

BASIC READING WORKSHOP



How you introduce the Reading Workshop approach to your students will depend on how long you have been working with them. The plan described below assumes that you are starting on the first day of school; it may need to be adapted if you are starting in the middle of the school year. It may also need to be adapted according to your own comfort level with this approach. This section explains how to get started with a very basic Reading Workshop model; you'll add the "power" components as your students become ready for them.

Daily Reading Workshop Structure

Begin by establishing a regular Reading Workshop routine in your classroom. Many teachers use the following structure:

- Read aloud and mini-lesson: 15 to 20 minutes
- Independent reading and conferring: 30 to 35 minutes
- Closure or response to reading: 10 minutes

The ten lesson ideas in this chapter will help you establish this structure over the next two weeks. The Reading Workshop approach may be completely foreign to your students, so they may need time to adjust to each part of the workshop. The first few lessons won't adhere to this format because it takes time to introduce the individual parts of the Reading Workshop, but over the next few weeks you will work toward establishing the three-part structure described above.

Remember that for each of the first ten lessons, you'll need to choose a book that can be read aloud in one sitting. Carefully select each book for the particular purpose described in the lesson. Each lesson includes two suggested book titles that would work well, and you can find the entire list of suggestions on page 35. Later you can begin reading chapter books aloud and creating your own mini-lessons based on the content of those books.

Please note that while this section is organized into ten individual days, you might actually spend as much as a month establishing your basic Reading Workshop. Take as much time as you need. Since it's important to allow students time for independent reading every single day, you may need to take several days to teach some mini-lessons. Don't worry! Quality instruction is more important than sticking to a timeline, and rushing through a lesson will only leave you and your students feeling stressed. Relax and enjoy the journey!