

Make the most of your reading

Make the most of your reading consists of general exercises for the reading of English fiction. The purpose is to give ideas for activities that can be used for all sorts of books, not for any specific titles.

The material is divided into three parts: *Before reading*, *While reading* and *After reading*. Hopefully, this material will add to the joy of reading by getting students to talk about the characters and the plot, for example. It will also give students the opportunity to see connections with their own lives and experiences.

BEFORE READING

Here are some ideas about what to do before your students plunge into a book. Some of the exercises are on two levels (I. – easy, II. – a little more difficult).

The front cover of the book

Look at the front cover of the book.

I.

1. Is the front cover a photo or a drawing? What does the photo or drawing show?
2. Do you like the cover? (*Yes, it's nice/interesting/beautiful/mysterious. I like the colours. – No, it's ugly/horrible/strange. I don't like the colours.*)
3. When you see the cover, what do you think the book is about?

Example: ***Epic Game* by William Kowalski**

I think the book is about card games. A woman plays cards. I want to read this book. I want to know what happens.



II.

1. Describe the front cover. What does it look like?

Example: ***Epic Game*** by William Kowalski

The front cover is a drawing. A woman's hand holds a card, ace of hearts. The background is greyish green, almost "dirty".



2. Do you like the cover? Why?/Why not?
3. What is the title of the book? What does it make you think of?
4. When you see the cover, what do you think the book is about? Why do you think that?

Example: ***Epic Game*** by William Kowalski

I think the book is about a woman who plays cards. She meets different people at casinos all over the world. Maybe she meets a man. I want to read this book to know if this is what happens.

Vocabulary

Is there a specific vocabulary connected to the theme? First, ask the students if they know any words or expressions that belong to the theme. Next, introduce a few words and expressions that will facilitate their reading. This could also be a start for a discussion of the contents of the book.

Example: ***Epic Game*** by William Kowalski

The main character of the book says these things that give you a picture of what she is like. Read the sentences. What adjectives on the the next page would you use to describe her?

Don't be a wuss (mes).

Just do it.

I rely on no one but myself.

I have only one goal in life. To make as much money as possible.

Just get it over with.

I don't like sudden turns. I always have a plan.

Examples of adjectives

| | |
|--|--|
| a loner | en ensamvarg |
| tough | hård |
| independent | självständig |
| cold | kall |
| ambitious (in a negative sense) | ärelysten, äregirig |
| selfish | självisk |
| a control freak | kontrollfreak (som inte kan släppa kontrollen) |
| unfeeling | okänslig |
| indifferent | likgiltig |

Love

Many books deal with love and relationships. Here are some expressions that have to do with love.

| | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| to be in love | att vara kär |
| to fall in love | att bli kär |
| to fall out of love | att sluta vara kär |
| to be with someone | att vara tillsammans med någon |
| to walk someone home | att följa någon hem |
| to care about someone | att bry sig om någon |
| to kiss someone | att kyssa någon |
| to have a good time | att ha kul, att ha det bra |
| You have to move on. | Du måste gå vidare. |
| forever | för alltid |
| I will always love you. | Jag kommer alltid att älska dig. |
| To dump someone. | Att dumpa någon/göra slut med någon. |

WHILE READING

Here are a few things you can do during the reading.

I.

1. Read the first few pages aloud. Talk about what happens and what the students think will happen. This is a good way of getting into the book.
2. Break up the reading into chapters/sections and talk about each chapter/section.
 - Who tells the story? Is it the same person all the time?
 - What happens in this chapter/section?
 - What do you think will happen in the next chapter/the next section?

II.

1. Read the first few pages aloud. Talk about what happens and what the students think will happen. This is a good way of getting into the book.
2. Break up the reading into chapters/sections and talk about each chapter/section.
 - What happens in this chapter/section?
 - What do you think will happen in the next chapter/the next section?
 - As you go on reading, do the characters change? How?
 - Do you like the characters? As you go on reading, does your attitude towards the characters change? Do you like them more? Do you like them less?

Character chart

Make a character chart like the one below. If you want to, you can draw pictures of the characters. Examples from *Epic Game* by William Kowalski.

| Picture | Name | What we know about him/her |
|---------|---------------|--|
| | Katherine/Kat | She is a professional poker player. She lives alone. She has no children. |
| | David | He is Kat's best friend's son. He is about ten years old. He is a weird child. |
| | Charlie | He is David's father. He is good-looking. He is a nice guy. |

AFTER READING

Your opinion of the book

Here are a few examples of ways to express opinions about the book:

I like this book because ...

it's exciting/thrilling (*spännande*), interesting (*intressant*), romantic (*romantisk*), fun (*rolig*), touching/moving (*rörande*), sad (*sorglig*).

I want to know how it ends.

I like the characters.

it's about XX, which I like/which I'm interested in./I have experienced something similar.

I don't like this book because ...

it's boring (*tråkig*), silly (*dum, fånig*), uninteresting (*ointressant*), frightening (*skrämmande*).
nothing happens.

when you start reading it, you know exactly what's going to happen.

I don't like the characters.

there is too much violence (*våld*)/sex/love/sorrow (*sorg*) in it.

I don't like love stories/detective stories/thrillers/science fiction/fantasy.

Talk about the book

I.

1. Who is the main character?/Who are the main characters?
2. What do the characters look like? Can you find descriptions of them in the book?
3. When you read a book, you get your own picture of the characters. Describe them. Are they tall or short, slim or fat, good-looking, pretty or ugly? Do they have long hair/short hair or are they bald? Are they blond/dark?
4. Do you like the characters? Are they nice, kind, unpleasant or nasty? Clever or stupid?
5. Do you think the characters do the right things?
6. Are there any pictures in the book? Look at the pictures and say something about each picture.
7. How does the book end? Do you like the ending?
8. Have you experienced anything like this in your own life?

II.

1. Is the book divided into chapters? Are there different narrators in different chapters who give different perspectives?
2. Do you like the characters? Why?/Why not?
3. Do you agree with what the characters do? Why?/Why not?
4. Would you have acted in the same way or would you have acted in a different way? How?
5. How does the book end? Had you expected the book to end like that?
6. Have you experienced anything like this in your own life?

Outline

Make an outline of the book and write what happens.

Example: *Epic Game* by William Kowalski

| | |
|---------------------|---|
| Introduction | Description of the main character, her life and background. |
| Main events | The e-mail from the lawyer. Kat's best friend is dead. She has to take care of her friend's 10-year-old son. She meets Charlie, David's father. |
| Ending | Kate wins the tournament and one million dollars. She calls David and Charlie. She will probably go and see them in England. |

Storyboard

Draw your own pictures of the story. Tell the story with the help of your pictures.

Advice to the characters

Should the characters have acted in a different way? Give them advice!

Example from *Epic Game* by William Kowalski: *Kate, you should have had something else than poker in your life.*

Interview the characters

Work together with one or several classmates. One of you interviews the characters in the book. The others play the characters and answer the questions. Before you start, write the questions together.

Caption the pictures

If there are pictures in the book, write captions (*bildtexter*) to each of them. One sentence for each picture.

The ending

Write another ending of the book.

The author

Find facts about the author. What can you find out about him/her? Has he/she published other books?