

# Empowering Readers

**A Quick Start Guide  
to Reading Workshop**



**Power  
Pack**

Created by Laura Candler

© 2010 All rights reserved.  
Classroom duplication rights only.



## Copyright Notice and Limitations of Use

© 2010 by Laura Candler. All rights reserved.

Your individual purchase entitles you to reproduce these pages as needed for your own classroom use. You may also save a backup file for your own use. **However, no part of this publication may be reproduced in any form, by any means, electronic or mechanical, without prior written permission from Laura Candler.** Individual copies may not be installed on school networks or distributed in any other form. Thanks for understanding!



## Site Licensing for Schools

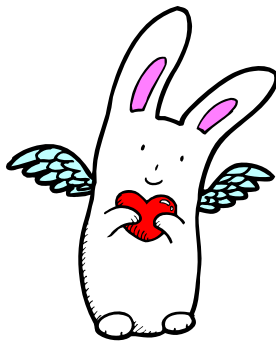
If you would like to use install this book on a school network or use it with multiple teachers, please have your school purchase a site license. **A site license provides a school with an unlimited, lifetime copyright of the book by all teachers for use with the students in that school.** The license does not have to be renewed each year, and documentation of the site license will be provided to the school. At this time, site licenses are priced between \$20 and \$100 per book depending on the book title and size of the school.

For more information and current site license prices, visit <http://www.lauracandler.com/books/sales/sitelicense.php>.

Email Laura ([lauracandler@att.net](mailto:lauracandler@att.net)) if you have questions about the copyright restrictions or site license options.

## Acknowledgements

I would like to express my appreciation to all the wonderful teachers I've known through the years. The Internet has opened my doors to a world of great classrooms filled with inspiring teachers. Thanks for all you have given me!



# Empowering Readers

## Power Pack Overview

### Power Pack Sections

Introduction.....	Page x
Power Reading Overview .....	Page x
Basic Reading Workshop.....	Page x
Power Reading Tools .....	Page x
Graphic Organizers and Foldables.....	Page x
Additional Resources.....	Page x



### Empowering Readers

Turning your students on to reading may be the single most powerful way to make a difference in your classroom. Unfortunately, many reading programs today turn kids off to reading. Kids learn the skills, but they don't develop a passion for reading. With today's accountability laws driving the curriculum, kids today aren't illiterate - they are aliterate. It's not that they can't read - they just choose not to do so. How can we help them find a passion for reading?

Believe it or not, the task isn't difficult, but it does require a willingness to abandon methods that aren't working in favor of more effective strategies. Thousands of teachers have experienced success using an instructional model called Reading Workshop which is incredibly simple yet amazingly powerful. This method uses a combination of mini-lessons, independent reading time, and individual conferences to inspire and motivate students. I've been using this method for several years, and I've also added rigor to the basic framework by introducing a number of Power Reading Tools to my students.

Empowering Readers: A Quick Start Guide to Reading Workshop offers a simple, step-by-step plan for starting a Reading Workshop in your classroom. In addition, you'll learn how to add Power Reading Tools that will challenge your students to take responsibility for their personal growth as readers. This book is for teachers who want to jump in and get started right away, teachers who like to take action and tweak things as they go. You'll be amazed at how quickly you can get a Power Reading Workshop started in your room. You'll empower your students with a love of reading, while ensuring that they are able to master reading skills and show consistent growth as readers.

# Empowering Readers

## Introduction

### **My Search for the Holy Grail of Reading**

Before you get started, it might be helpful to understand how the Power Reading Workshop was developed. Over the years, I used a variety of different approaches to teach reading, and most of them utilized the Accelerated Reader program as a key component. The reason I relied heavily on AR was that I believed that the best way to foster reading skills is to make sure students are actually reading. Not completing workbook pages. Not reading and answering questions about a basal reader. Just reading, reading, and more reading! What better way to make sure that students are reading than to have them take a brief computerized test? However, as time passed, I became increasingly dissatisfied with the program. AR test results “proved” that my students were reading, but taking tests certainly didn’t encourage them to love reading for its own sake. They weren’t illiterate, but they were definitely showing signs of aliteracy!



Over the years, I’ve experimented with many strategies in my quest for the holy grail of reading instruction. From literature circles, to basal reading instruction and literacy centers, I’ve explored a variety of methods. With some programs, my students became better readers but didn’t enjoy reading for pleasure. With other methods, they were motivated to read more but didn’t improve as readers.

Then several years ago I discovered the Reading Workshop approach, and I began experimenting with the strategies. It didn’t take long for me to realize that I had stumbled upon my holy grail! In recent years I’ve added a number of powerful tools to the basic Reading Workshop model, and I can finally say that my students are learning to love reading AND becoming better readers! It’s a joy see the impact of these strategies on my students.

### **Comprehensive Manual or Step-by-Step Guide**

When I decided to write this book, I struggled between writing a detailed, comprehensive manual or a short “how to” guide. After reviewing the available literature, I realized that the market is saturated with excellent comprehensive books on how to implement Reading Workshop. But nowhere did I find a simple step-by-step guide. Through conversations with other teachers, it became

# Empowering Readers

## Introduction

clear to me that a quick-start manual to Reading Workshop was desperately needed. Use this guide to help you get started, but explore the wealth of additional books and resources on this topic. You'll find a list of additional resources on page X, and every one of them is well-worth the time you'll invest in reading it.



### Assumptions

Because this is a quick start guide and I can't include everything to ensure your success, I'm going to make some assumptions. If these assumptions aren't true regarding your classroom or your school environment, you'll need to make some modifications in the Power Reading Workshop program.

- ◆ **You as a Reader** - First and foremost, I'm going to assume that you enjoy reading for pleasure and want to share your love of reading with your students. If you don't love to read, please explore your own feelings about reading before you attempt to influence your students. Read great children's literature and talk with other educators to discover what types of books you enjoy. Perhaps your own experiences in school caused you to dislike reading, but it's not too late to change! Think you can fool your students into believing that you like to read when you don't? Think again!
- ◆ **Computerized Test Programs** - For this purposes of this book, I'm assuming that you will not be using a computerized test program such as Accelerated Reader or Reading Counts. If you are required to use one of these programs, please allow students to read other books as well and offer a way for students to earn "points" for books that are not on the list. Don't emphasize the rewards and the points when you talk to your students about their books; instead, focus on more substantial topics such as their growth as readers and the variety of genres in their reading choices.
- ◆ **Access to Reading Material** - In order to implement this program fully, your students will need regular access to a variety of books and other reading material. If you don't have a full classroom library, students will need to be able to visit the school library on as needed, starting on the first day you introduce Reading Workshop.



# Empowering Readers

## Introduction

- ◆ **Basal Reading Programs** - It will be difficult to implement a Reading Workshop if you are required to teach from a Basal Reading text. If you are required to use a Basal Reader, you'll need to get permission to try this alternate approach to reading instruction. Ask your administrator to let you try this approach for one grading period. Offer to review the results together to determine the program's effectiveness.
- ◆ **Classroom Management** - If your classroom lacks an effective management system, now is not the time to begin using Reading Workshop. First, enlist the help of a mentor to work out an effective management system. Before allowing them the freedom inherent in Reading Workshop, students must consistently demonstrate respect for you, their classmates, and their classroom. Two excellent books on this topic are The First Days of School by Dr. Harry Wong, and Tools for Teaching by Dr. Fred Jones.
- ◆ **Cooperative Learning** - Many of the activities described in the mini-lessons require students to work in cooperative learning teams or partners. I have found partners or teams of 4 to be the most effective arrangements. If you are new to cooperative learning, I suggest that you obtain training on these strategies. Check out Dr. Spencer Kagan's Cooperative Learning, a comprehensive manual of specific and very effective techniques.



# Power Reading Overview



# Power Reading Components

## Overview

What does a Power Reading Workshop look like? Why not step into my room for a virtual visit and take a look for yourself? Depending on when you visit, you might see me reading aloud or my students scattered around the room deep into their own books. Under desks or snuggled up with a pillow in the corner of the room, they will scarcely notice when you step into the room. At other times you might see them conferencing with me as they describe a connection or make a prediction. You might see small groups of students discussing a book or working on a graphic organizer together. A peek in my Daily Planner would reveal fairly unimpressive lesson plans. You might even conclude that reading instruction isn't taking place!



Since the Power Reading Workshop is a different instructional model, it can't be evaluated by comparing it to more traditional forms of reading instruction. Despite the lack of literacy centers and impressive lesson plans, students are becoming more proficient readers in measurable ways. More importantly, as they experience the joys of reading for pleasure, they are becoming empowered because they are developing the habits of lifelong readers!

### Structuring Your Reading Workshop

Every teacher's classroom is different, and no two teachers will create exactly the same type of reading workshop. This wonderful adaptability is one of the advantages of the program because you can create a reading workshop that meets the needs of your own students. However, this ability to structure the program in a variety of ways can make it intimidating to figure out where to start. It's like going to your favorite bookstore - there are so many choices to make that you may just walk out without buying a thing!



After several years of experimenting with different reading workshop models, I have developed a simple yet effective method that has resulted in significant reading improvement. It takes the traditional reading workshop model to a new level, so I refer to it as Power Reading. I'll start with a brief explanation of each component

# Power Reading Components

## Overview

followed by a description of how they all fit together. I suggest you give it a try as described, and then adapt the basic model to fit your own needs.

### Power Reading Workshop Components

The heart of the Power Reading program involves students choosing their own books and reading at their own pace for extended periods of time. However, in order to be effective, the workshop must provide opportunities for reading instruction as well as time to confer with individuals. You'll see that these objectives can be met through the flexible application of the following key components of the Power Reading Workshop:

- ◆ **Whole Class Read Alouds**
- ◆ **Reading Strategy Mini Lessons**
- ◆ **Self-Selected Reading Time**
- ◆ **Individual Reading Conferences**
- ◆ **Responding to Reading**
- ◆ **Goal Setting, Record Keeping, and Assessment**

In addition to the components above, you can encourage students to read at home by assigning some type of home reading log. If you have parental support, this can be a valuable addition to your reading program. In my experience, unless students are required to keep a reading log at home, most of them will not take time to read, even if they enjoy it. When a reading log is assigned as homework, parents are more apt to make sure their child has a quiet place to read and the time to do so.



The rest of this chapter offers a brief overview of each component and how they all fit together into one coherent reading program.