Use Online Book Clubs to Excite Readers

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Brief description to be placed in program (20 words or less):

Using online book clubs, such as Good Reads, is great way to get middle grade students excited about free reading.

Circle if a laptop needs to be provided for this presentation: Mac Windows

Unit Overview

Using the online book club Good Reads, teachers will set up a private book club for their schools or individual classes. Students will then create virtual book shelves of books they've read and want to read. Students create online book reviews and make recommendations to be shared with friends in their book club. Students will learn how to choose their own free reading books as well as gain experience in social networking in a safe environment.

TEKS

- 110.22, 110.23, 110.24 (6th-8th Grade English Language Arts and Reading)
  - 6.7, 7.7, 8.7 Reading/fluency
    - (A) read regularly in independent-level materials
    - (C) demonstrate characteristics of fluent and effective readers
    - (D) adjust reading rate based on purposes for reading
    - (F) read silently with increasing ease for longer periods
  - 6.8, 7.8, 8.8 Reading/variety of texts
    - (A) read classic and contemporary works
    - (B) select varied sources
  - 6.10, 7.10, 8.10 Reading/comprehension
    - (A) use his/her own knowledge and experience to comprehend
    - (C) monitor his/her own comprehension
    - (G) paraphrase and summarize text
    - (I) find similarities and differences across texts
  - 6.11, 7.11, 8.11 Reading/literary response
    - (A) offer observations
    - (B) interpret text ideas
    - (C) support responses
    - (D) connect, compare, and contrast
  - 6.12, 7.12, 8.12 Reading/text structures/literary concepts
    - (B) recognize the distinguishing features of genres
    - (F) analyze characters
    - (G) recognize and analyze story plot, setting, and problem resolution
    - (J) recognize and interpret literary devices such as flashback, foreshadowing, and symbolism
    - (K) recognize how style, tone, and mood contribute to the effect of the text

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- o   6.14, 7.14, 8.14 Reading/culture
    - ▪   (A) compare text events with his/her own and other readers' experiences
- o   6.15, 7.15, 8.15 Writing/purposes
    - ▪   (A) write to express
    - ▪   (B) write to influence
    - ▪   (C) write to inform

Objectives
- Students will track their own reading over the course of the year.
- Students will evaluate literature of their own choosing and learn how to choose what to read next.
- Students will read from a variety of genres and be able to identify literature from various genres.
- Students will gain experience with social networking in a safer, teacher monitored environment.

Time Required
Teachers set up the groups ahead of time and then the initial set up for the students takes one class period. The program can run all year long. Since this is a web hosted program, students can access it from home, making it a good substitute for a reading log.

Materials Required
- Computer with projector and internet access for the teacher
- Computers with internet access for the students
- Students will need email addresses (free accounts can be obtained through ePals if students do not have district provided email accounts

Procedure
1. Teacher sets up a private group ahead of time. This can be restricted to a certain email address domain (such as @eanesisd.net, which is good if you have many students participating) or the teacher can leave the group open but choose to approve each member individually.
2. Students will need to have an email account ahead of time, but these can be obtained for free through ePals.
3. Students will use their email addresses to create a Good Reads account and to join the group the teacher has set up.
4. Students should then send a friend request to their teacher.
5. Once students have joined the group and friend requested the teacher, they can start putting books on their virtual bookshelves, as well as finding friends in their class.
6. Students will then keep track of the books they are reading through Good Reads. When books are finished, they can review them and recommend them online to friends in the class.
7. Within the group, the teacher or students can set up discussion threads for online book discussions. The teacher may choose to set up a thread on a certain book if it is being read as a whole class, or on a certain genre such as fantasy.

Closure
This is an ongoing activity through out the year. Closure activities, such as reading awards or recognitions, could come at the end of grading periods or at the end of the year.

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Evaluation

Grades can be given for participation in discussions or for completing book reviews. Once the program is up and running, it's very obvious how much students are reading based on how long it takes them to finish a book.

Extension Activity

- Teachers could expand the group to include another teacher's class at their school or in the district and compare favorite books in the different classes.
- Graphing most popular books, series, or genres could be done as a math extension. Students can also use the polling feature to create their own polls about books.

Teacher Resources

- www.goodreads.com
    - Create your own teacher account first, using your district email address, making your first name be Ms. or Mr. last name and leave the last name field blank.
        - (ex) I am "Ms. Foley" as my first name and the last name is blank.
    - Once you have verified your email address, you can create a group for your students.
        - Click on the "groups" tab at the top of the page.
        - Click on the tiny link for "create a group" on the right side of "group categories."
        - Fill in the required information for identifying the group and then decide which type of group you want to make it.
            - The type of group you choose might be based on how many students you are dealing with.
                - A restricted group is good if students have a district provided email address and you can just restrict the group to members with that email suffix without having to approve each member individually.
                - A private group would be better if the students have all different kinds of personal email accounts they would be using. However, you will have to accept each student individually.
                - A secret group would be best if you are really worried about outsiders seeing the group exists. You would have to invite each student individually to join because they wouldn't be able to search for the group and find it since its secret.
    - Walk the students through creating their accounts (this would be exactly the same steps you did when you created your own account) and remind them not to use their last names since this is out on the internet for anyone to see. They can use last initials if there is more than one of them with the same first name in your class.
        - They will have to verify their email addresses in order to create the account and join the group, so if they are using personal email addresses that are blocked by district filters, they may have to do this at home or with someone's smart phone.
    - Once their accounts are created, they can click on the "groups" tab and use the search field to find the name of the group you have already created. If you choose to have a secret group, you will have to invite them all by inputting each individual's email address.
    - At this point, they should also submit a friend request to you so you will be able to read their reviews and see their bookshelves.

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- o As for pictures, we used the self portraits students created with Photoshop in art class. Your own district's privacy guidelines would be where to look about putting their pictures on their accounts.
- www.epals.com
  - o If students do not have district provided email accounts, they can get them through ePals.
  - o There is a link for "District or School Administrators Bulk Registration" on the registration page. This would allow you to set up accounts for all your students with a district suffix and not have to have each student get parent permission through the parent's email addresses.
    - (ex) In Eanes, we have ePals accounts with the suffix @eanes.epals.com instead of the just the generic @epals.com account through an individual registration.
      - We were then able to create email accounts for each student in the class ahead of time.