

Preparing Through Pre-Reading

Although pre-reading strategies are important when studying all types of literature, they are especially crucial in helping students comprehend and unpack canonical literature. At first glance, the settings in canonical text seem alien to the everyday twenty-first century experience, but through the use of pre-reading activities we can create windows to these worlds for our students to shape and understand their personal connections with the literature they read. By using pre-reading activities with canonical literature, we challenge our students' claims that "this book has nothing to do with me" and empower them to shape and understand their personal connections with canonical literature. Through these windows, students can develop a thematic consciousness of sorts and realize that their contemporary lives are not that different from the text world they are about to enter. As teachers of adolescents, we sometimes overlook the importance of an effective pre-reading activity; as a result, the only way we learn is from our battle scars. We know we are guilty of this and have, in fact, learned from several instructional struggles. A primary reason for struggling readers is that, as teachers, we may not take the time to observe and assess our students' needs or to guide and assist them in entering a text world. Soon after we began doing pre-reading experiences, we witnessed firsthand how students' claims that "this book has nothing to do me" were being challenged.

Exhibit 2.1 Strategies and Skill Sets

Pre-reading activities invite students to enter a text. Exhibit 2.1 lists the pre-reading exercises covered in this chapter and the various learning styles that may be accommodated by using these strategies.

Exhibit 2.1 Strategies and Skill Sets

Pre-Reading Strategy	Appropriate for These Learning Styles	Multiple Intelligences
Poster Project	Visual/Kinesthetic	Visual/Spatial Logical/Mathematical Bodily/Kinesthetic Interpersonal
Music Project	Auditory	Musical/Rhythmic Logical/Mathematical Verbal/Linguistic Intrapersonal
Shorter Works Project	Visual	Verbal/Linguistic Logical/Mathematical
Drama-as-power Project	Tactile/Kinesthetic	Bodily/Kinesthetic Interpersonal Visual/Spatial Intrapersonal
Role-Play Project	Tactile/Kinesthetic Auditory	Bodily/Kinesthetic Interpersonal Visual/Spatial Intrapersonal
Visual Arts Gallery Project	Visual	Visual/Spatial Interpersonal Musical/Rhythmic

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