

Syllabus



Literature Circles: Make Reading Social

Syllabus

Literature Circles

"Literature Circles are small, student-led discussion groups where each reader has a role—like summarizer, questioner, or word detective—designed to deepen comprehension and build language skills. They're not just fun and engaging—they align beautifully with the Science of Reading by supporting vocabulary development, oral language, background knowledge, and comprehension strategy practice in a meaningful, social context. When paired with structured literacy instruction, Lit Circles give students a purposeful way to apply what they're learning about how language works."

Contact Hours: 1

Course Learning Objective:

Learners will explore what a literature circle is and how to introduce student choice and small group discussion with defined circle roles for each reader.

Demonstration of Learning:

For the learning artifact, learners will complete a survey describing how to incorporate a Literature Circle into their classroom, library or informal/afterschool setting.

Course Structure:

This course consists of three parts.

1. Watch - Watch the recorded session to learn about the skills you will need to complete the course.



2. Learn by Doing - Complete this activity to practice the skill(s) presented.
3. Learning Artifact - an activity to apply knowledge or reflect on practice in your setting required for course credit.

Skills Checklist

- ☐ Rationale for More Choice for Reading Engagement
- ☐ Elements to Consider for Literature Circles
- ☐ Literature Circles Roles

Resources:

- ☐ [A Discussion Guide: Science of Reading: Ohio DEW Link](#)
- ☐ [Collaboration Benefits with School Librarian Link](#)
- ☐ [Presentation in Canva Link](#)
- ☐ [Literature Circle: Routines](#)
- ☐ [Anchor Chart: Lit Circle Roles + Comprehension Strategies](#)

Learning Artifact: Google Doc

- ☐ [Lit Circle Learning Artifact](#)

Standards:

Ohio Educator Standards

- 4 Teachers plan and deliver effective instruction that advances the learning of each individual student.
- 5 Teachers create learning environments that promote high levels of learning and achievement for all students

ISTE Educator Standards

- 2.1. Learner Teachers
continually improve their practice by learning from and with others and exploring proven and promising practices that leverage technology to improve student learning. Teachers:
 - 2.1.b. Pursue professional interests by creating and actively participating in local and global learning networks.
 - 2.1.c. Stay current with research that supports improved student learning outcomes, including findings from the learning sciences.



2.5. Designer Teachers

design authentic, learner-driven activities and environments that recognize and accommodate learner variability. Teachers:

2.5.a. Use technology to create, adapt and personalize learning experiences that foster independent learning and accommodate learner differences and needs.

2.5.b. Design authentic learning activities that align with content area standards and use digital tools and resources to maximize active, deep learning.

2.5.c. Explore and apply instructional design principles to create innovative digital learning environments that engage and support learning



Explainer and Guide

TEACHER GUIDE: Literature Circles & the Science of Reading

What Are Literature Circles?

Literature Circles are small, student-led discussion groups where each member takes on a specific role (e.g., summarizer, vocabulary detective, connector, questioner). Students read a shared text and meet regularly to talk, reflect, and deepen their understanding.

Why They Work in Elementary Classrooms:

- Encourages active engagement with texts
- Promotes student voice and ownership of learning
- Strengthens peer collaboration and oral language

Connection to the Science of Reading:

Literature Circles reinforce the **comprehension strand** of Scarborough's Reading Rope by:

- Deepening **vocabulary knowledge**
- Practicing **oral language** through structured dialogue
- Enhancing **background knowledge** via connections and context
- Applying **comprehension strategies** in authentic discussions

When paired with **explicit instruction in phonics, decoding, and fluency**, Lit Circles give students a chance to **apply their skills in real reading tasks**, bridging the gap between word recognition and language comprehension.

Tips for Success:

- Choose accessible, high-interest texts
- Teach and model each role explicitly
- Rotate roles regularly to build broad skills
- Scaffold discussions at first, then release responsibility

Family Newsletter



FAMILY NEWSLETTER: What Are Literature Circles?

Dear Families,

In our classroom, your child will be participating in **Literature Circles**—a fun and engaging way to build reading comprehension, vocabulary, and critical thinking.

In a Literature Circle, small groups of students read the same book and meet to talk about what they've read. Each child takes on a special role—like summarizer, vocabulary finder, or question-asker—to help guide the discussion and keep everyone thinking deeply about the story.

Why do Literature Circles matter?

They support what we know from the **Science of Reading**—that strong readers need both decoding skills *and* language comprehension. Literature Circles help students grow their:

- **Vocabulary**
- **Listening and speaking skills**
- **Understanding of story structure**
- **Confidence as readers**

We're excited to help your child strengthen their reading in a joyful, meaningful way. Ask your reader about their group and what they're discovering in their book!

Warmly,
Your Teaching Team