Game of Tomes

Independent Reading: A Six Semester Collaboration
Barbara Mahoney, English Teacher, and Kim Claire, Y.A. Librarian

"A reader lives a thousand lives before he dies. The man who never reads lives only once."
--George R. R. Martin.

"Never apologize for your reading tastes."
--Betty Rosenberg's First Law of Reading.
Game of Tomes: Using Skill and Strategy to Keep Teens Reading

When will this be over?

I hate this book.

When is summer coming?

This is boring.
Why Start a Reading Course?

“I used to like to read when I was younger and could pick the books.”

-and-

“Now that I’m in high school, I don’t have time to read for pleasure any more.”
Exactly What We Didn’t Want...
Collaboration from the beginning!

The HWRHS course catalog
Independent Reading course description, an excerpt:
Through a partnership between the teacher of the course, the school media specialist, and the town teen librarian, the goal will be to find the right books for each student in the class.

One of three English electives available to grades 9 through 12. Other choices are Journalism or Creative Writing.
What’s the course like?

- Students choose what they want to read.
- Each student has a personalized reading goal.
- I conference with them each week about their reading.
- I give a mini-lesson every day (book talk or reading strategy).
- Everyone has a reading folder (vocabulary, “To Read Next” list).
- The course has some writing (but it’s not the focus).
- Everyone reads one book that’s outside his/her comfort zone.
- There’s an end-of-quarter reflection and end-of-semester letter.

Syllabus available here:
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1OJtyZBjVzLD-8RZPuuvCJGL6spLe5-GjcyLYHVDTiT0/edit?usp=sharing
Suitcase of the Month

What to put in the suitcase??? subjective/objective
Approximately 44 books will fit.

One genre per visit evolved to one highlighted
genre with a mix of other genres/groupings.

All books brought read by me evolved to a mix of
read by me, not-read by me, and newly added to
our collections.

Booktalking/presenting for an hour evolved to
bringing a book related activity in addition to the
booktalks and presentations on finding the your
next great read.
Some Tools for the Journey to Find their Next Great Read

Informed Teens blog HWRHS Indie page
Assembled for the Independent Reading class; arranged by genre.

YALSA’s Teen Book Finder Database
Search by award, list name, year, author, genre and more, as well as print customizable lists.

Fantastic Fiction:
- Young Adult Romance page
- Young Adult coming soon list

Hamilton-Wenham Public Library catalog
Search for read-a-likes.

NoveList
Genre reading lists, searchable appeal factors, read-a-likes, professional reviews.

Goodreads
LibraryThing
Keep track of what you read. Find out what your friends like.

Some Blogs:
- Bookshelves of Doom
- Epic Reads
- No Flying, No Tights
- Reading Rants!
- RA For All: Horror
Create book tasting stations. For example stations that feature: Teens’ Top Teen nominations; Banned Books; YA book awards such as Printz, Stonewall, Alex, etc.; best of lists and best sellers; or books with different appeal factors such as plot driven vs. character driven.

Create read outside your comfort zone stations, for example: a verse novel station; a graphic format nonfiction/biography station; stations with someone on the cover who doesn’t look like or live like most of your student population (e.g.: rural vs. urban); an LGBTQ station; genre stations that need a little love. Stir and combine!

For inspiration see Gene Luen Yang’s: The Reading Without Walls Challenge.
Entice! Experiment! A world of YA Book Activities continued...

**Reading Personality Quiz**
created by Sereena Hamm, adapted by Kim Claire

**Suggested Titles for the Reading Personality Quiz Categories**

Create Hogwarts house tasting stations. Find or write a house sorting quiz. For suggestions on what books to put in each house see Robin Brenner’s *What’s Your House: A Recommended Reading List Sorted by Hogwarts’s House*.

Student project: Use Canva to create bookmarks with themes such as their recommendation of top five books to read before graduating high school (may not include any required books assigned as part of school curriculum). You present & students present their bookmark choices.
Students Weigh In:

“I became a stronger reader and now enjoy reading more.”

“After a long day of class it was nice to have time to quietly read.”

“I learned a lot through this course about the type of reader I am.”

“I was able to explore genres that I don’t usually read and tackle more challenging books.”

“It was great to recharge the batteries in the middle of the school day.”

“This course has made me think of reading as a tool I can use to relax.”

“I used to be very bored from reading, but now I enjoy reading books that catch my eye.”
“Visits from Kim Claire -- They always helped me to find my books -- good to learn what's out there.”

“I really enjoyed the book talks because they gave me ideas of what to read. I also really enjoyed Kim Claire coming because she recommends amazing books.”

“I am re-interested in reading after this course.”

“I really enjoy reading and find myself reading rather than watching t.v.. Before this class I did not enjoy reading as much as I do now.”

“Kids rarely have time in other classes to read and relax. This is a great time to.”
School Benefits

● Course allows for mixing of grades & ability levels.

● Course creates a time for kids to escape from the stress of the school day.

● It’s fantastic when a student gets a library card or spends part of the weekend reading.
Kim’s Influence on Barbara’s Reading
Public Library - Benefits/Bumps

**Benefits**
- Get connected. Form relationships with students and teachers.
- Public library gains presence/recognition in the school.
- Discover what they want to read. It may not be what you think.
- Collection development/relevance/appeal. Finding your blind spots.
- Circulation stats!

**Bumps**
- Time, time, time, -- did I say time? Where is prep time in the schedule?
- The Schedule. “Who is going to cover the desk(s) while you are away?”
Some Perennial Student Favorites by Genre

**Contemporary/Realistic**

*Winger*, by Andrew Smith  
*The Hate U Give*, by Angie Thomas  
*Speak, Wintergirls, or Prom*, by Laurie Halse Anderson  
*The Kite Runner or A Thousand Splendid Suns*, by Khaled Hosseini  
*Every Day*, by David Levithan

*Orbiting Jupiter*, by Gary D. Schmidt  
*A Million Miles Away*, by Lara Avery  
*Looking for Alaska*, by John Green  
*The Boy in the Striped Pajamas*, by John Boyne

Continued...........

**Romance**

*Never Always Sometimes*, by Adi Alsaid  
*Eleanor and Park*, by Rainbow Rowell  
*Nicholas Sparks*

*Jodi Picoult*  
*Jhumpa Lahiri*  
*John Green*
# Perennial Student Favorites by Genre

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Memoir</th>
<th>Science Fiction / Fantasy / Dystopian</th>
<th>Horror / Suspense / Thriller / Crime</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#GIRLBOSS, by Sophia Amoruso</td>
<td>Harry Potter series</td>
<td>Miss Peregrine’s Home for Peculiar Children, by Ransom Riggs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Glass Castle, by Jeannette Walls</td>
<td>Scythe, by Neal Shusterman</td>
<td>Stephen King</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Warrior’s Heart: Becoming a Man of Compassion and Courage, by Eric Greitens</td>
<td>Ready Player One, by Ernest Cline</td>
<td>H.P. Lovecraft</td>
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<td>Foundation series, by Isaac Asimov</td>
<td>Defending Jacob, by William Landay</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Six of Crows, by Leigh Bardugo</td>
<td>Virals series, by Kathy Reichs</td>
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Perennial Student Favorites by Genre

**Nonfiction**
- *Unbroken*, by Laura Hillenbrand
- *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*, by Rebecca Skloot
- *Tuesdays With Morrie*, by Mitch Albom

**Graphic Novels**
- *My Friend Dahmer*, by Derf Backderf
- *March*, by John Lewis

**Mystery**
- *The Da Vinci Code*, by Dan Brown
- *Out of the Easy*, by Ruta Sepatys
- *Gentlemen and Players*, by Joanne Harris
What’s the Take Away?

-- **Monday** --
Get to know each other.
Pick up the phone, send an email.
Get together to find out how to help each other.

-- **Someday** --
How can curriculum/reading lists be updated to reflect teen tastes and concerns?

No!
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--George R. R. Martin