

# Children's Books: Author Studies

## Course Syllabus

TINT (The Innovative Northwest Teacher)

3 Quarter Credits

Instructors: Ashley Smith and Brooke Schmidt

Submit assignments to [tintbhs@gmail.com](mailto:tintbhs@gmail.com)

Congratulations on choosing a class in which you will immerse yourself in the rich world of children's literature and earn a graduate credit at the same time!!!

*"Author Studies are a powerful teaching tool. There is no better way to turn kids on to reading than to build a community joined by a great book. The goal of an author study is to make a connection between a book and an author's life. This shows children that authors are real people, develops motivation to seek out other work by the same author and hopefully inspires children to write."* ---Reading lady.com

### Assignment 1.

Submit an introductory paragraph about yourself, your background, and teaching experience.

In "The Allure of Authors: Author Studies in the Elementary Classroom", author Carol Brennan Jenkins argues there are three main types of author studies:

- An author study, a "literary biography," in which students make connections between the author's life and work.
- An author study is based on the reader's "critical response" to the books, focusing on an author's themes, characters and writing, with little or no attention to the author's life.
- An author study, based on the reader's own response to the books of a particular author, focusing on books can help readers relive and reflect on events in their own lives.

While each of these types of author studies has its own merits, Jenkins urges teachers to consider pulling strands of all three types into their author studies, viewing an author study as a "multiple response." In a multiple-response author study, students look at an author's books as literature while also doing research about the author's life. They reflect on how they personally respond to the author's books.

Think about which type of Author Study appeals to you and fits into your curriculum needs. Submit a paragraph that describes how you will set up an Author Study. Do you want to introduce the students to new authors, or will the unit be used to develop their research or writing skills? or both?

Submit a list of at least ten authors and illustrators you might use with students. Explain why you chose each one and how they might fit into your curriculum.

Go to [Reading Rockets Interviews](#). Watch six video interviews of authors/illustrators of your choice. (If you cannot watch the videos you can read the transcripts.) Write a paragraph describing whom you selected, titles of some of his/her books and some interesting facts you learned about each one.

### **Assignment 2.**

Go to this article from the Reading Rockets website and count how many Authors or Illustrators you know. Research 5 you do not know. Who did you research? What stands out to you as the most significant fact you learned about each? [Authors to know](#)

Famous celebrities are writing children's books more frequently. Find and read books by 5-6 famous people. Write a response paragraph about this search. What do you think of the quality of their work?

Read the 2 articles describing issues with celebrities writing children's books. What do you think of this trend? [Craft](#) [Galling](#)

### **Assignment 3.**

Complete 4 activities from the 11 options below:

Option 1. Set up an Author Center

Decide on a location for an Author and Illustrator center. Create a display that can change as you study various Authors and Illustrators. Make sure there is enough room for work the students will create that will be added later. Write a description of this center or send in a photo. Submit a list of Authors and Illustrators you plan to study. [pinterest](#)

Option 2. Celebrate Author's Birthdays

Create a "Celebrate an Author's Birthday" plan for your classroom. It could be a learning center or a system for reading books by each Author as he/she celebrates their birthday. For inspiration check out: [Birthdays](#)

#### Option 3. Author families

There are many Authors and Illustrators who have a spouse, sibling, possibly a child also illustrating or writing children's books. Choose three families and write about their works, their relationships, etc. For example: Jerry, Brian, and Andrea Davis Pinkney. Ed, Barbara, Michael, and Rebecca Emberley. [Pinkney](#) [Small-Stewart](#)

#### Option 4. Awards

Decide on a method of how to set up a children's book award activity in the classroom. Write a paragraph on ideas on how students nominate books, vote, announce the winners, and creatively display the winning books in the classroom. [Awards](#)

#### Option 5. Develop a Timeline About an Author or Illustrator

Create a timeline that can show biographical details as well as information about the books the Author or Illustrator has published. Add photos if available. [Andrew Clements](#)

#### Option 6. Author Biographies

Locate and compare at least two biographies of an Author or Illustrator. Write a paragraph about what you found.

#### Option 7. Author Comparison

Choose 2 Authors who have books that can be read by reluctant readers and 2 Authors who write books for experienced readers. List the Authors, their books and write a paragraph that details what you found.

Reluctant [Motivating Readers](#)

#### Option 8. Set up a Letter Writing Campaign

Decide on a plan of how you will have students write a fan letter to an Author or Illustrator. This project is perfect for individual, group or classroom Author Studies. Have students mention specific characters and say why they are such favorites. Submit a paragraph describing how you used this with your students and share the results. [Letter writing](#)

### Option 9. Activities for Demonstrating Knowledge

Describe 10 activities you might have students do to share knowledge learned during an Author or Illustrator Study. I have listed some ideas below that you might want to expand upon.

1. Students dress as their favorite character out of the author's book and act out a scene.
2. Students partner up and read books by the author and compare/contrast writing styles of the author.
3. Students write a letter to a character in one of the author's books.
4. Students create a bulletin board that depicts the author's books and life.
5. Students read aloud favorite passages from an author's books
6. Students put on an "Author Fair" along the lines of a Science Fair.
7. Students publish a newspaper about the author.

### Option 10. Assessment Rubric

Design an assessment activity to use at the conclusion of the Author Study. It might be a checklist including standards met during work. It might be an exit questionnaire. Submit a copy of this plan. [Culminating Projects](#)

### Option 11. Bookstore or Library Visit

Visit the children's section of a local bookstore or library checking out what is new and available to you. Write a paragraph naming the store and describing what you have discovered. Tell about a new to you Authors or Illustrators you found.

## Assignment 4.

**Reading Log:** Create a reading log that lists the titles of at least 30 books by authors who are new to you. You can read 6 chapter books or 30 picture books. If you read a mix of the two, each chapter book counts as 5 picture books. Submit this list at the end of the class.

For each book you read please list:

- \*Title and author of book
- \*Genre
- \*A brief summary
- \*A few sentences describing your reaction

**Submit 3 Author Study Projects:** For each Author Study Project create a brochure, display board or document sharing the most interesting information you have gathered. You might include a Biographical sketch of

the Author or Illustrator background, interesting information from interviews, Quotes, Book reviews, Titles of new books, A list of published work. [Sample 1](#) [Sample 2](#)

Reflection: Please write 1 to 2 paragraphs reflecting on the learning that you have done in this class. Have your goals been met or have they changed? How has this class better prepared you to share about authors and illustrators? What next step are you most excited to take?

Thanks for choosing our class!

Grading Scale/Evaluation: Graduate Credit A-F

Students will complete 4 assignments that include written reflections and activities. Each assignment will be scored in the following areas:

1. Student's writing is easy to understand and free of typos and other grammatical mistakes.
2. Student shows evidence of reading and understanding a variety of resources.
3. Student shares their personal experiences and opinions.
4. Student explains how their new learning will inform their future instruction
5. Student appropriately cites their resources

Student's grade will be determined based on the total points they receive on the 4 assignments (100 points possible).

A= 91-100 Points

B= 81-90 Points

C= 71-80 Points

D= 61-70 Points

F= Below 61 Points

Policies:

All course work must be completed by the deadlines.

Students are expected to make contact with the instructor to provide contact information when the course begins

All coursework is to be completed online via the internet.