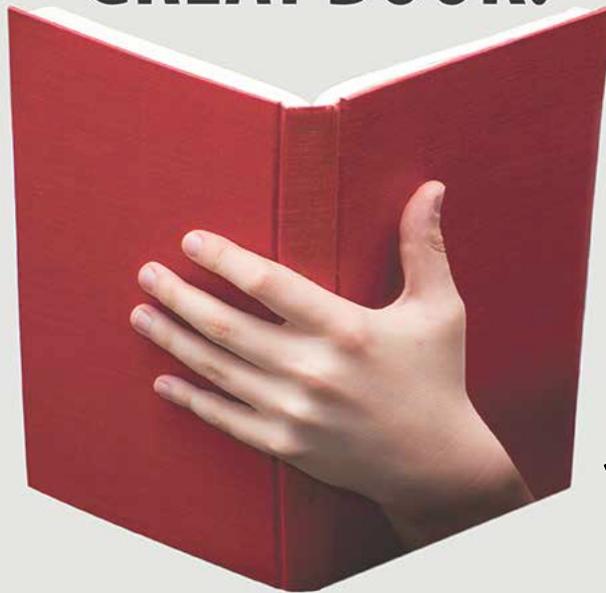


# Reading Choices

Pembroke's Friday Freebie

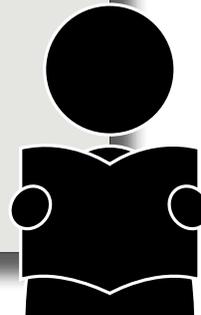
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## Reflecting on Reading Choices: Activities

The following six activities, some of which involve the use of line masters, invite students to think about why they make the reading choices they do. Teachers can choose one or more of the following to help draw students' attention to the key issue of choice and to have students take an inventory of the choices and preferences of their novel reading.

### Activity 2-1: Factors in Book Choices

Provide students with a copy of the line master "Factors Influencing Novel Choice" (page 61). Students can place a check mark beside any item that they feel influences their reading choices. To help them prioritize, invite students to put an asterisk (\*) beside three choices that are the most influential. Survey the class to find out which factors are the most popular. Students can discuss reasons for their choices.

### Activity 2-2: Whose Opinion Matters?

Challenge the students to rank the following six possible influences on how they make choices in reading:

friends, websites, a teacher, a librarian, book reviews, themselves.

Most important is #1; least important is #6. If they wish, they may add items to the list.

Once they have prepared their lists, prompt them to meet with other students to compare their rankings. Students could also take an opportunity to share any book titles that have been recommended to them. You could survey the class to determine which factors most influence students' choices.

### Activity 2-3: Would You Rather . . . ?

Students can approach the opinionnaire "Would You Rather . . ." (page 62) in one of two ways. They can complete the form, which is intended to help them consider their preferences for reading, independently, or they can work in pairs, interviewing each other. Students can then work with three or four classmates to compare answers. As teacher, ask students to consider these questions: "Who answered most similarly to you? Was there a perfect match with anyone?" Finally, choose one or more of the items from the "Would You Rather . . .?" line master and survey the class to find out the most popular choices.

### Activity 2-4: Read Anything Good Lately?

Direct each student to prepare a list of all the print texts read in the last 48 hours. Lists may include books, magazines, social media connections, and environmental print. Once their lists are completed, have students put a star beside the reading that they spent the most time with; a check mark beside any item that was "assigned" — in other words, not read by choice — and a dot beside their most unusual or special reading experience. In groups of four or five, let students share

their lists and discuss. Which items are similar? Which are unique to individual students? Who spent the most time reading?

#### Activity 2-5: My Great Book Bookshelf

Activity 2-5 is inspired by *My Ideal Bookshelf*, a book in which authors Thessaly La Force and Jane Mount present the thoughts of cultural figures who share the titles of books that have mattered most to them.

The line master “My Great Book Bookshelf,” page 63, provides students with an opportunity to consider books that are important to them. Students fill in the spines with different titles of appropriate books — they are not limited to novels. The same line master can be used at different times of the year as a tracking sheet for students to record novels they have completed reading.

**Extension:** Invite students to choose at least one of the titles and write a description of the book, explaining why it is important to them.

#### Activity 2-6: Top 10 Lists

Suggest that students put a number of age-appropriate titles from this list on a To Read list.

This activity invites students to study the “Leisure Reading List of Top 10 Titles” (pages 119–120) and consider some of their own choices. In groups of two or three, students review the list and identify the titles they are familiar with.

Tell the students that the list represents titles that its two authors mutually agreed upon after some discussion and negotiation. They worked together to prune their own favorites to the specific lists of just 10 items featured on the line master (they did, however, manage to slip in a few more favorites or sequels in parentheses). What are some titles that students might add to any of these top 10 lists? One criterion for the lists is that the books had to have been published since the year 2000.

There are, however, many great books from the 20th century and earlier, too. Many of these are classics that the students or their parents will have been introduced to. Tell students to work alone or in the same small groups as above to prepare a top 10 list of classic titles from the 20th century (and, if they wish, before) that they would recommend for independent reading.

## Factors Influencing Novel Choice

Place a check mark to the left of any item that you feel influences your reading choices. You might also put a little star (\*) beside the three factors that influence your choice of novel the most.

- Level of Difficulty:** Is the novel too easy? too challenging? just right?
- Length:** Is the novel too long? too short? just right?
- Format:** How appealing is the shape of the book? the size of the print? the font? the length of chapters?
- Author:** Is the author familiar? Is she or he popular?
- Series:** Is reading about familiar characters in familiar situations an appealing idea to you?
- Interests:** Are the story and setting familiar? What knowledge will you gain by reading this book?
- Availability:** Is the book one of yours, or does it belong to the classroom? a library? a friend?
- Situation:** Will you read the book independently? as part of a small group? as part of a larger group?
- Issues:** What can you learn about personal conflicts? social conflicts? political conflicts?
- Cultures:** What can you learn about personal identity? the identity of others?
- Setting:** Is the setting modern? historical? in the future? in another country? in a place of interest?
- Genre:** Is this genre familiar to you? Would this be a typical choice for you?
- Popularity:** Is the book popular with other students?
- Gender Appeal:** What gender is the protagonist? Is the book free of stereotypes?
- Cover:** How appealing do you find the title? the illustrations? the colors? the blurb? the review comments?
- Recommendations:** Has the book been recommended by a teacher? a parent? a friend? a librarian? a bookstore owner? a relative?

## Would You Rather . . . ?

Complete this opinionnaire to consider some of your reading preferences. Aim to make only one choice for each of the 10 items. Another way to approach this is to find a classmate as a partner and take turns interviewing each other. You could mark up a copy of the opinionnaire as your partner offers an answer.

1. Would you rather read . . .
  - a) more fiction than non-fiction?
  - b) more non-fiction than fiction?
  - c) fiction and non-fiction equally?
2. Would you rather . . .
  - a) subscribe to a magazine?
  - b) buy a novel?
  - c) borrow books from the school or community library?
3. Would you rather . . .
  - a) read news online?
  - b) read a newspaper?
  - c) watch the news on television?
4. Would you rather . . .
  - a) read a hardcover novel?
  - b) read a paperback novel?
  - c) read an e-book?
5. Would you rather . . .
  - a) read a novel that is 400 pages or more?
  - b) read a novel that is between 200 and 400 pages?
  - c) read a novel that is less than 200 pages?
6. Would you rather . . .
  - a) read a novel that is funny?
  - b) read a novel that is historical?
  - c) read a novel that is fantastical?
7. Would you rather . . .
  - a) read a biography or an autobiography?
  - b) read a how-to information text?
  - c) read a novel in either traditional or graphic format?
8. Would you rather . . .
  - a) read something recommended by a teacher or librarian?
  - b) read something recommended by a friend?
  - c) read something you chose yourself?
9. Would you rather . . .
  - a) read a novel and then see the movie?
  - b) see the movie and then read the novel?
  - c) just read the book or just see the movie?
10. Would you rather . . .
  - a) read novels that are in the same series?
  - b) read different novels by the same author (not series)?
  - c) read novels by a variety of authors?

**My Great Book Bookshelf**

