



More Book Talk Tips:

The Home-School Connection

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Our homework assignments are structured to promote communication between parents and their children. Consequently, we give parents resources to use for a home-school reading connection. One aid is a recommended list of books, which you'll find below.

We also involve parents in our classroom book talks through our "Paired Reading Adventure." This shared process of reading and talking often leads parents and their children into discussions of values, beliefs, fears and joys and charts a path for learning more about each other.

For the "Paired Reading Adventure," children receive a bag to take home. This bag contains a book and a discussion guide for the book, which maps out important discussion points for parents. When each family has finished reading their assigned book, parents and children gather at school for Book Talk Day at School to share their personal reactions to the books.

The following is a sample discussion guide for J. R. Gardiner's book, *Stone Fox*.

BEFORE READING CHAPTER 1

1. Look at the cover of the book. Predict what the story is about and where it takes place.

My prediction:

My partner's prediction:

AFTER READING CHAPTER 1

2. Grandfather lost his will to live. Talk with your partner about what this means. What are some reasons why a person might lose the will to live?

3. Predict why Grandfather gave up on life.

My prediction:

My partner's prediction:

AFTER READING CHAPTER 2

4. Adjectives are words that describe. Write at least two adjectives that you think describe Little Willy.

My adjectives:

My partner's adjectives:

5. Little Willy did not think Searchlight had the strength (because of her age and size) to plow potatoes. Searchlight did plow potatoes, even though it was a difficult task. Why do you think she was able to do this?

AFTER READING CHAPTER 4

6. Predict what you think will happen to the farm. Will Clifford Snyder take it away, or will Willy find a way to pay the taxes?

My prediction:

My partner's prediction:

7. We realize what a smart boy Willy is and how much Grandfather has taught him. What is something you are proud that you know how to do, for someone your age?

AFTER READING CHAPTER 6

8. After Willy went into the bank and got the 50 dollars to enter the race, he felt ten feet tall. Tell about a time when you felt ten feet tall.

My story:

My partner's story:

AFTER COMPLETING THE BOOK

9. Stone Fox had lost his home to the white men. How do you think this helped him decide what he would do for Willy at the end of the race?

10. Why do you think the author named the book after Stone Fox?

11. Did you like this book? Why or why not?

PARENT QUESTIONNAIRE

(for use after reading and discussing the assigned book together)

1. Have you ever been involved in a book club before?
2. Have you ever been involved in a book club in a school setting before?
3. Did you feel the book was appropriate for the age of your child? If not, please explain.
4. How did your view of reading with your child change after this reading experience?
5. What do you specifically feel are the advantages of reading with your child?

Some of my students' parents had the following things to say on the questionnaire:

"Reading with my child creates the opportunity to talk about 'other' things. It opens the door to more issues that we can talk about. This is been a learning experience for all of us."

"I was having trouble finding time for this, but the book club made me realize what I was missing out on with my daughter. This was very relaxing for us both."

"I like knowing what kind of material my daughter is reading. Reading with her gives me an idea of her capabilities, as far as what she understands."

"This was fun. I enjoyed reading with my son, and it gave us an opportunity to bond."

"This book was filled with a lot of humanity and gave my daughter and me a nice opportunity to understand each other's thoughts and exchange our opinions."

"Reading with my son gave us more 'together time,' allowed us much more communication and allowed me to influence his views and beliefs, to counter so much of the media influence."