

Letter for Families

Dear Families,

Today in language arts, we launched Module 1: The Power of Reading.

We will spend the next 8 weeks learning, reading, and writing about why people read and how they access the books they want. Research shows that students who develop more knowledge about a topic are better able to speak and read clearly on that topic, and better understand what they read. The EL Education curriculum we use in class lets students spend more time learning about topics in order to gain and share knowledge.

Your student will develop a range of vital reading skills throughout the module, and explore vibrant, varied stories about young people who love to read and others who long to learn.

In class, we will read, write, and talk about why people read. Students will learn that there are many reasons to read. Some people read to empower themselves with information; others read to unlock new worlds or ideas. In this module, we will also learn about different ways that people access the books they want, whether through a beloved community bookstore as in *The Book Itch: Freedom, Truth & Harlem's Greatest Bookstore*, via a traveling donkey as in *Waiting for the Biblioburro*, or with support from a kind librarian as in *Tomás and the Library Lady*. Through collaborative discussions and a narrative essay, students will draw connections to the experiences of other readers and also begin to tell their own stories.

During this module, students will also focus on habits of character. As students collaborate with classmates and share personal connections to texts, they will nurture habits of character that support them in becoming ethical people. Respect—for the unique perspectives and lived experiences of their classmates and of the characters in module texts—is critical in this module. Students also work to become effective learners in this module, drawing on their perseverance as they build new skills and tackle new challenges.

As a final performance task, students will create a personalized book that contains their reflections on the module guiding questions, excerpts of their narrative writing, and an “About the Author” page to describe themselves to readers. Students’ individual books are collected to construct a Class Library, which they explore and share with others during a Book Tour event.

How can you learn together at home?

- **Share your own experiences with reading.**
 - Discuss the following questions: What was the first book that had an impact on you? How did it make you feel? Today, what do you read?
- **Brainstorm ways to access books in your community.**

- Locate your nearest library or another community resource that helps people access books. How far away is it?
- Use an online search engine to find free digital books or articles. Save those you want to return to and read together in the future.
- **Seek out and explore the stories of other readers.**
 - Through stories, news articles, or interviews with friends, find additional answers to the question: Why do people read?

What will students learn in class?

Guiding Questions and Big Ideas	<p>Why do people read?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● People read to empower themselves and others with skills and knowledge. ● People read because they are curious and want to build their own ideas and discuss new perspectives. ● People read to imagine lives, worlds, and experiences that are different from their own. ● People read to build and sustain cultural and historical knowledge. <p>How can people get access to the books they want?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● People can seek support from others, like family members, peers, teachers, librarians, or other community members. ● People can advocate for the opportunity to read and access books that reflect diverse experiences, topics, and perspectives. ● People can support spaces that share books with the wider community. <p>What barriers to book access might people experience?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● People might live far away from places where they can get books. ● People might not have their own collection of books to read. ● People might face unjust rules, laws, or circumstances that keep them from reading. ● People might not be able to access books that reflect diverse experiences, topics, and perspectives.
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Texts	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Waiting for the Biblioburro</i> by Monica Brown• <i>Tomás and the Library Lady</i> by Pat Mora• <i>The Book Itch: Freedom, Truth & Harlem’s Greatest Bookstore</i> by Vaunda Micheaux Nelson• <i>Nasreen’s Secret School</i> by Jeanette Winter• <i>When I Was Eight</i> by Christy Jordan-Fenton and Margaret Pokiak-Fenton• <i>Fatty Legs</i> by Christy Jordan-Fenton and Margaret Pokiak-Fenton
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See Module 1: The Power of Reading: Homework Calendar for details about classwork, homework, and independent reading.