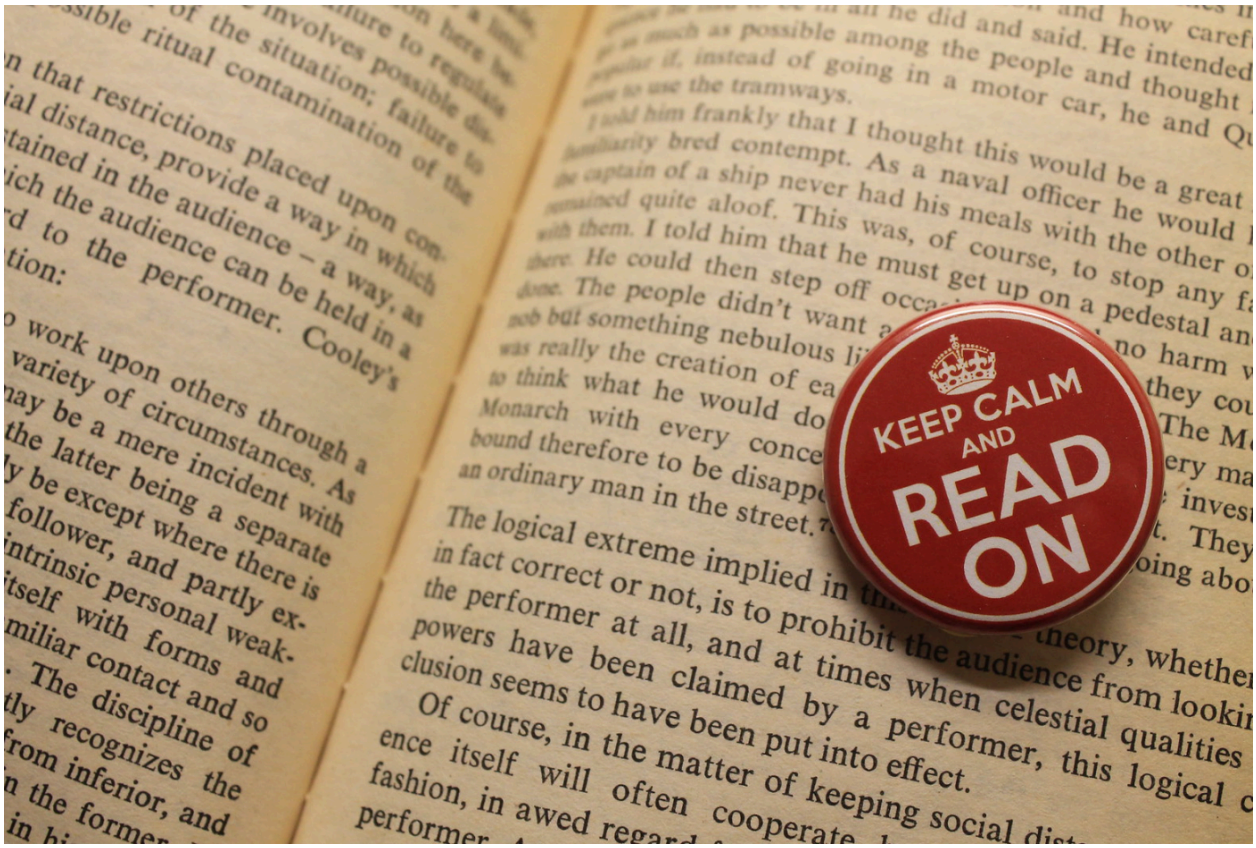
Emotion and Reader Choice



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Emotion and Reader Choice

Summary

This activity asks students to tap into their emotions and make text selections based on how they are feeling.

Students will be introduced to the notion of mood in texts and shown a selection of novels which evoke particular moods. They will also discuss how we can make informed predictions about how a text might make us feel. Students will also complete a short reflection and select a text for wide-reading.

Rationale

The relationship between emotions and text selection is incredibly complex. Previously held views of reading as a hedonic pursuit are thwarted by research that suggests we are just as likely to make selections to improve mood as we are to maintain negative moods. Adding to complexity, meta-emotions and meta-moods (how we feel about a feeling) also influence reader choice.

This lesson attempts to help students consider their emotions more closely, using this reflection to influence the reading choices they make.

Learning Intention

To consider the connection between how I feel and my reading choices.

Success Criteria

I can consider how different stories might evoke a different mood.

I reflect upon how I am feeling and understand how my emotional state may impact upon the reading choices I make.

I can learn about the various ways that I can make informed reading choices, distinguishing between effective and less effective methods.

Cross-curriculum Priorities & General Capabilities

General capabilities



Personal and social capability

Materials Required

A selection of novels and texts which evoke particular moods.

The 'Tapping into my Emotions' questionnaire

A short mindfulness activity (teacher choice)

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Outline

Preparation

Before the lesson, work with your teacher librarian/other teachers to examine your collection of novels, dividing a selection into categories by 'mood', for instance:

- Uplifting/Positive books
- Gloomy/Melancholy
- Fast-paced and exciting
- Romantic
- Mysterious
- High tension

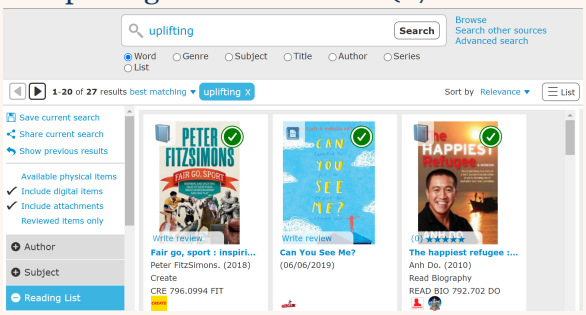
These categories of books will be used as example texts to help students consider the link between their emotions and book choice.

Discussion: 10 minutes

Explain to the class that today they will be thinking about how their mood impacts upon their reading choices.

Conduct a discussion about how students can predict what kind of mood a novel might have. Below are some talking points which students, or the teacher may suggest:

- *Genre:* Use the genre of the text to predict the mood, for instance dystopian or horror texts will probably evoke a gloomy or tense mood.
- *Cover:* Use the cover as a way to predict if they will like a text. Covers may also be the key to determining the mood of the story. This is a great opportunity to discuss how book covers are a form of marketing and may not always be the most reliable way to predict a novel's content.
- *Blurb:* Read the blurb of a book and predict the sort of mood which might be evoked.
- *Using the library catalogue:* Looking up a particular title in the library catalogue may provide more hints about what it is about.Using a mood word as a search term may also offer some hints. See the image below from my own school's library catalouge after using the term 'uplifting' as a search term (27 titles were found).



- *Reviews:* Consider using a website like 'Shelftalkers', which uses real students to review various popular titles (https://www.shelftalkers.slav.vic.edu.au/)
- *Author:* Considering an author they have read the work of to predict the mood of one of their other titles. Discuss if this is an accurate predictor of the mood of a text.
- *Recommendations:* Using the recommendations of other readers and/or teachers/teacher librarians.
- *Page sampling:* Reading a few pages of a book to get a feel for the mood and story.

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Discuss whether this is an accurate predictor of an entire novel. This is a good opportunity to talk about story conventions (e.g. purpose of the orientation of a novel).

Mood Mindfulness Exercise: 10 minutes

Begin by completing a mindfulness activity around breathing with the class. Many schools and teachers have their favourites, so use what you prefer. Some suggestions are below:

- Belly Breathing: Mindfulness for Children (4 minutes)
- Guided Meditation For Kids - Bubble Breathing and Mindfulness (3 minutes)
- Smiling Minds: Sea Creatures and noticing emotions (2 minutes 30 seconds)
- Smiling Minds: The Five Count Breath (2 minutes)

After the mindfulness activity, ask students to remain seated with their eyes closed. Ask them to place their hand on their heart and continue to focus on their breathing. Ask the students to silently ask themselves 'how do you feel today'?

Mood Questionnaire: 5 minutes

Ask students to complete the 'Tapping into my Emotions' questionnaire. You may need to preface this activity with an understanding that students do not have to share this information with anyone that they do not wish to.

Book Options: 5 minutes

Before sending students off to locate and choose a book to read based on their mood, use the pre-prepared categories of books and select a few to speak to the class about. For instance '*Today I am feeling a little frustrated. Things didn't work out how I wanted them to earlier today, so I am going to use a book to harness this frustrated energy. I want to read something fast-paced and energetic so I am going to choose…'*

Book Selection and Reading: Remainder of Lesson

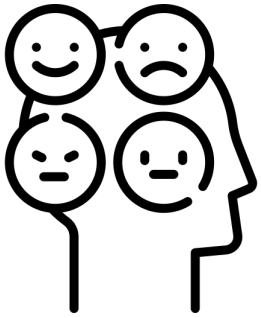
Give students time to choose a book and read based on their emotions, reminding them of the prediction methods the class discussed at the beginning of the lesson. Some students may require further support with their selections.

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Tapping into my Emotions

Your name: _____



This questionnaire is designed to help you tap into your emotions and then use these feelings to make reading choices.

How do I feel?

Colour in or circle the faces which best represents how you feel.

If none of the faces represent how you feel, draw and caption your own emotion in the question-mark box. Some suggestions have been made for you

Happy	Sad	Confused	Cheeky	Worried

Annoyed
Frustrated
Excited
Delighted
Relaxed
Content
Bored
Calm
Pensive
Regretful
Jealous
Spiteful

Angry

?

Embarrassed
Alarmed
Joyous
Bitter
Nostalgic
Optimistic
Pessimistic
Outraged
Proud
Relieved
Restless
Self-conscious

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Meta-Moods

Sometimes we have emotions about our emotion, or moods about our moods. These are called 'meta-emotions' or 'meta-moods' and they can impact upon our ongoing emotions throughout the day. Colour in or circle how you feel about feeling this way:

 Positive	 Neutral	 Negative

To make things even more complex, sometimes we want to stay in the mood we are in, and other times we want to feel a different way. Sometimes we might be in a negative mood and want to feel more positive, but other times we want to keep feeling in a negative way.

Complete the following sentence, using what you completed above, and then make a decision about whether you want to stay in this mood or change it.

Today I feel _____ and I feel positive/neutral/negative
(circle one)

about this. I want to stay in this mood/change my mood to _____.
(circle one)

You will now use this reflection to help you select something to read.

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