



HOW-TO-GUIDE

How to Set Up Summer Book Clubs

Introduction

Summer is a critical time to build student literacy skills through reading longer works. [ThinkCERCA's collection of Longer Works Units](#) provides 4-6 weeks of student guide activities and teacher facilitation guides for every step of a deep longer works study. These hybrid learning units are meant to be used with physical copies of the texts. The book club format can be modified and adapted to meet the needs of the students in a class.

In our [Longer Works Units](#), you will find:

- **Units At-a-Glance:** Pacing for both 50 and 90-minute periods of study over the course of 4-6 weeks.
- **Teacher's Guide:** Day-by-day lesson facilitation notes with tips for differentiation.
- **Student Guides:** Editable and *printable* student workbooks with offline activity pages to extend learning.
- **Diverse Learners Guides:** Differentiated versions of student guide pages that can be easily swapped in.
- **Anchor Text Modules:**
 - 1 informational text lesson to build further context around the longer works
 - Direct Instruction lessons designed to teach students specific skills for analyzing longer works
 - Close Reading and Writing Lessons for each chunk of chapters within the longer works (*students read text offline in physical book copies*) including pause and reflect questions, key vocabulary, 10 reading comprehension questions, and a CERCA writing prompt.
- **Speaking and Listening Skills—Socratic Discussion:** Direct instruction and student/teacher guide resources for holding a final Socratic discussion around the longer works' essential questions.
- **Writing Portfolio—Literary Analysis Essay:** Direct instruction and student/teacher guide resources for writing a final literary analysis of the longer works.

Introduction (continued)

The Unit At-a-Glance and Teacher Guide for each unit presents the organization and structure for implementing the longer works units and includes materials to support students in various groupings (whole class, small group, individual).

We encourage educators to engage in best practices by previewing all selections and preparing students in advance regarding topics that will be covered in instructional materials.

Implementing the Book Club Model

1 Student Choice:

Students want to be the architects of their own learning—allow them to give input on what longer works they would like to explore. [View our catalog here.](#)

2 Choose a book club implementation model:

There are a variety of ways in which book clubs could be implemented in the classroom. You can choose what works best for your students.

- **One longer work, Small Groups:** In this model, the class has decided to read the same longer work but to break into small groups for discussion and analysis activities.
 - Pros: This model may be easier for teachers to track as there is only one set of resources to preview and assess. Students can also engage as a whole class in the Socratic discussion and portfolio pieces around the same topic.
 - Cons: May limit student choice if the chosen longer works was not their preference. One longer works may not be able to accommodate the full range of skill and interest levels within the class.
 - Teacher tips for implementation:
 - Consider grouping students in different ways. A few to consider: mixed skill levels; similar skill levels; grade levels; etc.
 - Circulate (or “sit in” on small group discussions) and conference with student groups often.
 - Provide group planning sheets to hold them accountable for each step of their journeys.
- **Multiple longer works, Small Groups:** In this model, the class has decided to read different longer works in their small groups.
 - Pros: Allows for more student choice over literature selections and engages interest. May be able to accommodate a broader range of student reading and skill levels. Creates opportunities for lively small group discussions.

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- Cons: Teachers will need to preview and track multiple resources across multiple longer works. Limited whole class discussion opportunities.
- Teacher tips for implementation:
 - Circulate (or “sit in” on small group discussions) and conference with student groups often.
 - Provide group planning sheets to hold them accountable for each step of their journeys.
 - Consider bringing students together for whole group conversations. A few ideas: jigsaw discussions about skills they are learning; Socratic discussion around a common theme; peer review of writing prompts; book talks; etc.
- **Independent Study**: In this model, students are all engaging with a longer works unit on their own, asynchronous path.
 - Pros: Maximizes student choice over literature selections and engages interest. May be able to accommodate a broader range of student reading and skill levels.
 - Cons: Teachers will need to preview and track many resources across multiple longer works. Limited whole class discussion opportunities. Students will lose the benefits of peer collaboration and accountability.
 - Teacher tips for implementation:
 - Circulate and one-on-one conferences with students often.
 - Provide students with independent study planning sheets to hold them accountable for each step of their journeys.
 - Consider bringing students together for whole or small group conversations. A few ideas: jigsaw discussions about skills they are learning; Socratic discussion around a common theme; peer review of writing prompts; book talks; etc.

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3 Create book club norms:

Determine expectations and norms together as a whole group, then allow students time in their small groups to write their own “book club constitutions” stating their specific group norms and expectations.

- As a whole group, lead a conversation with students about what makes compelling discussions by going through the **Direct Instruction Lesson on [Conducting and Participating in Great Discussions](#)**. When leading a Direct Instruction lesson as a whole group, consider having students participate in the comprehension questions by having them raise one finger if they think the answer is A, two for B, etc., then discussing the correct answer as a group.

4 Determine roles and schedules:

Provide students with an editable calendar where they can work together in groups to determine how they will meet certain reading and activity benchmarks in the time given.

Encourage students to rotate roles so that everyone is given a chance to shine and build their skills.

- **Here are a few example roles that are often found in book groups:**
 - *Moderator (Help keep participants on topic and ensure the discussion stays respectful.)*
 - *Questioner (Ask questions of participants to keep the discussion moving or to clarify ideas or details)*
 - *Recorder (Keep notes on what is said during the discussion to review at a later time.) Discussion Leader (asks key questions of the group during discussion time)*
 - *Speaker/Liaison (reports out to whole class and coordinates with other groups)*
 - *Googler/Word Wizard (searches for answers to questions & vocabulary definitions)*
 - *Task Manager (keeps the group on schedule)*
 - *Art Director (in charge of visuals for group presentation)*

Implementing the Book Club Model

5 Discuss & Reflect Across Groups:

Even if students are working independently or are reading different longer works in small groups, it is pivotal for students to come together to reflect upon and share their learning with each other.

The student and teacher guides provide many discussion and reflection opportunities that can be easily modified for individual, small group, and whole class groupings.

Consider providing students with a mix of different discussion groupings to practice peer collaboration and speaking and listening skills.

- Teacher tips for implementation:
 - If students are reading different longer works in small groups or in independent study, consider having them deliver “[book talks](#)” to the rest of the class to “hype” their longer works and encourage peers to read the longer works independently.
 - You might also consider bringing all students together for the final socratic discussion. You can adapt the essential question into something that bridges a common theme across all of the longer works.
 - Consider bringing students back together for a round of peer editing of their portfolio pieces. Having a peer who has not read the longer works peer edit can provide students with key feedback on any gaps in their claim→evidence→reasoning chains that may be taken for granted by those who have read the longer works.

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