

Expectations for Reading This Year

- Read as much as you can, as joyfully as you can. Practice with pleasure.
- Read at home for at least half an hour every day, seven days a week.
- Find books, authors, subjects, genres, and themes that matter to who you are now, who you once were, and who you might become.
- Try new books, authors, subjects, genres, and themes. Expand your literary experience, knowledge, and appreciation.
- On the Someday List in your writing-reading handbook (Atwell, 2015), keep a running list of titles and authors you'd like to try, especially in response to booktalks and other recommendations.
- Recognize that a book represents a writer's ideas and the choices he or she has made. Understand that you can step back from a story after you've finished living inside it and notice and discuss the author's decisions.
- Use the critical vocabulary you already know and the terms I teach you to talk and write about literature.
- Write a letter-essay every three weeks about what you noticed and appreciated about one book you've recently finished. Use writing to go back inside the book as a critic and consider the writing—how the book made you think and feel, what the author did, what worked or needs more work.
- Recognize that there are different approaches to reading and different stances readers take in relation to different texts, e.g., realistic fiction vs. a poem vs. a feature article in a newspaper vs. a chapter from a history book vs. a scientific report.
- Develop and articulate your own criteria for selecting and abandoning books.
- Each trimester, establish and work toward significant, relevant goals for yourself as a reader.
- In every reading workshop take a *deliberate stance* (Harwayne, 1992) toward engaging and responding with your whole heart and mind. Take advantage of the workshop—*use it* to find your own sources of happiness and inspiration. Stretch your imagination, live other lives and learn about your own, find prose and poetry so well written it knocks you out, understand experiences you might never know about otherwise, find stories that make you happy and feed your soul, consider how other writers have written and why, acquire their knowledge and insights, wonder, escape, think, travel, ponder, laugh, cry, love, and grow up.