

- The students bring their favorite books to class and read from them to the class.
- Parents, relatives, other teachers are invited to read a passage from their favorite books.

13 Riddle string

Goal

In order to collect riddles for a book or a text, the students must read the material very closely, pay attention to details and focus on key passages of the text. Solving riddles motivates in particular the younger children to read.

2nd–9th grade

60 minutes



Materials:

Texts (not very long stories, selected articles from magazines or the internet, books, picture books for the little ones); paper strips, scissors, string.

Procedure:

- Individual work: The students select a text that interests them from a previously prepared stack of books. They read the text intently and take notes of questions which can only be answered upon fully absorbing the text content. Examples: What does the protagonist wear the first day of school after vacation? What is the name of the main character's father? In which compass direction does the river XY flow?
- The questions are written on paper strips in the sequence in which they are answered in the text. Enough space must be left for the answers after each question (either on the paper strip itself or by adding blank, colorful strips).
- The paper strips then are attached to a string. Two students each exchange their texts with the riddles on a string.



- The students read the exchanged book or the text from the others (possible as a homework assignment) and try to answer the questions on the riddle string. After reading the texts, the answers are compared.
- Those who want to solve more riddles obtain other texts and corresponding riddle strings from other students.

Remarks:

- The project “riddle string” can be extended over several weeks.
- For younger children who are not yet able to read and write well, the project can be adapted with picture books and the help of an older student who produced the riddle.
- Riddle string can easily be created by groups so that individual students only have to read part of a whole book.
- Experiences in libraries have shown that books with riddle string are much more frequently borrowed by younger children.

Variants:

The students create a riddle string for every book in their classroom library, so that at the end of the year mostly all books are furnished with such strings.

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Developing questions about texts

Goal

In order to compile and to solve questions about a book or a text, the text has to be closely read and understood. Most of all, creating “questions about understanding” and “questions for reflection” (see below) requires a deeper understanding of the content since the answers are not explicitly stated in the text.

4th–9th grade

45–90 minutes



Materials:
Books, magazines (possibly
texts from the internet);
notepaper.

Procedure:

- After reading a story, an article, or a whole book, the class is divided into groups of two. The group’s assignment is to develop questions about the content and the central argument of the text for the other students. Their questions should fall into the three following categories:
 - **Questions that can be looked up.** The answers to these questions are contained in the text. They are mostly clear-cut (e.g. can be answered with “correct” or “false” or with a precise indication).
 - **Questions about comprehension.** These questions can only be answered upon reflecting more deeply about the content. It requires a little “reading between the lines”. The answers to these are often not entirely unambiguous. (Example: how did the person feel? Why did s/he act in this way?)
 - **Questions for reflection.** The questions that fall into this category go beyond the content per se. Generally, there are no “correct” solutions, requiring that students discuss the responses together. (Example: what are the consequences of the end of the story? How could this conflict have been resolved in other ways?)
- Upon elaborating on the questions, the students hand them in to the teacher. The teacher then distributes the questions to the teams for answering, or the questions are discussed/resolved by the whole class.
- The differentiation between different types of questions must previously be discussed and elaborated with examples. The questions for reflection should, in any case, be discussed in the plenary, as there are often no clear answers.