

YBMC Lit Circle Staff Facilitator Guide

Welcome to Lit Circles! As a staff facilitator, you have a key role in encouraging a love of reading among our students. This can be challenging, so here are a few suggestions in case you're looking for ideas! **For Questions, see Dr. E.: *Ryan Edel*, redel@ybmc.org**

Folders, Attendance, and Submissions: Tracking Course Credits

All staff are welcome to facilitate the Lit Circles — the more the merrier!

I still have to track the individual course credits for each student! (I have to make sure every student gets their four credits to graduate). Page 5 includes the ISBE course codes — we'll determine these based on the books you're reading.

Tracking System: Each class will have a folder with an attendance sheet — check out your folders from Dr. E. at each morning meeting!

Do Not Lose Your Folder! I will not give students credit for missing writing — even if it's the facilitator who lost the folder. But I'll happily fill my jar of tears if a folder goes missing — and yes, I will make staff members cry if you lose your students' work. Trust me — you do *not* want to lose your Lit Circle folder! (But maybe I want you to . . .)

Suggested Pace to Meet .25 Credits in 8 Weeks

Each student who successfully completes a Lit Circle receives .25 credits in English. To receive credit, each student must do the following:

- **attend** at least 15 of the 20 discussion meetings
- **read** 250-300 pages of your chosen book
- **write** 8 pages of reflection/response

	Per Meeting	Per Week	Total in 8 weeks
Discussions	1 (Tues, Wed, Thurs)	2-3	20-24
Reading	12-15 pages	40-50 pages	250-300 pages
Writing	(Missed discussion: 1 page make-up)	1 page (250 words)	6-8 pages (1,500-2,000 words)

Tips for Leading Discussions

Do What Works Best for You

You've all led discussions before, so this is just a quick review. As long as you follow the attendance and credit guidelines on the prior page, you are free to do whatever works best for you! Everyone has their own style of reading and inspiring — the most important thing is that students see you enjoying the books you read with them.

Read!

Whether silent, out loud, or performed through interpretive dance, we just want the students reading. Life is pain — and words are the way to share!

Students Should Do Most of the Talking

If this means you need to sit with some long and awkward silences, that's okay! Every student will have thoughts on the reading — sometimes, it just takes time for them to feel comfortable speaking. I recommend leading off discussion with questions. Only after you know how your students feel can you crush their illusions of self-worth.

Invite Comments from Every Student

Some students love speaking up, and others might not speak up unless you say something like "And what do you think, Jane?" If you have quiet students, it's good to say "What about you, Joe? How do you feel about this chapter?"

Remember the Written Responses and Reflections!

Remember that students need to write 6-8 pages for their .25 credits. I recommend having them write one page per week — in eight weeks, they'll have all they need!

Offer Freedom to Write

Please encourage your students to write whatever they want. As long as they're reading and writing, that will get them engaged. The Lit Circles are *not* about grading how students think and feel, but encouraging the joy of reading and writing. Tears come later!

Judgment-Free Zone!

Some students will hate the reading — and that's okay! Ask them to describe what they disliked. You can turn this into a learning moment — any response to the reading

shows that they're paying attention! Welcoming multiple perspectives also means accepting disappointment. Pass around the jar of tears as needed!

Thank Students for Their Participation!

Whether the discussion goes well or not, it's good to thank everyone for coming to the Lit Circle. Please do this every day — we want to build the culture that reading is something to be appreciated! The more you trick them into reading now, the more homework I can assign later!

Beware Disruptions and Cell Phones!!

The Lit Circle won't work if someone is constantly checking messages on their phone or (worse) watching videos through the whole session. If you have a student who starts doing this, please let us know! If someone is disruptive, you can always ask this student to leave your discussion. Refer them to Kev or Case Management!

Take Attendance!

Students only get class credit if they attend 15 out of 20 meetings! If a student misses a meeting, they can do a one-page write-up about the missed discussion.

Questions to Ask Your Students

Here are some suggested conversation starters:

- What do you like about the reading? Is it applicable to your life?
- Was there anything you didn't like? Any sections you would write differently?
- What are your thoughts on the main character? Is this person making good choices? Bad choices? Dumb choices that make sense?
- What details stand out to you? What's the most memorable sentence here?
- Does this book remind you of other books or movies?
- Would you recommend this book to a friend? Why or why not?

Some terms you might find helpful:

- **Allegory**: a story meant to symbolize more abstract ideas and concepts.
- **Foreshadowing**: details given early in the book that hint at the future to come.
- **Metaphor**: Comparing two similar things by saying one of them is the other.
- **Juxtaposition**: presenting two very different details together.
- **Paradox**: stating something that makes no logical sense yet is still true.
- **Satire**: writing that pokes fun at society or human life in general.
- **Mary Sue**: a character who's too perfect to be real.
- **Tone**: The primary mood or feeling of the story.

Discussion Approaches

Here are some different approaches you can take in leading your discussions. There is no one “right” way to run your Lit Circle — use whatever works best for you and your students!

Group Reading Out Loud

You and your students can take turns reading the story out loud! Sometimes it works to go in a circle, other times to call on volunteers. Some students enjoy this approach, and others absolutely hate it. (If needed, the jar of tears is always open!)

Read to Your Students

This is the easiest for your students, and it may help students who struggle to sound out words. In this approach, you’d simply read out loud to the students, and then have students read along silently. To ensure students are benefitting, it’s important to have periodic discussions to see how much your students understand.

Silent Reading

Some students really prefer reading on their own, and you might decide that your group is responsible enough to do so. Just make sure that you factor in enough time for discussion and that you ensure students are actually doing the reading.

Trivia Competition

Every so often, you might have a game to see which students remember the most from the readings! You can award candy prizes! (Or not!)

Level 08 Classes (Lit Circles — 0.25 credits)

The Lit Circles are quarter-credit (0.25) courses designed to build student reading and writing skills. Each course requires attendance at 15 of 20 meetings, reading a total of 250-300 pages, and the additional writing of 6-8 pages (1,500-2,000 words) of reflection and response. The course number will reflect the focus of the course.

Readings (R)	10 points / 250 pages	Research Writing (RW)	—
Discussions (D)	15 meetings (of 20)	Creative Writing (CW)	6-8 pages response

ISBE Course Codes

Please enter the applicable Illinois State Board of Education code in the box on the front.

ELA 08.1 — General Literature Lit Circle

[01053A000 - Literature](#)

ELA 08.2 — American Authors Lit Circle

[01054A000 - American Literature](#)

[01055A000 - American Literature/History](#)

ELA 08.3 — British Authors Lit Circle

[01056A000 - British Literature](#)

[01057A000 - British Literature/History](#)

ELA 08.4 — Global Authors Lit Circle

[01058A000 - World Literature](#)

ELA 08.5 — Author Focus Lit Circle

[01060A000 - Literature of an Author](#)

ELA 08.6 — Genre Focus Lit Circle

[01061A000 - Literature of a Genre](#)

ELA 08.6 — Historical Period Focus Lit Circle

[01062A000 - Literature of a Period](#)

ELA 08.7 — Geography and Culture Lit Circle

[01063A000 - Literature of a Place](#)

ELA 08.8 — Peoples and Culture Lit Circle

[01064A000 - Literature of a People](#)

ELA 08.9 — Thematic Focus Lit Circle

[01065A000 - Literature of a Theme](#)

Which ISBE Codes Fit Best?

Choose no more than three, then check with Dr. E. for the code you'll use:

ISBE Course Code Option 1: _____

ISBE Course Code Option 2: _____

ISBE Course Code Option 3: _____

Notes: How Will You Facilitate Your Group?

What book are you sharing? Why did you choose it?

Which reading approach will you use?

☐ Group Reading Out Loud

☐ You Read Out Loud

☐ Silent Reading

☐ Other: _____

What's the most memorable part of this book for you?

What are some questions for discussion?

Any related books or movies you'd recommend with this book?
