

rites

Class Favorites

Penguin
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Education

Resource Pack for New Teachers

Grades 9-12



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

Dear New Teacher,

Congratulations! You made it and are about to start an incredibly rewarding journey as you enter your new career. Nervous? Excited? Uncertain? These feelings (and more) are completely normal. As an experienced teacher who has worked with preservice teachers, I'm here to offer you advice, tips, and strategies based on what has worked for me over the years to better reach and bond with my students.

One of the biggest challenges for teachers of all experience levels is finding a good balance between work and home. Teacher burnout is real so it's important to start your career right away by setting boundaries. It's good and OKAY to leave work at work. It's okay to let emails received after work hours go unanswered until a new work day begins. It's not always easy to remember, but everything ends up getting done—even when it feels like the grading and planning are never ending. You will be a better, happier teacher if you remind yourself to rest when you're at home and do what brings you joy.

As you move through your first years of teaching, work on creating positive relationships with other educators. Those relationships will help lift you up and serve as a source of constructive feedback as you create and try exciting new lessons. If a lesson doesn't work out as planned (this happens and it's normal!), seek out advice from a trusted colleague. In addition to connecting with other educators in your school or district, these connections also happen at state and national conferences like the National Council of Teachers of English convention, so work with your administrators to continue your professional learning and development. Many counties offer subject-specific workshops for teachers in the districts of that county. These workshops may be more affordable for your administrators and are still valuable to you as an educator.

Just as it's important to build relationships with your colleagues and fellow educators, it's even more important to build a strong rapport with your students. It can be as simple as standing at your classroom door between classes and greeting each student by name with a genuine smile as they enter the room. That student who comes unprepared or wants to find a way to be distracted or distracting? Don't let that student slip by. Find a way to get to know them so you can start building a bond with them. The same goes for the students who rarely volunteer and sit there quietly. I keep a basket of mini lotions and hand sanitizers on my desk. Many of my students love using them and it offers me a chance to check in with them and ask them about their day when they use one.

I am so excited for the journey you are about to embark on. Teaching is truly a calling and a rewarding career. I hope this resource pack helps guide you. You are welcome to reach out to me as a fellow educator if you ever need to.

All the best,

Sarah Andersen



CONTENTS

2 High-Quality Teaching Approaches

Creating a Classroom Library

Organizing Your Classroom Library

Independent Reading

The Power of the Read Aloud

6 Browse Award-Winning, Classroom Favorite Titles

10 Penguin Random House Education Website Resources

12 Grant Opportunities for Teachers

13 Stay Connected!



Sarah Andersen has served as a high school English teacher for the past 16 years and counting. She is passionate about finding the right book for the right reader and building a strong rapport with all of her students. She enjoys collaborating with other teachers and hosting student teachers in her classroom. You can email her at: sandersen@fentonschools.org

High-Quality Approaches to Teaching

Creating a Classroom Library

As a high school English teacher, one of the most important parts of my practice has been the development of my classroom library. A well-developed, diverse classroom library should be the norm, not the exception in a high school classroom. It's an opportunity to reach all students in your classroom directly. [A position statement on classroom libraries from the National Council of Teachers of English](https://www.ncte.org/statement/classroom-libraries) (ncte.org/statement/classroom-libraries) states:

“When students possess the skills necessary to access, select, use, and effectively evaluate their reading materials, their ability to become engaged members of their communities and productive citizens is enhanced. A large body of research demonstrates that equitable access to books promotes reading achievement and motivation.”

If you have a media specialist in your building, this is a great opportunity to collaborate with them as you work together to develop engaged and successful students.

Building a classroom library, however, is not just about having large quantities of books for students to read. You must read as many of the books as possible. If you can't read a book before you add it to your classroom, check with resources like [YALSA](http://booklists.yalsa.net), (booklists.yalsa.net) the [American Library Association](http://www.americanlibraryassociation.org) (ALA.org), and [ALAN](http://alan-ya.org) (alan-ya.org) to see how it's been reviewed. I stress the importance of reading as many of the books as possible because 1) you'll know the book well and will be able to properly recommend it to your students as you get to know them and their interests and 2) if you know the book, you'll be able to explain your rationale for having it in your room should anyone present concerns about content.



Knowing the content of the books in your classroom library will also help you ensure that they reflect your students and their interests and backgrounds. Offer them a diverse variety of genres, formats, and diverse characters and stories.

[Scholar Dr. Rudine Sims Bishop](https://www.library.ncte.org/journals/LA/issues/v85-2/6175)

([library.ncte.org/journals/LA/issues/v85-2/6175](https://www.library.ncte.org/journals/LA/issues/v85-2/6175)) wisely wrote:

“Books are sometimes windows, offering views of worlds that may be real or imagined, familiar or strange. These windows are also sliding glass doors, and readers have only to walk through in imagination to become part of whatever world has been created and recreated by the author. When lighting conditions are just right, however, a window can also be a mirror. Literature transforms human experience and reflects it back to us, and in that reflection we can see our own lives and experiences as part of the larger human experience. Reading, then, becomes a means of self-affirmation, and readers often seek their mirrors in books.”

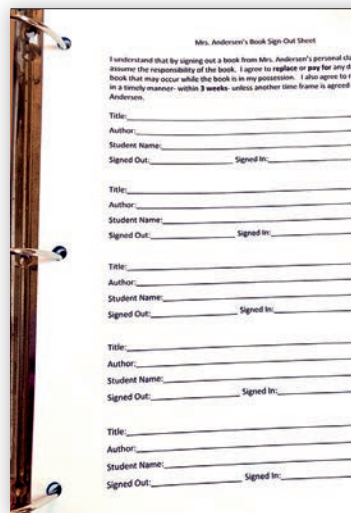
Our students need to feel seen and valued, so the books they find in your classroom should let them know you care about them and see them for who they are.

Once you begin creating your classroom library, managing it is important. I recommend using a resource many book suppliers provide to keep track of the books in your classroom and who checks them out. Many wholesalers have digital classroom library management tools to help you inventory and manage your books.

If a digital resource won't work for you, utilizing a binder divided by class period is also helpful:

- Create book checkout sheets and teach students to record the book they're borrowing, the author, and the date they're borrowing it.
- Teach them to sign it back in once they've finished reading it.
- It's also helpful to label all of your books. I put my last name along the outside edges so it's clearly visible who the book belongs to should a student lose it or leave it in a classroom.

Whatever system you create, train your students at the start of the year and continue throughout the school year to help avoid losing books.



Organizing Your Classroom Library

More and more teachers and librarians are organizing their libraries by genre so students can easily find a book they may enjoy reading. There really is no right or wrong way of organizing a classroom library. Go with what works best for your organizational style.

Here are a few tips based on what has worked for me:

- I have a hard time organizing by genre simply because so many books now cross genres. I keep mine in alphabetical order by author's last name and then keep the series organized in order by number in the series.
- I use simple dot stickers to keep my series labeled/numbered on the spines.
- Organizing by genre helps students find the types of books they like to read, like going directly to the fantasy section. I've found that my students sometimes find books they wouldn't have usually picked up had I organized by genre (for instance, a student finding a great Ruta Sepetys historical fiction novel when normally they would choose something from the mystery section).
- Consider creating shelves or displays based on themes like "Edge of Your Seat Thrillers," "Tear-Jerkers," "Fabulous Fantasy," etc.



Choose what works best for you and make sure you introduce your students to your system and explain it to them.

Independent Reading

One of our goals as English teachers should be developing life-long readers and learners. Providing your students independent reading time helps foster that love of reading since you give them choice in what they read.

There are different ways to engage your students with independent reading. I offer my students sustained silent reading time (SSR) each day for about ten minutes at the beginning of the hour. This may vary depending on the length of your class periods. Some points to consider when arranging independent reading time:

- During this time, my students are reading a novel of their choice.
- It is not a graded assignment and does not connect to any assessment. It's designed to help my students fall in love with reading.
- I often read at the front of the room with them; this is a way for me to model the behavior I expect from them. But I often spend much of that time helping students find a book they're looking for and checking in with my students as they read.
- Conferring with students about their independent reading does not need to be overly formal or time consuming. I keep a notebook on my desk to make notes to myself as I chat with my students. I jot down notes like recommendations I've made for an individual student or what page a student is on when I check on them.



I avoid grading SSR time because it takes away from the intrinsic value of reading. Grading independent reading time may also feel punitive to students who are struggling. There will be students who push back and do not want to read. Work with those students and get to know them. Ask them what they like to watch on Netflix or what hobbies they enjoy. This will help you find a book they may like reading.

When you have a classroom library, it makes independent reading time that much easier for both you and your students.

If a student can't find something to read, you and your student can peruse your library on the spot to find something. It also opens up the opportunity for you to ask your student what they like, which helps you get to know them.

In addition, offering independent reading time helps students academically, such as increasing their reading stamina. Do we think our band instructors are wasting time when their students practice their instruments? Of course not. Providing our students with time during class to read a book they enjoy is no different. [NCTE has a position statement regarding independent reading](https://ncte.org/statement/independent-reading) (ncte.org/statement/independent-reading) and part of it states:

"All reading communities should contain protected time for the sake of reading. Independent reading practices emphasize the process of making meaning through reading, not an end product. The school culture (teachers, administration, etc.) should affirm this daily practice time as inherently important instructional time for all readers. As much as possible, teachers should support independent reading in a way that is most appropriate for their classroom of readers (e.g., conferring, book talking, modeling reading, etc.) to show that this skill is practiced all throughout life."

I've offered my students SSR time for my entire teaching career and, to this day, I have past students reach out to me asking for book recommendations. The relationships you can build as you develop a classroom of readers are invaluable.

As you continue to read engaging young adult novels during your school year, let your students see your reading life. On a classroom door or another open space, print off book covers of the books you finish and post them in that space for students to see.

Mr. Johnson is currently reading:
The Nickel Boys

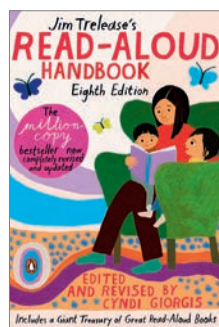
Create a simple sign with something like Mr./Ms. (insert last name) is currently reading: _____. Laminate the sign and keep it updated with the titles you read throughout the year. I keep mine

posted outside my classroom next to the door for students and staff to see as they enter my room.

The Power of the Read Aloud

Many people can remember being read to during their elementary years. Unfortunately, many students don't experience a read aloud at the high school level. I strongly encourage you to try a read aloud with your classes. Yes, even high school seniors love a good read aloud! A great resource to get yourself started is *The Read-Aloud Handbook* by Jim Trelease.

The read aloud is a wonderful way to build a strong community in your classroom. It offers students a low-stakes opportunity to listen to a story and enjoy it. I recommend the read aloud as your class bell ringer. Students have literally run into class so they wouldn't miss that day's section of the novel.



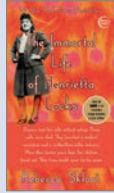
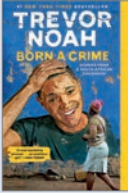
Some tips on choosing a book for your students:

- The length of the novel and the chapters/sections matter. I recommend avoiding a novel that is too long, so you avoid students checking out and growing bored.
- Look for a book with shorter chapters/sections to make it easier to fit your schedule. I read aloud every day, but will sometimes cut SSR a little shorter one day if my lessons for the day are more time consuming. Students often fall in love with the read aloud, which is why I avoid skipping it if possible.
- Finding a book with a good balance of narration and dialogue is important since too much ping pong dialogue can get confusing.
- Allow students to doodle or draw while you read aloud since many focus better that way.
- Always read the book FIRST before you begin reading it aloud to a class, so you're aware of the content.
- If the book isn't working for students, it's okay to abandon it and try something else. I often poll my students about 50-100 pages in to gauge how they feel about the book.

Browse Award-Winning, Classroom Favorite Titles

I know you're excited to get your hands on some books and start building that library! Simply scan the below QR codes to learn more about this selection of classic and contemporary texts that are beloved by educators and students alike.

Beloved Classroom Favorites

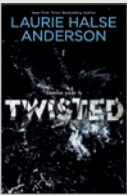
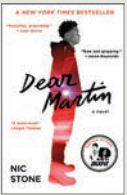


*Born a Crime • The Martian: Classroom Edition • The Book Thief
The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks • Into the Wild • 1984
Hotel on the Corner of Bitter and Sweet*

See More!



Student Top Favorites



*Legend • A Good Girl's Guide to Murder • Dear Martin • Twisted
Everything, Everything • I Must Betray You • We Were Liars*

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Great Graphic Novels



*Between Shades of Gray: The Graphic Novel • They Called Us Enemy
Teen Titans: Raven • March: Book One • Vietnamerica
The Complete Persepolis • The Magic Fish*

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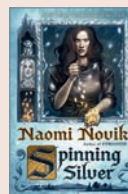
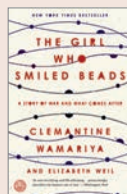
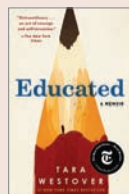
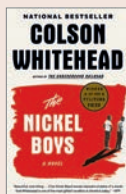
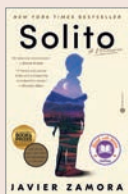




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ALA ALEX Award Winners

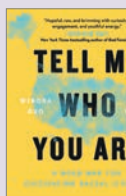
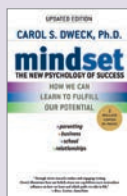


True Biz • Solito • The Nickel Boys • Educated
The Girl Who Smiled Beads • Spinning Silver • The Good Thief



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Education & Professional Learning

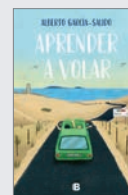


Mindset • Let Your Light Shine • Tell Me Who You Are
The Freedom Writers Diary • How to Teach Your Children Shakespeare
The Power of Habit • Thrivers



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Authentic Spanish

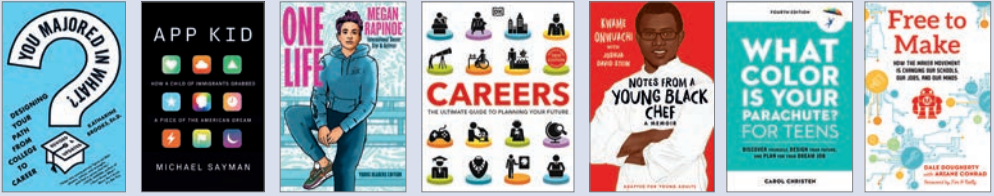


Memorias del águila y el jaguar • Pétalos de papel • Memorias de Idhún: Panteón
Un lobo dentro • Cosas de tetras. Aprendiendo a volar sin alas
Aprender a volar • No somos el centro del universo



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Interesting Careers



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 Alma Presses Play • Poukahangatus • Poems by Robert Frost
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Chasing the Truth • The Media and Me • Lies, Incorporated
Antisocial*

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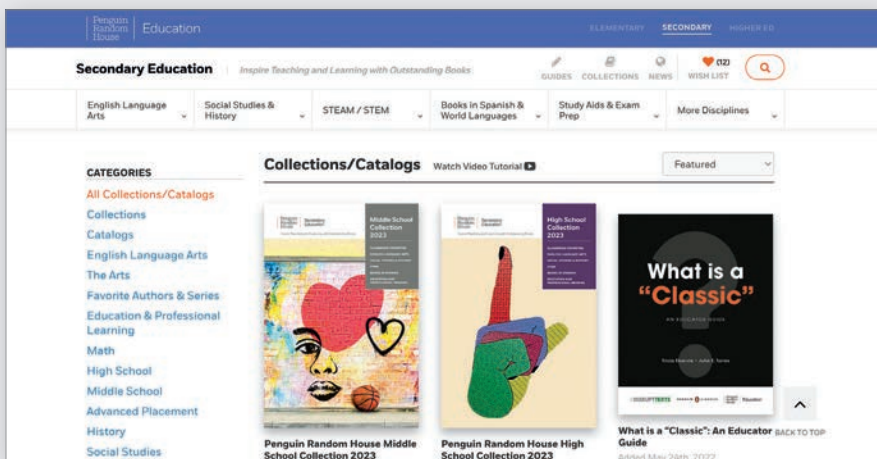


*What the Fireflies Knew • I Am Not Your Perfect Mexican Daughter
Homegoing • The Kite Runner • The House on Mango Street
Atonement • Darius the Great Is Not Okay*

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Elementary



Secondary



PRH Website Resources

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

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Elementary Education

Grades PreK-K-6

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- Browse All Subjects and Topics

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Secondary Education

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Reading Level Lexile 130L

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Mental Health of Teen Girls: Books for Students

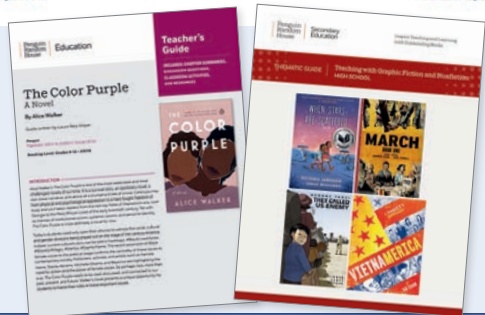
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Find resources around book bans & challenges

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

LIBRARY & CLASSROOM POSTER

Open books

Open doors

Read Free. Support #PrHouses to read.

Banned Books Resources Hub

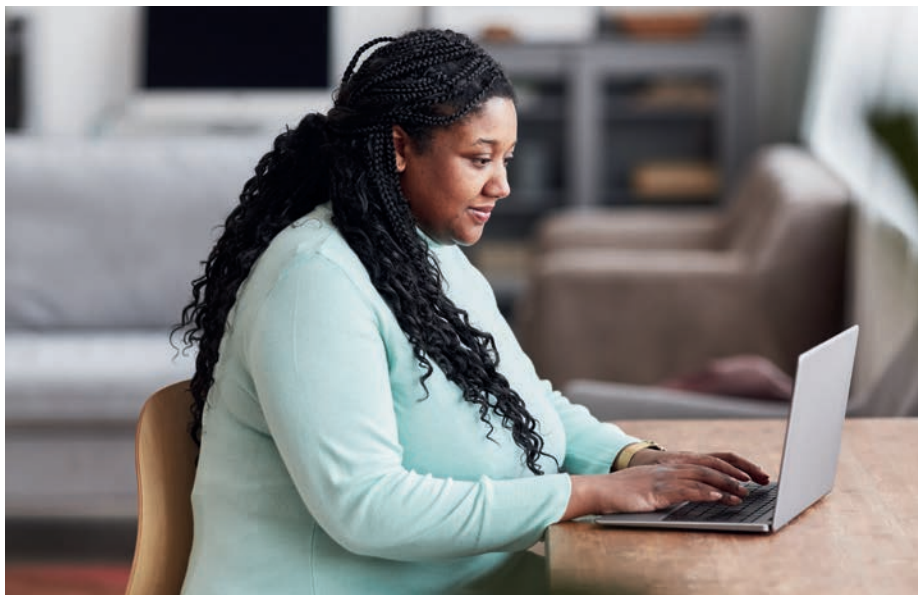
Grant Opportunities for Teachers

As you begin your career, make sure to take advantage of the many grant opportunities available to teachers. Many districts offer grants for teachers and their classroom projects. The local businesses in your district may reach out about applying for grants as well.

There are also educational organizations that offer grants for teachers:

The National Council of Teachers of English offers a host of grant opportunities for educators such as:

- [ELATE Geneva Smitherman Cultural Diversity Grant](https://ncte.org/awards/elate-cultural-diversity-grant)
(ncte.org/awards/elate-cultural-diversity-grant)
- [ELATE James Moffett Memorial Award](https://ncte.org/awards/elate-james-moffett-memorial-fund)
(ncte.org/awards/elate-james-moffett-memorial-fund)
- [ELATE Graduate Student Research Award](https://ncte.org/awards/elate-graduate-student-research-award)
(ncte.org/awards/elate-graduate-student-research-award)
- [NCTE Research Foundation Grant](https://ncte.org/research/research-foundation-grants)
(ncte.org/research/research-foundation-grants)



The Assembly on Literature for Adolescents of NCTE (ALAN) offers a variety of grants for educators:

- [Smith/Carlsen Grant](#)

(alan-ya.org/awards/the-smithcarlsen-grant)

Offers graduate students a grant to help fund their attendance at the annual two-day ALAN workshop

- [ALAN Foundation Grant](#)

(alan-ya.org/awards/alan-foundation-grant)

Members of ALAN may apply for this grant to receive funding for research in young adult literature

If you wish to attend the National Council of Teachers of English annual convention in November, [NCTE has a resource with tips and suggestions](#) (convention.ncte.org/funding-ideas-options) on how to approach your administrator for funding/reimbursement.

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

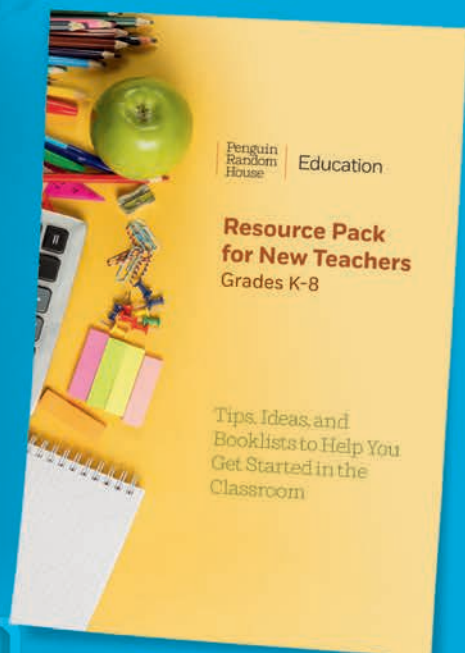


Secondary E-Newsletter



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