



Penguin  
Random  
House

Education

# **Resource Pack for New Teachers**

Grades K-8

Tips, Ideas, and  
Booklists to Help You  
Get Started in the  
Classroom

## Dear New Teacher,

You did it! You have made it to the world of inspiring young minds. The job ahead is exciting and challenging. If you're feeling nervous, excited, or overwhelmed, rest assured you are not alone. You've got this!

As a veteran educator, there are a few things I have learned along the way that have helped me keep my passion and love for learning alive. I would like to pass on a few of my strategies, particularly those that have had the biggest impact on students and on maintaining my commitment for continuing to grow every year.

**Maintain professional and personal balance.** Develop emotionally healthy relationships outside of work and surround yourself with a positive network of other educators. Those are the ones you can count on to remind you that your lesson wasn't so bad, or to give perspective when you're faced with a challenging student. Your network should also challenge you to grow as a professional, offering positive feedback and affirmations, as well as productive criticism. Keep growing by reading professional publications and attending PD relevant to your needs and interests. Make sure to take time for yourself. I love my students but also need time to rejuvenate and reset. Never feel guilty for doing something just for you. I promise you won't regret it.

**Build positive relationships with *all* your students.** I stress the word *all* because there will be students that you will find it difficult to connect with. I have always found that those are the ones that need connections the most. Get to know your students and their families, no matter how busy you feel. Ask about their families and tell them about yours. By asking, you show them that you care and respect the different cultures and backgrounds that they bring to your classroom community. They will love and respect you for being willing to try.

**Engage your learners in meaningful tasks and activities.** Utilize high-quality and award-winning literature and texts that are representative of the class community. Students love to see themselves and their cultures authentically represented. This helps them engage more openly with the materials, while also developing their understanding of the world around them.

My colleague, Dr. Dana Godek, and I are thrilled to share some tips and best practices we've learned through our own classroom experience. We hope you will have fun digging into the pages of this packet and find some tools that may be helpful as you develop your own teaching career.

Thank you for choosing to inspire the minds of our future leaders.

Yours in Learning,

Shanita

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Shanita', with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

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**Shanita Galatowitsch** is a public education leader and recognized literacy expert. She has worked as a teacher, dean of students, and curriculum specialist for the past 17 years. Additional areas of expertise include equity in education, approaching sensitive topics in elementary literacy, and social and emotional learning.



**Dr. Dana Godek** is a policy and research leader with a passion to achieve equitable outcomes in public education. She has served as a reading teacher, public school administrator, national researcher, and federal programs expert for both urban and rural school districts.

# High-Quality Approaches to Teaching

## Read Aloud to Your Class

Read-alouds are important in helping students develop and improve vocabulary skills and comprehension. Reading aloud to students provides access to books that may be more difficult for them to read independently and provides them with a demonstration of what fluent readers sound like. One of the most important values of a read-aloud is that it provides enjoyment for your students.

Here are tips to consider:

- Choose books that are 1-2 years above grade level
- Incorporate variations in your pitch, tone, pace, and volume
- Choose books that represent the students in your class and their interests
- Model your think-alouds during reading to highlight strategies used by thoughtful readers
- Allow students opportunities to discuss connections they make with the text
- Engage your students

## Independent Reading Matters

When students have access, choice, and voice in what they are reading, it gives them the opportunity to explore their curiosities and interests. Independent reading allows them the time and space to engage with quality literature. It also reinforces the strategies that have been taught and modeled.

Here are some ways to make independent reading enjoyable for your students:

- Have a variety of genres, levels, topics, and different cultural representations available in your library
- Provide adequate time (at least 20 minutes)
- Provide students the opportunity to select a space where they feel comfortable reading during that time
- Allow them to gradually build stamina
- Confer with students about the books they are reading



## Building Your Classroom Library

Classroom libraries are an essential building block for creating an equitable reading culture. A well-stocked classroom library should represent your students' actual range of reading levels and interests so it will promote the access, opportunity, and volume that leads to reading growth for all students!

When setting up your classroom library here are a few things to consider:

- **Utilize a comfortable space in your room that is accessible to all students.**

Make the space inviting and well organized. It helps to have yoga mats, pillows, carpet squares, and anything else that the students can use to sit on in their area. Always consider any students that may have difficulty accessing the space.



- **Have a variety of book options for students to choose from.**

Line your shelves with a balance of fiction and nonfiction, different genres, and with authors and content that represent diverse communities. Students seeing themselves or their culture in text helps to make deeper connections. Some educators have an extraordinary eye for identifying a breadth of literature that encompasses different genres, titles, etc. Be a reader and develop an eye for the texts that resonate with students. Check out the PRH Classroom Libraries ([tinyurl.com/PRHCL](https://tinyurl.com/PRHCL)), which offer titles that are inclusive, engaging, and appeal to a wide variety of interests.

- **Organize and clearly label book shelves.**

Books should be labeled and organized by genre or topic, not level. Book baskets or bins help keep shelves and books neat and in order. You don't want to spend all of your time reorganizing messy shelves, so organization and systems are helpful.

- **Influence student ownership.**

Students should have ownership and pride in their classroom library. One way to facilitate their ownership is to have the class help sort and label books by genres and topics. Students can also give recommendations on specific titles or collections. It's always fun to have a book of the month based on student favorites. Students having time to share their favorite books with classmates can encourage reluctant readers to try new books.





# Classroom Favorites

As a new teacher, you might be begging, borrowing, and stealing (okay, maybe not stealing) books to build up your classroom library. Borrow no more! Take a look at a few of these collections to support your print-rich room. Simply scan the QR codes to learn more about these classic and contemporary texts that are beloved by many educators. Interested in ordering copies? Go to [tinyurl.com/order-books](http://tinyurl.com/order-books) for more information and find an educational wholesaler in your area.

## Top Classroom Favorites



*My Papi Has a Motorcycle • Science • Last Stop on Market Street  
Swimmy • The Name Jar • The Knight at Dawn*

See More!



## Newbery Medal Award Winners



*The Night Diary • The Watsons Go to Birmingham • Roller Skates  
Moon Over Manifest • The Voyages of Doctor Doolittle • Rascal  
My Side of the Mountain*

See More!



## Marvelous Middle Grade Reads

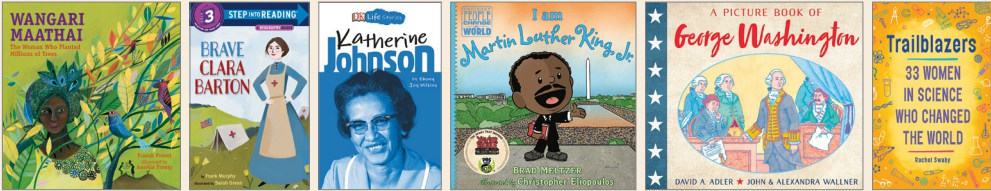


*The True History of Lyndie B. Hawkins • Tight • When Stars Are Scattered  
The Miscalculations of Lightning Girl • The Stars Beneath Our Feet  
Harbor Me • The Beloved World of Sonia Sotomayor*

See More!



# Fascinating Biographies

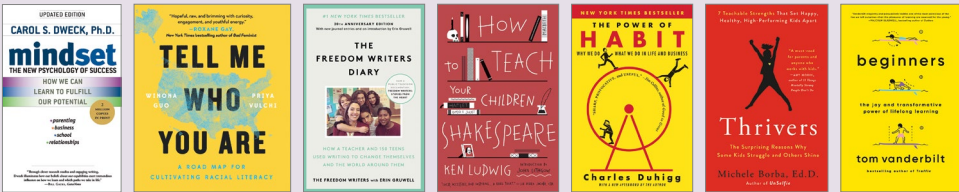


Wangari Maathai • Brave Clara Barton • Katherine Johnson  
I am Martin Luther King, Jr. • A Picture Book of George Washington  
Trailblazers

See More!



# Education & Professional Learning

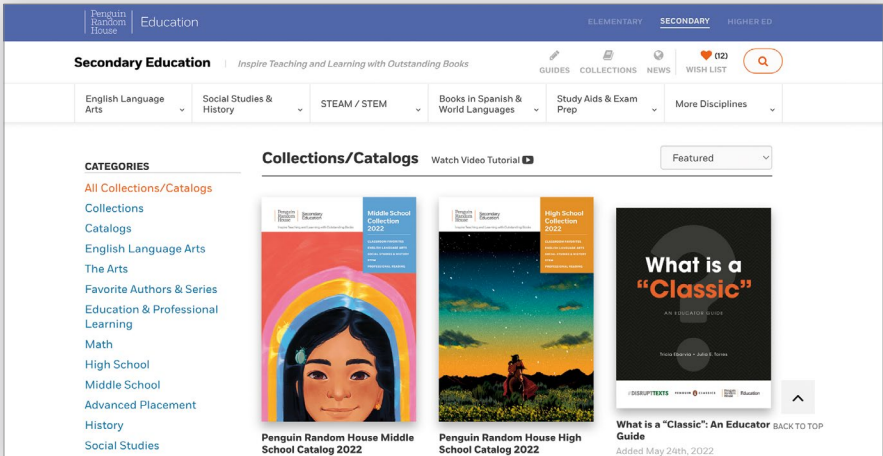


Mindset • Tell Me Who You Are • The Freedom Writers Diary  
How to Teach Your Children Shakespeare • The Power of Habit  
Thrivers • Beginners

See More!



# Visit our Collections & Catalog page to browse more books!



Elementary



Secondary



# PRH Website Resources

Welcome to the PRH Education site:  
the perfect spot to browse, connect, and  
create a customized learning experience

Visit our Elementary and Secondary sites



Elementary



Secondary

### Elementary Education

Grades PreK-6

Discover the best books and resources from Read Aloud to Independent Reading to Curriculum Collections.

EXPLORE ELEMENTARY →

- English Language Arts
- Social Studies & History
- Science & Technology
- Spanish & Bilingual Books
- Browse All Subjects and Topics

### Secondary Education

Grades 6-12

Engage with books & resources for the middle school, high school and AP/IB classroom.

EXPLORE SECONDARY →

- English Language Arts
- Social Studies
- History
- Science
- Browse All Subjects and Topics

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ELMENTARY **SECONDARY** HIGHER ED

Secondary Education | Inspire Teaching and Learning with Outstanding Books

GUIDES COLLECTIONS NEWS WISH LIST (12) 🔍

English Language Arts Social Studies & History STEAM / STEM Books in Spanish & World Languages Study Aids & Exam Prep More Disciplines

## Educator's Guides

By Educators for Educators,  
Now Easier to Access

LEARN MORE →

Books are organized by teaching level and broken out by different subject areas/topics

## Get all the facts about the books that interest you

Each book's web page includes a description, list of awards, reviews, price, reading levels, and subject areas



### Wonder

Part of *Wonder*

Author R.J. Palacio

ADD TO WISH LIST

Best Seller

HARDCOVER

\$17.99 US

RH Childrens Books | Knopf Books for Young Readers  
5.92"W x 8.56"H x 1.24"D  
On sale Feb 14, 2012 | 320 Pages | 978-0-375-86902-0  
| Grades 3-7  
Reading Level: Lexile 790L | Fountas & Pinnell V

- English Language Arts > Fiction > Home, Health, and Daily Living > Diseases, Illness, and Injuries
- English Language Arts > Fiction > People & Places by Group > Visible & Invisible Disabilities

ABOUT | AUTHOR | EXCERPT | GUIDES | **AWARDS** | PRAISE | MEDIA



**WINNER | 2018**  
Christopher Award



**WINNER | 2015**  
Louisiana Young Reader's Choice Award



**WINNER | 2015**  
Pacific Northwest Young Reader's Choice Award



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# Browse curated thematic title collections

Each collection takes you to a listing of 30-35 recommended titles


Collections/Catalogs

WATCH VIDEO TUTORIAL


Featured



**PRH Elementary Education Catalog 2022**  
Added June 29th, 2022  
[Elementary Catalog 2022](#)  
[Share by email](#)



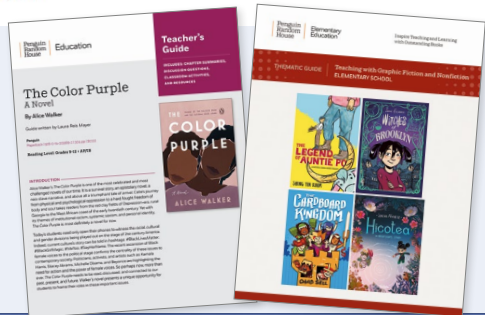
**Top Classroom Favorites**  
Added April 5th, 2022  
[View titles](#)  
[Share by email](#)



**Summer Reading 2022**  
Added March 24th, 2022  
[View titles](#)  
[Share by email](#)

## Download free educator resources

Find educator guides built around a single title or theme



## Find resources around book bans & challenges

At Penguin Random House, we believe in the right to freedom of expression and protecting writers against censorship.

To underscore this commitment, we have created a **Banned Books Resources Hub** featuring tools, materials, and organizations that educators, librarians, parents, students, authors, and illustrators can turn to as bans and challenges spread across the country. The hub includes a contact form for people to report new instances of PRH titles being banned, so we can better track these increasingly widespread conflicts.

Penguin Random House

BANNED BOOKS RESOURCES HUB



Read Free. Support #Read to Read



Banned Books Resources Hub

# Grant Writing 101

As a teacher, you're probably been told, "We don't have the money in the budget for that." Why let your creative energy cool, when there is a ton of financial support all for the asking? Here are a few resources to help get you started so you can fund your dream classroom project:

## How to Write Grants

Writing effective grant proposals can seem like stepping into a confusing, long labyrinth, and one that comes with many strings attached. Fortunately, there are multiple writing resources that offer wisdom, guidance, and tips to get you started.

Check out the following websites:

- **GuideStar** ([Guidestar.org](https://www.guidestar.org)) to stay up to date on the latest in grant funding trends and cutting-edge proposal approaches.
- **NEEF** ([tinyurl.com/NEEFgrants](https://tinyurl.com/NEEFgrants)) offers a guide for writing grants in both English and Spanish.
- **University Lab Partners** ([tinyurl.com/ULPgrants](https://tinyurl.com/ULPgrants)) describe grant writing as an art form—calling all creatives!



## Private Philanthropy Grants

A surefire way to access funding to support any learning or literacy project is by simply asking. Private philanthropic foundations receive special tax considerations in exchange for donating funds to civic and charitable initiatives. The best news is many of these foundations are right in your backyard. Foundations like to give to educational causes that are localized in most cases. All it takes is a simple letter of request with some details about your project and a simple budget to get the process started.

Visit the **NEA Foundation** ([tinyurl.com/NEAedu](https://tinyurl.com/NEAedu)) for excellent tips and resources to help you find the right foundation matched to your initiative.

## Federal or Public Grants

Federal grants are more complex than private foundation grants, but they typically support larger-scale initiatives beyond just a single classroom. If you dream big, this might be a good place to start. Be sure to check in on any guidance from your school district before applying for a federal or public grant as they can often help.

[Grants.gov](https://grants.gov) is the national clearinghouse for all federal grants. These grants are funded by your tax dollars after all, so take a look and be bold!

## Stay Connected!

We hope that you have found these pages to be useful and we encourage you to explore the tips and resources that were included. Need additional help finding the right book, building your classroom library, or have general questions? We're here to help!

We also encourage you to sign up for one of our free monthly newsletters to learn about new books, giveaways, and events.

Elementary E-Newsletter



Secondary E-Newsletter



Please reach out to us anytime at

[k12education@penguinrandomhouse.com](mailto:k12education@penguinrandomhouse.com)



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Education

Penguin Random House Education  
1745 Broadway, New York, NY 10019

[penguinrandomhouseeducation.com](http://penguinrandomhouseeducation.com)

Queries:

[k12education@penguinrandomhouse.com](mailto:k12education@penguinrandomhouse.com)