

Literature Circles

Purpose:

To develop and extend understanding of text.

Materials:

Anything worth discussing (i.e., most literary text, some expository text)

Procedure:

1. Groups are usually small (4-9 people). Students read (or listen to) the text before assembling in the literature circle. Depending on the nature of the discussion, students may want to make notes.
2. The discussion itself may be completely open: Students talk about whatever interests them. The discussion may also be guided by questions such as Did anything puzzle you? What do you think of the author's writing style? Why? Who's the most interesting character? Why? And so forth. A third alternative for the discussions is for students to assume roles. Students can either prepare for their roles before the groups assemble, or groups can take time for preparation before discussion. Possible roles include leader (encourages participation), summarizer (begins discussion with a summary of the text), connector (compares text to other texts or some aspect of students' lives), sentence/word finder (finds and shares interesting or powerful sentences/ words), imagineer (creates images of compelling scenes), and character collector (identifies a compelling character).
(Note: Groups need not use all roles; teachers may want to establish different roles as well, depending on the nature of the text).