your answers to others. This is anonymous.

	Almost never	About once a month	About once a week	Almost every day
1. How often do you listen to music?	1	2	3	4
2. How often do you watch television?	1	2	3	4
3. How often do you play outside?	1	2	3	4
4. How often do you use the Internet?	1	2	3	4
	Always	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
5. When I am researching something, I look in a book.	1	2	3	4
6. When I am researching something, I read a magazine article.	1	2	3	4
7. When I am researching something, I look online for information.	1	2	3	4
8. I read for pleasure.	1	2	3	4

(continued)



## Literacy Activity Inventory *(page 2 of 2)*

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Please write your answers below (use the back if needed).

1. What does it mean to be a reader and a writer?

2. What types of texts do you read and write?

3. When do you use reading and writing outside of school or homework?

4. How do you use reading and writing in \_\_\_\_\_ (insert discipline of study) class?

A helpful professional resource for developing literacy assessments is McKenna and Stahl (2015).

# Useful Resources

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## WEBSITES

- [www.weebly.com](http://www.weebly.com)—platform for building websites
- [www.smore.com](http://www.smore.com)—interactive digital poster
- [www.classroom.google.com](http://www.classroom.google.com)—Google Classroom
- [www.edmodo.com](http://www.edmodo.com)—tool for creating digital collaborations
- [www.literacyworldwide.org](http://www.literacyworldwide.org)—International Literacy Association
- [www.ncte.org](http://www.ncte.org)—National Council of Teachers of English
- [www.sbsciencematters.com](http://www.sbsciencematters.com)—Science Matters

## PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

The following professional organizations offer a wealth of resources (many free) for teachers across the disciplines.

- [www.literacyworldwide.org](http://www.literacyworldwide.org)—International Literacy Association
- [www.ncte.org](http://www.ncte.org)—National Council of Teachers of English
- [www.nctm.org](http://www.nctm.org)—National Council of Teachers of Mathematics
- [www.nsta.org](http://www.nsta.org)—National Science Teachers Association
- [www.nextgenscience.org](http://www.nextgenscience.org)—Next Generation Science Standards
- [www.socialstudies.org](http://www.socialstudies.org)—National Council for the Social Studies

## STUDENT RESOURCES

- Math for the Real World—series published by Rainbow Resource Center
- You Choose: History—series published by Capstone Press
- Open directory project for kids and teens—found at [www.dmoz.org/Kids\\_and\\_Teens/](http://www.dmoz.org/Kids_and_Teens/). Search can be narrowed by discipline/topic of study.