LITERACY PANDEMIC:

Contaminating one lifelong reader at a time!

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Introduction

This handbook was born out of another project, one in which I surveyed the students at Jefferson Middle School in Caldwell Idaho, as to their reading habits, their likes and dislikes. In the study, which was based on of the book "Readicide" by Kelly Gallagher, I created three questionnaires and finished off with an interview process. What I found out was that Mr. Gallagher was correct as to what it was that students loved and hated about reading. I found out that they loved independent reading. They enjoyed being able to explore their interests with great books, the social aspect of recommending great literature, and warning others about stories that just didn't cut it. They went on and on about the great ones and ranted about the authors that started with great stories and finish them off in a paragraph or chapter, forewarning others not to waste their time.

The results of the study were the creation of a book club on campus after a year of enjoying books and having a great time; when summer came, students promise to go to the library. We had done a library drive to make sure that the students had library cards to be able to keep reading in summer. The summer reading program was a huge success with an increase of 59% to their regular summer program. We had also created an online blog for those who were unable to go to the library. The following year, the book club on campus was alive and well; we enjoyed many books, many conversations both pro and con on different kinds of books, different genres, and continued with the blog as well.

This workbook is for the teachers, the ones at home and at school. I have enclosed ideas that I have compiled from speaking with students, parents, and teachers, as well as some that I
have gathered from the World Wide Web and teaching books. Some I have altered to make them appropriate for the needs and personality of my students and me, others I have left pretty much as I have found them.

What this workbook is and is not, is quite simple. This book is about motivating children to read for fun on their own time and terms. This book is not an academic comprehension guidebook. Obviously, reading without comprehension is futile, while reading without retention is useless; when a student reads for fun, they figure out these two gems rather quickly! This workbook is about ideas; how to get children interested in reading and how to compel them to pick up a book when it isn't a requirement.

**Quick Tips and Ideas!**

Quick tips are little things that can help guide a child to a book or get them to read more. We all have them and we tend to use them without realizing what a great resource they really are. I have collected a wide range of Quick tips from parents, students, teachers, articles and any other resource I could find. Many of the tips come from tips that have be reconstructed and made to work for me and my students depending on our needs. No, these tips aren't new, they won't create 'world peace' but if they encourage one child to read or help a child to challenge themselves to read more, better or longer, they have accomplished their goal.

Here is a quick observation to help those overwhelmed; teaching is an art not a science! Relax and have fun, it's contagious!
Parents

Parents are their children's first and lifelong teachers! Nothing will motivate a child more than their parents, families and close friends. There is so much that parents can do to help motivate children to read for fun! Not only will your child read, but you two will have a much closer relationship due to all the quality time! Here is a quick list of easy things to do;

*Use two bookmarks, one to mark where you left off and one to show up to where you are planning to read.

* Read! Children are more likely to copy what you are doing, than what you tell them to do.

*Read and Share!

*Partner up with a younger child and share a story.

*Read a story and recount it to someone else; a grandparent, parent, sibling, or friend.

*Take turns reading parts in a story

*read a play

*turn a story into a play

*Reading breaks, 15 minutes throughout the day, read to relieve stress and to energize!

*Have the child read to you

*directions for anything you are working on

*recipes while you cook

*a story while you are driving

*a story to a sibling, grandparent, pet

*ingredients while you are grocery shopping

*magazine articles while you are waiting in line

*Make them your personal assistant

*sort the mail
*read the daily schedule

*read the travel brochures for the next vacation

**Visitors**

Motivating readers does not need to be a solitary effort, besides our fellow teachers and parents there are many to help us excite and motivate and persuade students to read! I love using Pinterest.com as one of my sources, but to create real excitement there is nothing better than to have a local celebrity make an appearance at your public library or school.

In the 2013-2014 school years I invited Amazon’s bestselling author Michaelbrent Collings to speak at Jefferson Middle School and he provided us with an amazing assembly. All it takes to get a local celebrity to show up is a little networking and the gumption to ask. After all the worst that can happen is to be declined.

Some authors, celebrities and motivational speakers do charge a fee, so it is very important to find out these facts prior to setting up the event. An ounce of prevention really does go a long way! Watching the celebrity in a YouTube video will also provide you with the necessary assurance that they are good speakers, are age appropriate, and that they are
well received. Once the celebrity agrees to visit your school or library it is important to agree to a topic that will be presented, as to not have any surprises. After all this research, conversation, and agreement has been settled, all that is left to do is to notify the teachers to prepare the audience, the student body. This can come in the form of reading some of the author’s works, reading about the celebrity, having the students come up with questions for the celebrity, or merely to be preparing the students as to appropriate behavior. The effort is worthwhile, and the results are amazing!

A master at his craft, Michaelbrent Collings captures over 700 students with the power of words and hijinks!
Bestselling Author Michaelbrent Collings visits Jefferson Middle School

posted May 9, 2014, 12:15 PM by Monica Caidon

JMS students and staff were treated to a personal visit by #1 bestselling novelist, screenwriter, and writing instructor Michaelbrent Collings. Mr. Collings has written many bestsellers, including The Haunted, The Colony Series, The Loon, and more. He spoke to Jefferson Middle School students about the art of writing and the importance in life of having the ability to communicate well. He shared stories about his experiences growing up, and how he became a story-teller. He was very gracious to take pictures with our "Page Turner" reading club members and sign autographs for students.

Students described Mr. Collings presentation as "funny," "entertaining," and "inspirational." "He made us believe that we are all story tellers and that we all have the ability to put our stories into writing. I hope he will come back next year!"
Reading Passport-

This is a concept that has many variations. The idea is to have students read a wide range of literature to help them widen their appreciation from changing the genre to exploring through time, space, and realities.

❖ **Genre passport**: Create a passport and have the students try out different genres from both fiction and nonfiction categories. Simply have a list of options available and have students read a certain amount of each genre, such as 3 fiction selections and 3 nonfiction selections. The catch being that they all need to be from different categories. Other variations to this concept are to have students find stories from specific location such as: towns, cities, states, countries, worlds, universes, galaxies, and dimensions that are either real or not. These differentials should give students a chance to explore their interests and feed their imaginations.
- **World map** – Create excitement at home or in the classroom by using push pins to illustrate the location visited in the stories they read. This simple idea can assist in engaging children to read and discover new places. It also ties in perfectly with Around the World in Eighty Days!

  ![Images of world map and books]

- **Around the world in 80 day challenge** - In this challenge, student(s) trek around the world by reading books from different countries or a book such as *Around the World in Eighty Days by Jules Verne* that travels through many countries. It can be altered for any amount of days that suits your needs better, such as a monthly, quarterly, or a semester challenge. Shorter challenges work best for younger children, while longer challenges are more appropriate for older children.

  ![Images of world map and books]

- **Books through time (past, present, & future)** - Same concept as Around the world but instead of traveling through our world, the emphasis is in traveling through time. Great way to introduce and engage in historical fiction and biographies, but allows for fantasy and dystopian
Postcard from location, time, space - Same basic concept, but this time we travel through space, time, and location. Traveling does not have to be just through real time; Neverland is great place to visit, so is The Shire, Narnia, or Hogwarts. Reading about the past, future, or alternative dimensions can also make for a very interesting passport and reading experience.

Dream vacation - Where would you go on vacation if time, finances, and ability were not an issue? Would you go to Jamaica, or maybe the Sherwood Forest? Dream vacations is all about the “what if.” What if I could go wherever I’d like, how would I get there, how long would I stay, what would I do while I’m there, whom would I see? These are the questions that a dream vacation passport would answer; reading a series or several stand-alone books and magazine articles would answer those questions.

Country, city, state, location of the week (day, month) - Concept here is to pick a date or location and read about them in some manner. For instance; if the location was England, the children could read any book that takes place in England.

Bucket list book list - Create a bucket list of all the places and activities that you would like to partake in, and read a book about that location and/or activity! A great way to encourage non-fiction reading.
- **7 wonder of the Ancient world/ 7 wonders of the modern world** - Travel to the 7 Wonders of the World, ancient or modern. There are plenty of books, both fiction and nonfiction that have such travels!

- **Tour of family tree locations** – Start off with the children’s family tree and then discover what that location was like when the family was living there. The students will discover a very personal storyline of how their families lived.

- **By using passports or a composition book for a passport a years’ worth of travel can be documented**, leaving a keepsake for the student to relive and encourage further journeys!

**IREAD**

This game is a variation of bingo; instead of having to find numbers on a card, you have to find genres. The cards have different kind of fiction and /or nonfiction genres in each box. The players will read a book, article, graphic novel, blog…etc. to fulfil each box in order to be able to sing out IREAD and win the game.

Great examples of genres and subgenres are: paranormal, horror, science fiction, romance, historical fiction, adventure, chick lit, steampunk, realistic fiction, mystery, science fiction, science, urban fantasy, dystopia, personal development, classic, fantasy, D.I.Y., magical realism, humor, memoir, philosophy, biography, autobiography, fables, myths, potpourri.
Here is a sample of one card:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>O</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>K</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>horror</td>
<td>fantasy</td>
<td>western</td>
<td>humor</td>
<td>mystery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>memoir</td>
<td>philosophy</td>
<td>biography</td>
<td>personal development</td>
<td>newspaper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>science fiction</td>
<td>chick lit</td>
<td>Your Choice</td>
<td>steam punk</td>
<td>classic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>auto biography</td>
<td>science</td>
<td>history</td>
<td>D.I.Y.</td>
<td>travel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>poetry</td>
<td>cookbook</td>
<td>myth</td>
<td>music</td>
<td>adventure</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Readathon**

Who said that all motivational ideas had to be original? Practically everything has been done before, but you can make anything your own and who knows maybe even better! I bumped into this little gem from across the pond, a readathon from [www.readathon.org](http://www.readathon.org).

The concept is pretty easy, it can be altered to fit your individual needs, and it only has four easy steps: pledge, sponsor, read, collect. Okay, there is a little more complicated than that, but not by much (theoretically).

In 2013, I did a readathon at Jefferson Middle School in Caldwell, Id. My efforts were well received.
and motivated some amazing students to help St. Luke’s Children’s Hospital.

The individuals who will sponsor the event (parents, friends, students, community) should be aware of how the funds will be used; in my case we gave the entire donation to St Luke’s Children Hospital. Let me side track for a moment here, the reason a readathon is such a powerful and successful tool is because it motivate students to read. I chose the Children’s Hospital, because children care about other children. However, you and your school should pick a cause or recipient that is important to your student’s body; that may be a soup kitchen, the school itself, or maybe some other place that is important for your community.

Readers will read no matter what, but we’re trying to motivate the nonreaders, by making sure that whom you are benefiting is important to the students, and not only for the adults in the room, the motivation will be successful.

Running a readathon isn’t really that complicated as long as you have the permissions from the administration. Once the administration provides permission for the readathon, it is important to advertise. This can be as simple as putting posters on the walls, send emails, or put literature into the teacher’s mailboxes. The posters can be done by the teachers themselves, the students, or you can get the PTA and/or the student’s body to help spread the word.
The next step is to create pledge sheets and provide them to all the teachers to distribute. This is where excitement is crucial, the more excited the student’s body is, the more they will read.

It is important to let the students know that when we're talking about reading for the pledge, it is not necessarily a book or novel; a graphic novel, a comic book, a blog, a magazine, or a newspaper article count as reading too. Honestly, anything that it is in the written form could be utilized for the readathon. It is crucial that students are aware that those that support their reading may be asking questions; therefore they need to be ready to answer those questions. Once you have secured who you will be beneficiary it’s time to go crazy and advertise. I also went into my community and asked for donations which resulted in pizza and gift cards. Making the students feel like partners not only motivates readers, but it empowers them to be more than they already are, which of course is huge! Ask for help, they are more than willing to do assist in running, advertising and reading for the event. For extra oomph, make it an annual event!

The next step is to have a sponsors form available to hand out to the students who are pledging to read. These forms will be filled out by friends, family, coworkers and neighbors, who are willing to sponsor the student’s reading. It is helpful for sponsors to have some advice as to how much to donate, this could be done in many ways; they can donate a small amount per page, donate an amount per book, or for people who read a lot they can just do a flat donation. For instance, a student that is a heavy reader, say they read five books with 1000 pages each, would be rather expensive if paid per page, but if they chose to sponsor them with a flat amount
say five dollars per book or 25 dollars total that would be a very nice donation without being exuberant. Now let's imagine the reader that doesn't read a lot, a struggling reader who would like to contribute and help out in the readathon. They struggle and they will not read a lot of pages or a lot of books for that matter, this is where generosity really is appreciated because it rewards the effort, but a little really does go a long way. If this student reads ten books with ten pages each, we are looking at a hundred pages. Imagine those hundred pages at ten cents a page we are now looking at ten dollars and that is only from just one sponsor. If they have five sponsors, that would make it $50, which is a huge donation for a single student to collect. To be clear, while this is a fundraising readathon, we are primarily interested in having students read, read, and read some more. They can read anything for the mere pleasure of reading: magazines, books, newspapers, blogs quite honestly anything that is in print, and then after all the reading is done and the enjoyment has been had, it is a fundraiser to add onto their pride by helping others.

The last step (for the students) is collecting the funds from all their sponsors and turning them into
the appropriate person whoever is designated for this task; the teacher, librarian, secretary or coach. As for the readathon coordinator, you still have work to do! Collecting the funds is just part of your job; the other part is to get these funds into the hands of the new recipient. Do the transfer in a public forum to give the students closure for the event, while building excitement for a future readathon.

Here is the challenge as to the behind the scene requirements for the readathon. Depending on how big and who you want to participate in the readathon you may need not only your principal’s permission, but the superintendents as well. If you wish to advertise into the community, you will need not only permission, but announcement articles that must be approved as well. Another thing to think about is that many organizations you may wish to fundraise for, will also require you to fill out an application and permission; because they want to be sure that your event and their reputation are in sinc.
Don’t forget to use your walls to showcase great books, and promote lots of reading for every day, and not only the reading events!

**Book Clubs**

When people think about book clubs, images of intellectuals sipping tea seem to come to mind. That may have been the image once upon a time, but my experience is of teens showing all their craziness and zeal for the books they have read and loved or hated!

These three villainous wizards on the loose are a few of my readers! I created a book club on campus and attracted students from every corner and ability imaginable. You ask how this can be possible? Easy, instead of running the book club in the traditional way, where we pick a book and have everyone read the same book at the same time and discuss it thoroughly, I ran my club by genres. We pick a genre to read and this allows students to pick any book and format that was of that genre.
This technique allows students to read something they want to read, in the level and language they are able to read. By using this technique we were able to attract students of every ability, socio-economic group, race, gender, and clique. We had the cool kids, the shy kids, the jocks, the loners, and the newcomers. As a club, we set up a few rules and came up with our club name. It is important that you allow the students to have ownership of the club; because that makes them responsible for how the club is run and how they all behave.

First we made suggestions as to what we would be called, and had a vote on all the suggested names. Then we came up with our rules. We chose to read based on genres, each month we voted on the new genre we would read the following month. The only exception we had on this was when we invited an author to come speak at the school, that month we had an author of the month instead of a genre of the month. Another decision the club members made was that you could read more than one book per month, but were responsible to speak about at least one. Also students were encouraged to read different books, so that we would have a summary and real critique of more books. The more books read the more suggestions that were available to be offered.

Students would meet once or twice a week to discuss what they had read and what they thought about the book. We would also compare characters from the different stories in scenario battles of all sorts. Conversations such as who was the better heroine; Hermione (Harry Potter) or Belle (Twilight)? Were the pictures necessary in “The invention of Hugo Cabret” by Brian Selznick? We discussed diction and style, story lines and authors. Some conversations were calm and measured while others got completely out of control with emotion and laughter.
This club was for the students, by the students, and about the students. They kept time, order, and flow of what we were discussing, and also, when we needed to move along to the next speaker. In short, they not only learned about books and read a lot, but they also practiced patience, responsibility and control. Maybe this is the book club you are looking for in your classroom or living room!

**Genres and Lists**

It is crucial that teachers and parents have a knowledge base as to the different kinds of books that are available for their students and children. Two pieces of information that can be helpful is to know what genres are available, what they are, and to have lists of books that may interest students depending on their personal interests. Wordles and lists are great tools to inform quickly and effortlessly. Teachers and parents should also have sources as to where to find books that are both fun to read and appropriate depending on age, ability, personal taste, values and morals. Summaries of books are available in various places online and of course word of mouth.

A few places I like to use are:

Amazon.com

BookBub.com

Goodreads.com

Scholastic.com

Readitfoward.com

Epicreads.com
The Public library and various readers’ blogs! When in doubt if a book is right for your child or yourself the internet has many places that can tell you what you need without ruining the story.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fiction</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Black comedy</td>
<td>A form of comedy that treats serious issues humorously</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classic</td>
<td>Fiction that has become part of an accepted literature, widely used in school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comedy</td>
<td>A story that is amusing and has a happy ending</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dystopian</td>
<td>A type of writing that explores social and political scenarios.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Epic</td>
<td>A heroic poem, a long narrative poem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Espionage</td>
<td>An spy story</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fable</td>
<td>A narrative that tells of a lesson may contain animals that speak legendary,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>supernatural tales.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairy tale</td>
<td>Stories about fairies and magical creatures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fan fiction</td>
<td>Fiction written for or by a fan in regards to characters from a movie or show</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fantasy</td>
<td>Fictions that have other worldly characters or settings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiction</td>
<td>Stories that are not real or have an element that is not real/true.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Folklore</td>
<td>Stories, songs, myths and proverbs of people that were handed down by word of mouth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gothic</td>
<td>Stories with elements of romance and horror.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graphic novel</td>
<td>Stories told visually in drawn pictures, using panels and speech bubbles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historical fiction</td>
<td>A fictional story with real and invented characters that takes place during a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>historical time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horror</td>
<td>Stories that have or create dread or fear from character or readers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humor</td>
<td>Stories that are full of humor, with meant to entertain and cause laughter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legend</td>
<td>Stories that use fact and fantasy about a national or folk hero</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mystery</td>
<td>A suspenseful story about a puzzling event that is not solved until the end of the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mythology</td>
<td>story</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Legend or traditional narrative, based in a historical event that explains a natural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>phenomenon, often in regards to actions of gods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Novella</td>
<td>Shorter than a novel but longer than a story</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Novels</td>
<td>A story that is lengthy and complex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poetry</td>
<td>A verse, rhymic writing that creates emotional responses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Realistic fiction</td>
<td>A story using made up characters that are in a situation that could have really...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Style</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romance</td>
<td>Love stories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satire</td>
<td>longer than a story but shorter than a novel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science fiction</td>
<td>A story that blends futuristic technology with scientific fact and fiction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steampunk</td>
<td>A story that blends technology with Victorian era as in Jules Verne novels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suspense</td>
<td>Stories about harm that will befall the character or characters and the actions they take to prevent it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tall tale</td>
<td>Humorous stories about exaggerations and heroes that do the impossible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thriller</td>
<td>A story that is designed to make the reader nervous and excited about what is happening to the characters as to upcoming doom.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tragicomedy</td>
<td>A story that blends tragic and comic forms, very often a serious story with a happy ending</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western fiction</td>
<td>Stories from western civilizations.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Nonfiction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>argumentative</td>
<td>A form of writing in which a debatable topic, is presented in an evidence gathered, well-reasoned format.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Articles</td>
<td>Writing that is published in a newspaper, magazine of other short format.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autobiographies</td>
<td>The story of a real person's life written by that person.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biographies</td>
<td>The story of a real person's life written by another person.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blogs</td>
<td>An informal or conversational writing style that is located in a regularly updated website or web page.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulletins</td>
<td>Newsletter of an organization or society.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encyclopedias</td>
<td>A book set that provides information about many subjects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essays</td>
<td>Short compositions that reflects the authors outlook.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explanatory</td>
<td>Writing that provides explanations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journals</td>
<td>Magazines or newspapers that deal with a specific subject or activity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maps</td>
<td>A diagram that represents the location of bodies of land, water and physical features such as cities, states, roads, etc…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media</td>
<td>Mass communication; television, radio, newspaper, magazine, internet, etc…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memoirs</td>
<td>A biography.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narrative</td>
<td>Factual information presented in a story.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newspapers</td>
<td>A daily or weekly printed publication that is unstapled and folded which contains articles, advertisement and various entertainment forums</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonfiction</td>
<td>All the information is accurate and true.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Favorite Young Adult Literature

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A Child Call &quot;It&quot;</td>
<td>Dave Pelzer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Tale of Two Castles</td>
<td>Gail Carson Levine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above World</td>
<td>Jenn Reese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adventure Wanted: Slathbog's Gold</td>
<td>M.L. Forman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aida</td>
<td>Leontyne Price</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Airhead</td>
<td>Meg Cabot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al Capone Does my Shirts</td>
<td>Gennifer Choldenko</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alex Rider Series</td>
<td>Anthony Horowitz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Among the Enemy</td>
<td>Margaret Peterson Haddix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arcadia Awakens</td>
<td>Kai Meyer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artemus Fowl (series)</td>
<td>Eoin Colfer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bayou Dogs: The Haunting of Derek Stone</td>
<td>Tony Abbott</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beautiful Creatures</td>
<td>Kami Garcia</td>
</tr>
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<td>Beauty Queens</td>
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**Strong Women in Young Adult Literature**

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**Movies, Television and Video Games in Young Adult Literature**

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Technology

Twenty first century methodology requires teachers and schools to implement the knowledge and use of computers in the classrooms. Students love using computers and are very knowledgeable to a point. It is to our benefit and theirs that we find interesting and fun activities to implement this tool.

Cautionary Tale for Hardware Health

You wouldn't walk down a dark street, in the shady side of town all alone, would you? Technology is sometimes like that. There are safe and secure areas and sites, and then there are the shady and dangerous types of areas and sites. It is always a good idea to know the neighborhood and to keep vigilance to the surroundings.

In the world of computers that means that you must be wary of the integrity of the site. You must have enough knowledge of the producer of the site, and be confident it does not contain: viruses, Trojans, unwanted pop-ups and unwanted add-on software. How can you be sure that the site you use is legitimate and trustworthy? You should always read the fine print for any program you wish to download. Most sites clearly tell you that they will put “cookies” onto your hardware. They also tell you what information they will extract from your computer or programs. If you feel that it is invasive, don’t download the program. When you are downloading the program carefully read every step to confirm that add-ons that you do not want are not downloaded. However, there are companies that are not so clear and up front to what they will do. Having a strong anti-virus program on your computer system will also protect you from the known Trojans and viruses. Another way to protect yourself is by
researching the programs and companies. Google searches can be a wonderful source for quick and reliable information, just make sure that you go to sites that are known.

**Creating a Blog**

There are many ways and sites available to have your very own blog! Blogs are great for creating excitement for readers and writers alike, by offering a community to socialize with; after all reading is a social activity. The first thing is to find a blog site that fulfills your needs and budget. My advice is that you start with a free site and try it out for a while; if you end up really liking it and have a strong following, it is really simple to upgrade the service. Weebly.com and Sites.google.com are two great places to start your blogging adventure.

The first thing that must be done is to open an account. This is a very simple process of registration and choosing your web address. Once this is complete you will have options as to the kind of blog that you wish to create. Depending on your needs you can choose from different kinds such as store, blog or site. If you wish to encourage reading and conversation a blog site would be best.

Next thing is to choose a theme or background. While the provider may have many wonderful themes, it is good to remember that you can customize these themes and backgrounds with your own pictures or you can purchase other themes from reputable providers. Once you have chosen, now you need to start building the site, starting with the name of the site and what your site will be about. For instance, if you are planning to provide your opinion on books, but do not want to discuss them, there would be no use for a comment section. Taking a little time to review existing blogs would help you in deciding your content and layout.
Speaking of layout, that is the next step! Layout merely means how you are going to set up your site. Where will you place your comment box if you want one? Where will the buttons to navigate throughout be placed and how many pages will you set up? These details while important are as simple to create as they are to move around. Each time you start a new page you will be asked to name it. You will also be asked where you wish it to be located. Using the handy panel on the left side of the page, you will be able to not only add content but change the look and feel of a page or the entire site by just clicking and dragging the items to where you’d like them.

Once the site is constructed it is time to add content. This might actually be the most difficult part, if you are anything like me. Here you get to concrete your thought process as to who is your audience and what do you want to say to them. What kind of conversations to you want to engage and how often will you be adding new content. Once you have completed this step, take a step back and review your work. You have just created your own blog! There is only one last step, pushing the “Publish” button, after you do this your blog will be alive and visible to all your soon to be friends and devoted followers. Congratulations!

**How to create your own blog on Weebly.com!**

Weebly offers a drag and drop website which makes it simple to create and edit your new blog, here is how to construct it!

- Go to [www.weebly.com](http://www.weebly.com)
- Log on using your Google sign on, Facebook sign on or creating a new account using your full name, email and a password. Once these steps have been completed, click on the “Sign up. It’s Free” button and start having some fun creating your own site!
Choose the kind of site you would like to make.

Customize your blog with a theme or use one of your own.
Choose your domain, if you already own one you may use that or you can create a free site and purchase it at some other time if you would like.

Picking a theme is as easy as choosing one of the many available on the site or downloading one of your own!
Now you are ready to add content to your front page!

This handy panel is the driving force behind the click and drag format that allows you to add pages, content and change the look of your site.
Adding pages is a breeze too!

Time to add content!
Next time to log onto your blog, you will see a page such as this one. Where you can choose what you would like to do, such as edit and add more content or see some stats to how popular your site is. Creating a blog is really as easy as clicking and dragging!

Memes

Memes and posters are easy and lighthearted visual motivators to encourage students to read! They can be copied from practically anywhere online, this is a small array of memes that I really like and a few that I created myself. The creation of these digital bumper stickers are as easy as finding a quote adding a picture and hitting the go button. I have included a few free sites on the resource page for your meme creating pleasure, but if you prefer they can also be created or copied in a word document!
PHOTO ALBUM

IF YOU WANT YOUR CHILDREN TO BE INTELLIGENT, READ THEM FAIRY TALES.
- EINSTEIN

If it's raining outside, what a perfect day to curl up with a good book!

If it's snowing outside, I think I'll curl up by the fire with a good book!

What a hot, sunny day! I don't want to get sunburned so I'd better curl up in the shade with a good book!

The Four Food Tribes

There is no such thing as too many books. However, there is such a thing as not enough room.
A library is a repository of medicine for the mind.

Greek Proverb

Bookworms will rule the world - as soon as we finish one more chapter...

Fight evil. Read books.
Fairy tales are more than true; not because they tell us that dragons exist, but because they tell us that dragons can be beaten. —G.K. Chesterton

A mind needs books as a sword needs a whetstone, if it is to keep its edge.

Blessed are the children of the Bookworm for they shall inherit the Books.

My Patronus is a Bookworm.
Resources and References

Meme Creator websites: Besides allowing you to create memes using their images, you can also download your own pictures.


Passport


WWW.projectsbyjen.com/GTW--2012


