

Social Reading Strategies

The following strategies provide structure for students to work together as they read and respond to literary texts. You may wish to introduce them to students one at a time and then encourage them to choose those strategies with which they feel most comfortable and which they feel might be most useful with a particular text.

Conversation Partners

During read-alouds, pause and offer students a question to think about in their journals. After they have had several minutes to reflect in writing, ask them to turn to a conversation partner sitting nearby and share what they have written. After the conversation partners have had time to discuss their individual observations, open the conversation to the entire class, or proceed with the read-aloud.

Book Buddies

Assign two students to read and discuss a shared text. You may ask them to complete a shared response invitation such as the following used by Tim O'Keefe with his students. Alternately, you may ask each buddy group to pair with another buddy group to expand their conversation of the reading.

1. Written Conversation: Have a double written conversation about the book in which you write back and forth, sharing what you noticed, what you liked, and questions you may have about the book.
2. Describe how the author makes you feel at different parts of the story. How did she accomplish this?
3. Describe the changes that took place in the book. What caused the changes and what happened as a result of the changes?
4. Analyze the characters in the story. What made them behave as they did?
5. What lessons have you learned from the story? What lasting memories will you take with you?

Group Reading

Join with one or two others to read. You may decide to read out loud together, alternate reading, or read silently until an agreed-upon point. Use sticky notes to flag parts of the text that you have questions about or that you want to discuss. When you have finished reading, use your sticky notes to guide your conversation.