

THE
#SUPERREADER
CLASSROOM GUIDE

**Great ideas to get your Super Reader
classroom up and running!**

 **SCHOLASTIC**


Read Fearlessly

THE #SUPERREADER

CLASSROOM GUIDE

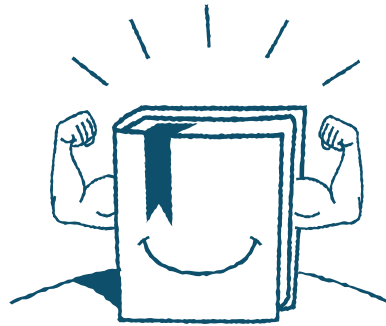


An excerpt from
Every Child a Super Reader by
Pam Allyn and Ernest Morrell

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Teaching Methods That Strengthen Super Readers

The belief that students who feel emotionally secure, supported, and connected to learning will be better prepared to achieve academically is a foundational tenet of the 7 Strengths Model. The classroom culture, discourse, and even physical set-up all play key roles in fostering this type of support and engagement. In this chapter, we will discuss best practice teaching methods that strengthen all readers and how to implement them in your classroom.

Successful reading instruction incorporates a gradual release of responsibility from the teacher to the student. Effective teachers model what successful, engaged readers do, but they also allow students extended time to apply and practice what they have learned about reading. Teaching structures, such as the read aloud and small-group work, teach children all the rules and tricks of super reading, and then the independent practice lets them play the game.

No matter your setting, you can create an accordion flow to your classroom management that creates opportunities for explicit instruction as well as independent practice. The following table describes the teaching model we call “whole-small-whole.”



Whole-Small-Whole Teaching Sequence	
Whole	The teacher gathers the entire class and uses high-quality literature to model a skill or strategy and to build reading community values.
Small	The teacher breaks the class into small groups, pairs, or individuals. The students apply and practice what they learned in the whole-group lesson, usually in the context of independent reading. The teacher coaches students in their efforts and uses this time to address the needs of individuals through conferences or small-group instruction.
Whole	The teacher gathers the entire class. Students share results of the independent work, reflect on how it went, and articulate why it was helpful to them as readers.

Read Aloud

What Is It? An “expert” reading of an authentic text chosen from a variety of genres and levels to an audience of one or more.

Why Is Reading Aloud Helpful to Super Readers? One of the most beneficial activities to nurture a super reader is the simple act of reading text aloud to children. We distinguish two kinds of read alouds, one in which we stop and “teach into” the text, and another that is meant to be more “immersive.” We recommend at least one instructional read aloud a day and two ritual read alouds a day in a six-hour school day and at least one of each in an afterschool session (for all ages). The read alouds should come from a variety of genres, and a read aloud can be short (a poem!) or longer (a chapter or an article or blog post). Texts can be used in either of these structures, and the same text can be used instructionally at one point in the day and then revisited for pure enjoyment later in the day.

Instructional Read Aloud	Ritual Read Aloud
• Offers opportunity for instruction in genre, strategy, and comprehension • Cultivates vocabulary development • Builds understanding and comprehension in texts	• Fosters a love of reading and models the processes of reading (stamina, enjoyment, engagement) • Fills the ear with the richness of literary and informational texts • Introduces texts, genres, and authors to students

Reading aloud to young children stimulates the growth of the essential cognitive functions that lead to literacy development, such as narrative and informational text comprehension and visual imagery (Duke & Martin, 2015). Researchers have actually discovered that babies who were read Dr. Seuss before birth recognized the same text after they were born (DeCasper & Spence, 1986).

A recent study used functional magnetic resonance imaging to show how children's brains develop in relation to how much they had been read to at home. Children with more exposure to read alouds had significantly greater activation in the areas of the brain responsible for visualization and multisensory integration (Hutton, Horowitz-Kraus, Mendelsohn, Dewitt, & Holland, 2015). Unfortunately, research also shows that many families stop reading to their children once they begin to do it on their own, yet the benefits of the family read aloud can continue indefinitely (Trelease, 2006). After all, even as adults, many of us enjoy books on tape or listening to authors read their own words.

Reading aloud is a profoundly essential activity for reading success, particularly for emergent readers (Fisher, Flood, Lapp, & Frey, 2004). In 1985, the government report, *Becoming a Nation of Readers* (Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, & Wilkinson) stated that "the single most important activity for building the knowledge required for eventual success in reading is reading aloud to children" (p. 23) and current research continues to support this finding (Lesesne, 2006). Children of all ages should be given the opportunity to participate daily in this high-joy, high-impact activity, at home and in classroom settings.

The read aloud is how we make the work of reading "visible." Reading aloud is a skill and art, especially when we are sharing with children (Braxton, 2007). While there are specific suggestions for making a read aloud as engaging and enjoyable as possible, such as introducing a story and building background knowledge, the most important way to excite children about reading a particular text is to let



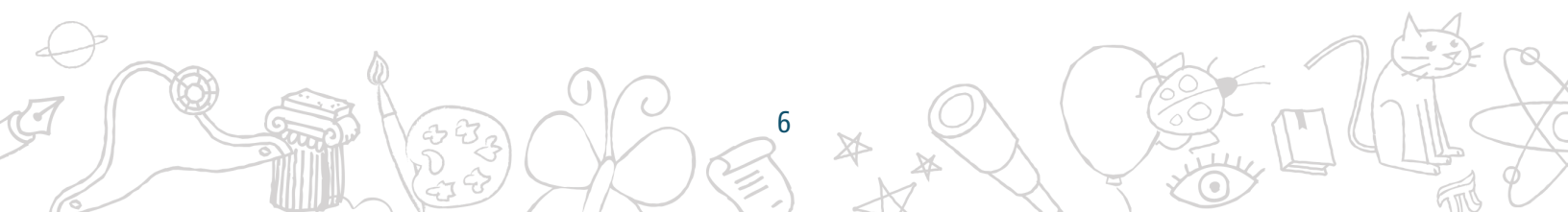
inhibitions go, reread as needed, and be as expressive as possible. Ultimately, as librarian and author Barbara Braxton suggests, “Reading aloud is such a simple pleasure, but it can be a complex task. If you enjoy yourself, however, the children will, too.”

Families whose primary home language differs from the school language should be encouraged to read aloud in the language with which they are most comfortable. Skills, strategies, and a passion for reading can be taught in any language and research has consistently shown that “development of children’s home language supports their learning of English” (Wiley & de Klerk, 2010, p. 403). Families can be supported in locating printed and digital multimedia texts in their home language and encouraged to help their children grow as super readers in multiple languages.

The stunning fact of the research is this: children who are read aloud to on a daily basis consistently outperform their peers, reaching levels almost a year ahead of children who are not read aloud to (Kalb & van Ours, 2013). In the classroom, when students actively listen to a read aloud rather than participate round-robin-style, they benefit from the teacher’s modeling of fluency and the immediate engagement of hearing a wonderful story told well. Not only are children expanding their oral vocabularies, they are learning new concepts in a pleasurable way (Blachowicz & Fisher, 2015). The read aloud invites children to sink into the world of a book and to flex the muscles of their imaginations as the story plays out in their minds.

The 7 Strengths and Read Aloud

- Bring the 7 Strengths to the forefront by reading aloud books that connect to each strength.
- Recognize when the 7 Strengths emerge as central ideas in your read alouds.
- Acknowledge how reading aloud together brings us closer as a community and fosters a sense of belonging.
- Encourage students to express curiosity about the content of texts by asking questions about the content and illustrations and making and confirming predictions.
- Satisfy students’ curiosity by prompting them to research and read aloud to the class the answers to their many questions about the world as they come up.
- Help students build courage to read aloud with fluency and expression in front of others.
- Have students turn and talk about their hopes and dreams before, during, and after the read aloud.



Close Reading

What Is It? Reading at increasing levels of comprehension, from basic understanding of the text's message to understanding its structure, craft, and style to understanding its purpose and theme.

Why Is Close Reading Helpful to Super Readers? Super readers are close and critical readers. They read carefully and thoughtfully, asking critical questions of the texts they read. It is powerful to create the contexts in which children become close and critical readers. For example, Ernest sometimes has his students participate in mock trials and debates based on the literature they read. Because they know that they will be responsible for all of the material covered in the book, they generally read it more carefully. Also, when students are reading as part of research for a report that they are going to share with an audience, they tend to pay close attention to detail.

Close reading gives you the chance to linger over text with your students to allow for deeper and more analytical understandings of key pieces of literature and informational text. You get the chance to model *what*, *how*, and *why* we read. Immersing your students in close reading gives them the opportunity to learn the "look" and "feel" of language, to practice code breaking and meaning making together, to see the process of reading made visible. Students become strong, bold readers, approaching even the most difficult texts with new confidence in their abilities to decode what an author is trying to convey.

Close reading can happen during whole-class instruction, small-group lessons, and conferences with individual students. Deep analysis should be done with complex texts, therefore close readings need to be very scaffolded (and work best in small-group or one-on-one conferences).

General Close Reading Protocol for All Grades and Genres	
Preview	Examine the overall form and features of the text.
Read for what the text says	Try to summarize what the text is mainly about. Clarify unknown words.
Read for how the text is written	Analyze the author's choices of structure, words, and phrases to deepen your understanding of the text.
Read for why the text is written	Determine purpose and central ideas of the text.

Examining an author's craft is a crucial part of close reading. Our students studied why Ezra Jack Keats decided to make the boy's coat red in *The Snowy Day*, and why he never named his character. One child said: "I believe Mr. Keats used only pronouns because he wanted us to feel like we could be the boy." Another child said: "I am a close reader of the footprints in the snow. Are they going forward or away? Maybe Mr. Keats wanted us to wonder." A third said: "I love how he used white space. It was like the snow itself, so quiet on that winter's day."

Encourage students to use text evidence to support any claims or conclusions they have about a text. See the chart below.

Explaining Thinking Using Text Evidence

Phrases to scaffold readers when they share their thinking orally and in writing:

- I think this because _____.
- The author shows this on page ____ where it says _____.
- There is proof of my thinking on page _____.
- There is evidence of this on page ____ where it states that _____.
- In the ____ (e.g., text, photo, article, letter, chart, cartoon, graph, speech, etc.), the author/artist states/shows _____.
- This idea is supported by the ____ (e.g., text, photo, article, letter, chart, cartoon, graph, speech, etc.). [Explain how.]
- An example from the ____ (e.g., text, photo, article, letter, chart, cartoon, graph, speech) is _____.

Other phrases to cite evidence:

- This clearly proves that _____.
- It is obvious that _____.
- Clearly, _____.
- It is evident that _____.
- This demonstrates _____.
- This makes it clear that _____.

Other useful verbs for explaining why a source supports your ideas include: *shows, conveys, justifies, supports, exemplifies, suggests, illustrates, displays.*

The 7 Strengths and Close Reading

- Encourage students to be curious about the choices authors make. Word choice, character development, plot development, illustration details, and more are thoughtfully included to impact the meaning of a text. Super readers notice these elements when they read closely and consider why authors shape them the way they do.
- Have students do close reading partnerships or small groups where reading friends can help each other by collaborating on ideas.
- Help students build the confidence to do the hard work of comprehending challenging text.
- Insist on kindness toward all readers in the class regardless of skill level. Students will engage in close reading and all reading activities with varying levels of success. We are all growing as readers alongside each other.

Small-Group Instruction

What Is It? A meeting with two or more students in which the teacher helps them achieve common learning goals as readers.

Why Is Small-Group Instruction Helpful to Super Readers? The most effective small-group instruction occurs when a teacher starts with formal or informal data to match students with similar needs together. He then convenes a manageable group of two to seven students to engage them in a lesson focused on a skill or strategy that they need. Meeting with small groups allows teachers to differentiate instruction effectively and efficiently. Students get more direct attention from the teacher than during whole-class instruction, and the teacher has the opportunity to choose texts and teaching objectives that closely address the needs of the group members. In small groups, students benefit from hearing the questions and ideas of fellow group members and solving challenges with and for each other.



The 7 Strengths and Small-Group Instruction

- Encourage students to be supportive reading friends by showing kindness to each other at all times and compassion for each other's challenges. Actively provide coaching for students as they practice sharing their conclusions and views with confidence. Encourage them to support their ideas with text evidence whenever possible.
- Urge students to work through mistakes in small-group reading. Students should treat each other's mistakes with kindness and be able to make mistakes without losing their confidence.
- Help students recognize that working in small groups often allows them to build the courage they need to be successful as independent readers. Recognize their growth and teach toward independence.

Collaborating With Peers: Reading Partners

What Is It? A meeting of two students reading and discussing their reading together.

Why Are Reading Partners Helpful to Super Readers? The super reader loves to talk about her reading. And she is listening, too. The partnership structure, even two times a week, is a valuable way for children to practice speaking and listening to each other about books. These partnerships can be flexible, changing each week or each month. They can be partnerships based on the following:

- interests
- similar reading goal
- favorite authors
- primary language
- similar reading level
- project-based learning
- similar reading challenge

Reading partners may happen in a variety of contexts: as quick meet-ups at any point in the day to check in on each other's reading or share something read outside of the classroom, during whole-class instruction as a Turn and Talk, or during small-group instruction or independent reading. This is a highly flexible structure that should come to feel natural for the children so they can feel supported by a partner whether or not they are reading the same book. Scaffold students' conversation by providing and role-playing with conversation stems such as those in the chart that follows.

Crafting Longer and Stronger Conversations	
Describe	I noticed that... I see that... I hear you saying...
React	I agree/disagree because... This makes me feel ____ because... I think ____ because... That's amazing/cool/funny... This reminds me of...
Question	I am wondering... Why did the (author, poet, creator, photographer, illustrator)...? Why is...? Why does...?
Evaluate	I like how... I do not like how... My favorite thing is... I really enjoyed... The most important thing is...
Clarify	What did you mean? Can you explain? I feel confused about... I don't understand...
Draw Conclusions	This gives me a clue that... I think that the message is... This teaches a lesson about...
Speculate	I think that maybe... I am guessing that...
Expand	What do you think? Tell me more about that. Let me add to what ____ just said... That's true... plus... I also (noticed, thought, wondered)...

You can strengthen partnerships using the 7 Strengths by encouraging these behaviors in students:

Belonging: I greet my partner and give a compliment.

Curiosity: I ask questions about things my partner has to say.

Friendship: I show a connection when talking to my partner.

Kindness: I listen to what my partner has to say.

Confidence: I provide constructive feedback.

Courage: I work with different people in my class—even if they're not my best friends.

Hope: I set reading goals with my partner.

Collaborating With Peers: Reading Clubs

What Is It? Small groups of students reading a common text and engaging in discussion about it.

Why Are Reading Clubs Helpful to Super Readers? This is a fun way for your students to have longer sustained conversations and to get to know each other as readers. The club should, like partnerships, have a start and end date, and the same children should not be expected to stay together in one club all year. It is to mix the levels of the children so they can experience different kinds of conversation. For example, a club could meet for a week to talk about poetry, or the club could meet for two weeks to talk about the theme of bullying. In these two cases, the club does not have to commit to reading the same text at the same time. When the same text will be read, it may make more sense to match children by their reading levels.

There should also be time for children to talk to one another about what they are reading and writing. Talk should also be initiated by students and geared toward their interests and curiosities. In her book *Classroom Discourse: The Language of Teaching and Learning*, Courtney Cazden (1988) identified that most classroom talk was initiated by and directed toward the teacher. Similarly, Gordon Wells (1989) found that lower-income and ethnolinguistic minority students had the fewest opportunities to initiate and participate in classroom talk. He calls for more talk that is 1) student owned, 2) inquiry driven, and 3) integrated with thinking, doing, reading, and writing. To prepare our children for the communicative world of the 21st century, they will need to become better speakers and listeners. This is facilitated by offering multiple opportunities for them to interact with one another.



The 7 Strengths and Collaborating With Peers

- Develop a sense of belonging by helping students find peers to talk with about reading.
- Help students develop friendships in ways that relate directly to academics.
- Build students' confidence and courage by making sure their peers are supportive and active companions in the reading experience.
- Spread hope by letting students know they are trusted members of the community and that their engagement with a particular text, type of text, or idea is truly valued and heard.





Creating an Environment That Supports and Engages Super Readers

Increasing reading engagement is essential to increasing literacy achievement and developing lifelong readers. Super readers by definition are engaged readers. In order to raise a super reader, we must find strategies to promote engagement.

In his 2004 *Journal of Literacy Research* article, John Guthrie describes a study of third graders and their literacy engagement. He found that 9-year-olds whose family background was characterized by low income and low education, but who were highly engaged readers, substantially outscored students who came from backgrounds with higher education and income, but who themselves were less engaged readers. Guthrie also found that engaged readers spend up to 500 percent more time reading than disengaged readers. He encourages families and teachers to increase reading time by 200–500 percent and to foster engagement through conceptual themes, hands-on experiences, self-directed learning, interesting texts, classroom discourse, and time for extended reading.



The following practices are designed to foster a classroom culture that celebrates reading and helps to create a classroom environment that nurtures the growth of super readers.

How We Use the 7 Strengths

Strength	What we do as super readers...
Belonging	We work together to create a learning community that explores the world and all kinds of literature.
Curiosity	We feed our curious minds by asking and answering questions about what we read.
Friendship	We bond because of our shared passions. We build identities as readers by working together.
Kindness	We support one another, working together to reach new heights as readers.
Confidence	We practice reading every day, using new strategies and skills to help us become fearless and strong.
Courage	We understand that reading can be challenging and aren't afraid to work through the hard parts.
Hope	We set goals for ourselves as readers and use those goals to think about the future.

Identity Building

What Is It? Instruction aimed at building students' awareness of their preferences, habits, strengths, and challenges as readers.

Why Is Identity Building Helpful to Super Readers? First and foremost, we strive to help all of our students recognize themselves as readers, regardless of age, skill level, language proficiency, or any other classifications that cause students to consider themselves outsiders from the group



that calls themselves “readers.” There is no pivotal moment when one becomes a reader. An infant listening to a story read aloud is just as much of a reader as a scientist reading a professional journal. We are all in different places on our unique reading journeys. As educators and parents, we must assure all children that they, too, are readers. This is the first step of creating a reading identity. Once that critical foundation is established, we can help readers build on it by helping them identify other important aspects of their reading identity:

- What do you like to read about?
- Who is a favorite author?
- Where do you like to read?
- What is easy for you as a reader?
- What is challenging for you as a reader?
- What goals do you need to work on to become stronger as a reader?
- What kinds of books do you like to read?
- What genres would you like to explore next?

Super readers have answers to these types of questions, and the answers will evolve over time as they continue to learn and grow.

The 7 Strengths and Identity Building

- Assure students that all children in the classroom are readers and belong to the classroom reading community.
- Help students develop curiosity about authors, genres, and books through engaging library displays, book talks, and peer recommendations.
- Provide frequent opportunities for students to share their reading preferences and make recommendations with confidence to their reading friends in the group.
- Satisfy students’ hopes to grow as readers by helping them set goals and monitoring progress toward them.

Reading Celebrations

What Is It? Recognition of achievements, both small and large, of each student in the classroom.

Why Are Reading Celebrations Helpful to Super Readers? Every day, be sure to find something you admire in your children as readers. The goal is that by the end of the week, each child will have heard at least one specific thing about his or her growth as a reader. Be as specific as you can. "Bobby, I so loved how you worked with your partner." "Sarah, I really liked how you got comfortable quickly in your reading spot this week."

Celebrate your children as readers by honoring each small step. "I appreciate how you read in a one-inch voice so that others could read quietly." "I liked how you reread that passage when you didn't understand." Don't let anything small escape your attention. These are teachable moments.

Have weekly reading celebrations. Use the opportunity to have children read to a guest or have a guest reader join the class for the day. Let the weekly celebrations celebrate small steps: that a read aloud had longer discussion, or a child felt that she read for more minutes. Have children share out their gains in these ways. Some of the ways you can celebrate include:

Stamina: We read for more minutes this week.

Volume: We read many words this week.

Engagement: We were focused on our reading this week.

Comprehension: We had great book talks this week:

Identity: We changed and grew as readers this week.

Collaboration: We worked well with our partners this week.



The 7 Strengths and Reading Celebrations

- Recognize students' accomplishments, even their smallest accomplishments, to develop a sense of belonging.
- Cultivate a culture of affirmation; build a spirit of kindness for all.
- Deepen friendship by encouraging students to interact and engage with peers as readers (not only as playmates).
- Inspire hope by creating an atmosphere of enjoyment and pleasure around the reading experience.

The Classroom Library

What Is It? A large collection of texts (e.g., books, magazines, digital texts, pictures) available to students in a classroom.

Why Are Classroom Libraries Helpful to Super Readers? A classroom library provides super readers with the most critical tool we can give them—texts to read. Readers thrive by reading. A well-appointed library—one with a wide variety of levels, genres, titles, topics, languages, and media—enables students to find texts that suit their interests and needs.

In the classroom library, students should have plenty of texts to choose from all year long. The library should be arranged for easy access and navigation to promote engagement. Bins clustered by genre, author, and topic help students find books they need and want to read. If students have access to tablets, be sure you create time to organize for how students are integrating both on and offline reading into library routines. Engage students in organizing and contributing to parts of the library. One easy way to do this is to allow them to form “Our Favorites” baskets with their favorite trade books or baskets of their own writing, all to encourage others to read.



Text Types to Consider for Your Classroom Library			
Narratives	Informational	Opinion/Argument	Poetry
• Fairy tales • Myths • Graphic novels • Science fiction • Fantasy stories • Poetry • Realistic fiction • Historical fiction • Short stories • Memoirs • Blogs	• Primary source documents • Reports • Informative picture books • Blogs • Biographies • Journal articles • Infographics • Functional texts • Scientific texts • Mathematical texts • Magazine articles • Websites • Historical texts • Maps	• Editorials • Reviews: product, music, film, book • Blogs • Social media posts • Letters to the editor • Advertisements	• Odes • Sonnets • Free verse • Haiku • Cinquains • Couplets • Songs • Lullabies

The 7 Strengths and the Classroom Library

- Highlight belonging by including texts that capture the mirrors and windows of human experience.
- Deepen curiosity by offering children a diverse and interesting collection.



- Develop curiosity by including texts that are not commonly found in classroom libraries, but children love to read because they truly reflect their interests, such as sports books and silly joke books.
- Build children's capacity for kindness by offering them a wide variety of books containing characters and true-life heroes who go above and beyond for other people.

Mentor Texts

What Is It? Well-written texts that are used as models to influence students' reading and writing, or that inspire students personally.

Why Are Mentor Texts Helpful to Super Readers? To mentor is to teach. Super readers often have favorite texts that influence or inspire them in important, sometimes profound ways. For example, they may relate to a character or theme so strongly that they will articulate that the book changed their lives or the way they think about themselves. Informational texts may be mentor texts as well, especially those to which a reader turns time and time again for knowledge that enhances some aspect of their life. Some readers find a text they love so much that it provokes a turning point in their lives as a reader. They may even credit it for teaching them to read or making them think of themselves as readers for the first time.

Mentor texts may also impact a reader's writing life. All writers are readers. By definition, great writers have to be readers of others' texts and close and careful readers of the texts they create. Unfortunately, not all readers see themselves as writers, and we'd like to change that. Ernest's life was forever changed by a fourth-grade teacher who allowed him to write his own novel. As we allow our students to write in the artistic genres that they read, we will create the conditions for very close reading. When we've given the opportunity for fourth graders to write plays responding to social issues they'd like to change, they become very close readers of plays as a way to learn the genre. They also become close readers of the news and of research that deals with social issues that matter to them, such as environmental threats, global hunger, and bullying on school campuses.



Writers learn to write by noticing what authors do. Reading fantastic, exemplar texts teaches them how to...

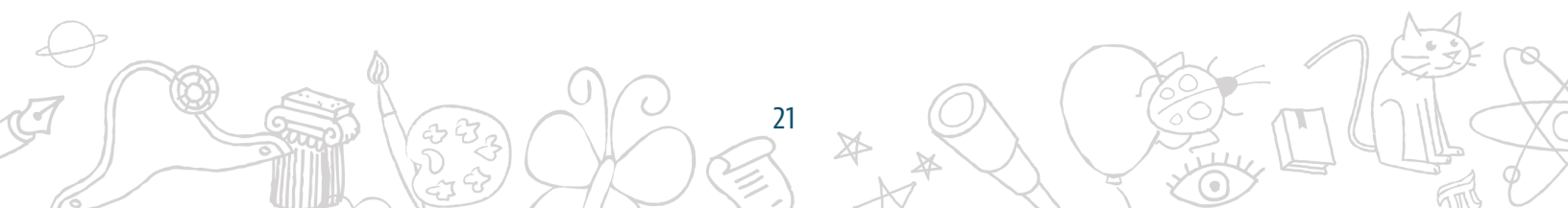
- Begin a story
- Teach something new
- Gather facts that build an idea
- Understand someone's feelings
- Make language beautiful
- Prove a point
- Build imaginary worlds
- Make a reader laugh
- End a story

The 7 Strengths and Mentor Texts

- Form book clubs based on favorite authors or genres (e.g., fantasy, historical fiction, comic books) to foster a sense of belonging.
- Encourage students to be curious about authors—why they write, where they get their inspiration, why they make the literary choices they do, and so on.
- Help students to develop the courage to try out new genres, styles, or topics inspired by their mentor texts.

Best practices become even better when they are rooted in the 7 Strengths. When social-emotional learning is seamlessly folded into the reading routines, students learn more effectively. Teaching structures such as the read aloud, close reading, and reading celebrations will help you to build the 7 Strengths in your students.

Now let us turn to the super practice of all practices, the key ingredient to raising a lifelong super reader: the practice of independent reading itself. We gave this practice a chapter all of its own because we want to be sure you take time to study it, implement it, and value it highly. It is often considered optional or supplemental, but as any super reader will tell you, this practice needs to be central: it is what turned them into lifelong readers. Let's find out how to integrate it into our instruction in magical, yet highly practical ways.





Welcome to the world of **Super Reading!**

Super Readers possess specific skills and qualities that allow them to engage with books and words. They find value in independence and are able to connect with other readers and their communities. Use this Classroom Guide to help foster Super Reader students and develop lifelong readers.

Join the conversation!

Use **#SuperReader** on social media to share your ideas and see what others are talking about. To view video, read articles, and download Super Reader classroom material, visit **[scholastic.com/super-reader](https://www.scholastic.com/super-reader)**.