



CASS presentation

Sharon Cronin Director of Instructional Leadership

Lori Meyer Associate Superintendent of Learning

Intended Outcomes

- Research on book clubs and lit circles
- What is book tasting
- Explore literary materials and connect to provincial resource review guide
 - Leadership lens
 - Student access
- Reflection and possible next steps

LQS Connections

- 2. Modelling Commitment to Professional Learning
- 4. Leading a Learning Community
- 9. Understanding and Responding to the Larger Societal Context

SLQS Connections

- 2. Modelling Commitment to Professional Learning
- 4. Leading Learning
- 7. Supporting Effective Governance especially b., c., and d.

What is a book club

- A group of people (students) come together to discuss a book they are reading

AND...

- An opportunity for students to discuss a book of their choosing
- An opportunity to decrease social isolation
- An opportunity for students to support and encourage each other

Research on the effectiveness of book clubs

- Reimagining Reading: Connecting and Promoting Lifelong Readers Through Book Clubs- (article by Penny Kittle and Kelly Gallagher, April 2018)
- Breathing New Life Into Book Clubs: A practical Guide for Teachers (book by Sonja Cherry-Paul and Dana Johansen)

What is the difference between a book club and a literature circle?

Feature	Book Club	Literature Circle
Purpose	Build enjoyment of reading, foster community, encourage authentic discussion	Build literacy skills (comprehension, analysis, vocabulary, discussion strategies)
Structure	Flexible, organic discussions	Highly structured with assigned roles and tasks
Student Choice	High — students often choose the book and discussion flow	Moderate — students may choose books, but roles and procedures are teacher-directed
Discussion Style	Informal, conversational, like an “adult” book club	Guided, role-based, focused on practicing specific strategies
Teacher Role	Facilitator or participant; light-touch guidance	Instructor/coach; scaffolds, models, and monitors discussions
Accountability	Minimal; emphasis on engagement and reflection	Stronger; often includes logs, journals, role sheets, or projects
Typical Use	Upper elementary through secondary; enrichment, choice reading, engagement	Elementary through secondary; core literacy instruction or small-group reading practice
Primary Focus	Engagement, identity as a reader, love of books	Explicit literacy development, strategy practice, and comprehension skills

The importance of choosing your own book

“No matter what a person’s reading preferences, *selection proficiency* matters. It is a significant life skill. Many people who are perceived—by teachers, by parents, and often by themselves—as poor or non-readers are in fact simply poor choosers of reading material, a very different concern.”

Margaret Mackey “Learning to Choose. The Hidden Art of the Enthusiastic Reader”

(italics are ours)

Guidance in Alberta on Resource Selection

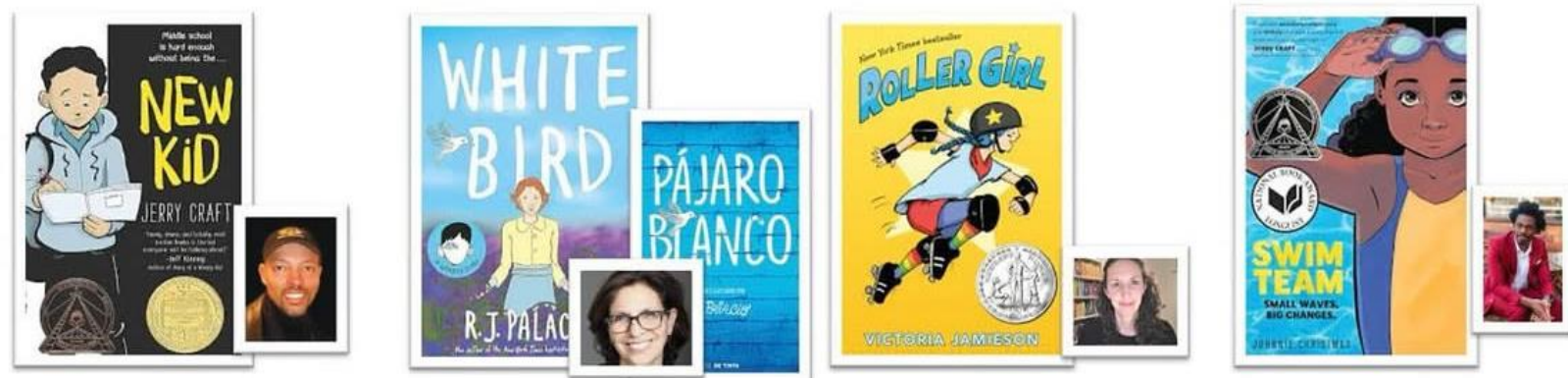
Provincial Resource Review Guide

Alberta Education and Childcare

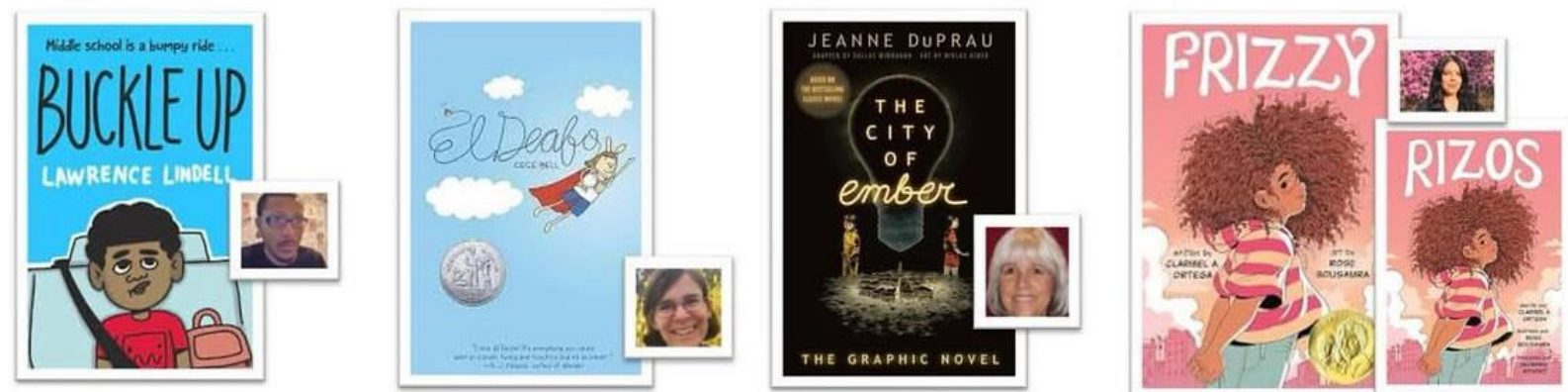
Published September 2025

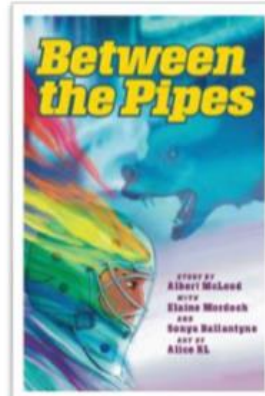
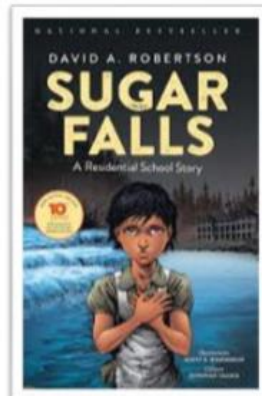
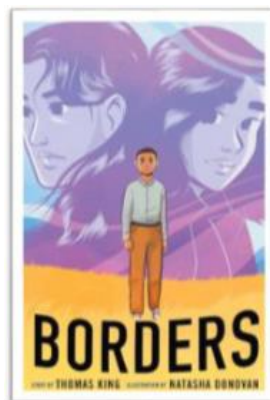
“This guide provides a provincial approach for Alberta’s Kindergarten to Grade 12 (K-12) education system to select and manage learning and teaching resources for the local learning environment. It is recommended that school leaders and teachers use this guide to provide a consistent provincial approach for the integration of resources into the local learning environment.”

Pg 1

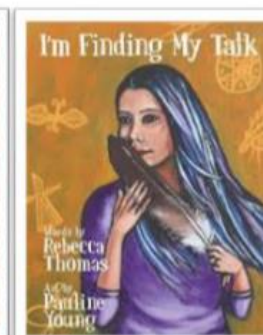
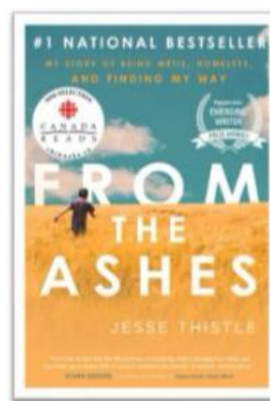


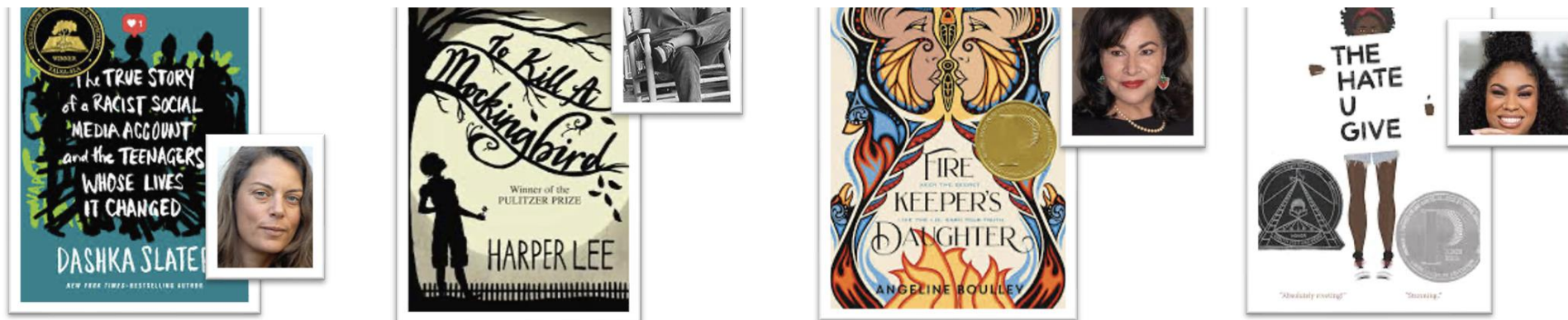
What parts of your identity are determined for you, by other people, or by society?



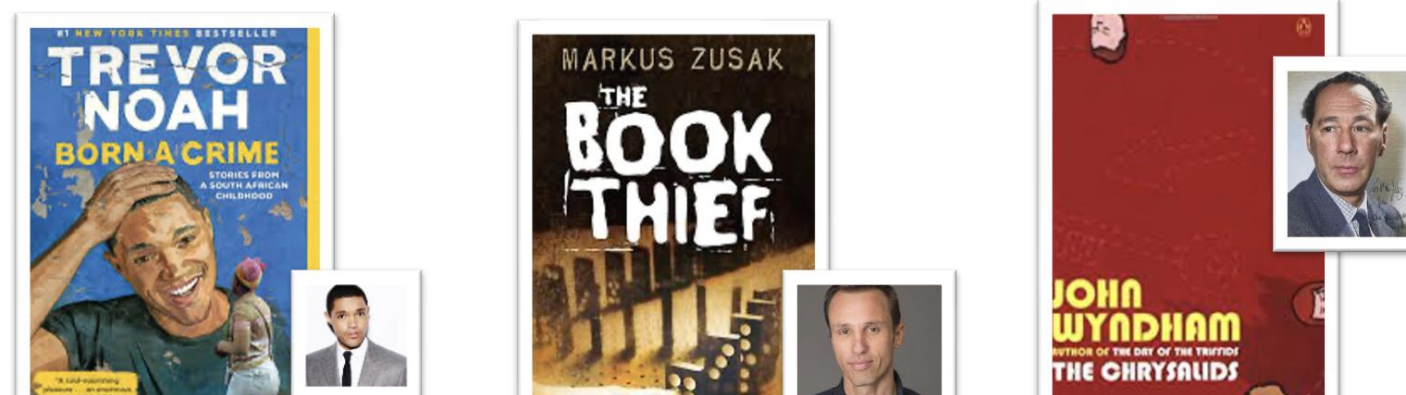


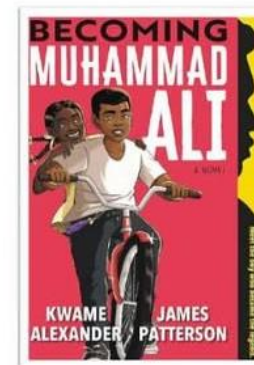
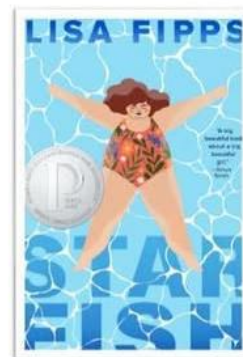
Indigenous Canadian Voices



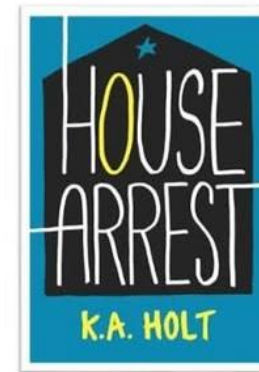
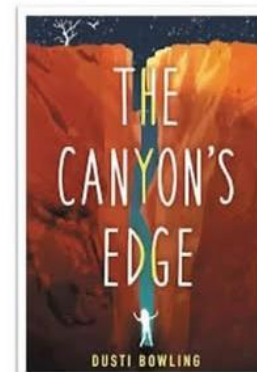
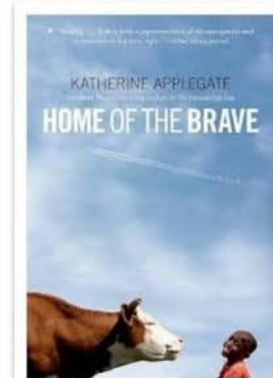
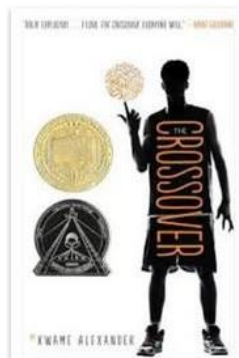


What role does storytelling play in bringing attention to issues of injustice?





How do our relationships and experiences shape who we are and influence the choices we make?



What is book tasting?

- **Set-up:**

The classroom is arranged like a café or restaurant, with books placed at different tables or stations. Sometimes teachers add “menus,” placemats, or even music/props to make it feel like a special event.

- **Process:**

Students rotate between tables, “taste” (skim, preview, or read a short section of) several books, and record their impressions in a “menu” or log (e.g., genre, characters, interest level, would they want to keep reading?).

What is the purpose of book tasting

- **Purpose:**

- Expose students to a wide range of texts, authors, and genres.
 - Help students discover books that interest them.
 - Build around reading by making book selection fun and social.
excitement
- Choice reading
 - Book club organization
 - Compel students to read!

Planning for a tasting!

1. Prepare the “Café”

- Arrange the classroom like a café (clusters of desks or tables).
- Place a selection of books (4–6 per table) — ideally multiple titles for students to choose from in their future book clubs.
- Add ambiance: tablecloths, menus, placemats, café music, maybe even a “host/hostess” sign.
- Create “**Book Menus**” or **tasting sheets** where students can jot notes: title, genre, first impressions, interest rating.

2. Introduce the Event

- Frame it as a special event: *“Today you’ll be sampling different books, like dishes at a restaurant, to help you find the right one for your book club.”*
- Explain the rotation: students will spend about 5–8 minutes at each table, skimming the book (back cover, first pages, illustrations, style).

3. The Tasting

- Students rotate through 3–5 tables, sampling at least a few books.
- They jot down notes in their menus:
 - *What's the “flavor” of this book?*
 - *Does it seem exciting, confusing, funny, relatable?*
 - *Would you want to keep reading it? (Star or rate 1–5).*

Let's do some tasting!

- Menu options
 - General description of process
 - Taste the first book
 - Remind to jot notes
 - Peruse the books
-
- The tasting is the menu and the meal is the club!

4. Reflection & Choice

- After tastings, students review their menus and pick their top 2–3 preferred titles.
- Teacher collects preferences and groups students into book clubs based on interest, reading level, and balance across the class.

5. Forming the Book Clubs

- Announce groups: *“Here are your book club tables!”*
- Each group receives their chosen book.
- Students decorate a tent card with their club name, or write a group contract/norms for how they’ll work together.

6. Launch the Clubs

- First meeting: students set reading goals (e.g., chapters by next session) and decide how they'll discuss (roles, guiding questions, or open discussion).
- Teacher scaffolds with sample questions:
 - *What's happening so far?*
 - *What predictions do you have?*
 - *How do you connect with the characters or events?*

7. Keep the Momentum

- Schedule regular book club meetings (once or twice a week).
- Provide guiding questions, optional roles, or mini-lessons on discussion skills.
- Allow creative projects or reflections at the end (posters, book trailers, skits, written reviews).

References

Allington, Richard. *What I Have Learned About Effective Reading Instruction*. Phi Delta Kappan. June 2002.

Cherry-Paul, S., & Johansen, D. (2019). *Breathing new life into book clubs: A practical guide for teachers*. Heinemann.

Kittle, P., & Gallagher, K. (2018). *180 Days: Two teachers and the quest to engage and empower adolescents*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann

Kittle, P., & Gallagher, K. (2018, April 4). Reimagining reading: Connecting and promoting lifelong readers through book clubs. *Literacy Now*. International Literacy Association.

<https://www.literacyworldwide.org/blog/literacy-now/2018/04/04/reimagining-reading-connecting-and-promoting-lifelong-readers-through-book-clubs>

Mackey, Margaret. *Learning to Choose. The Hidden Art of the Enthusiastic Reader*. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy* 57(7) April 2014 doi: 10.1002/jaal.290 © 2014 International Reading Association (pp. 521–526)

“...if we want to increase substantially the amount of reading that children do (and I would argue that this is one absolutely crucial step toward enhancing reading proficiency), it is important to give children books they can read and *choices* regarding which books they will read.”

Richard Allington What I Have Learned About Effective Reading Instruction pg 746

Italics ours