



TIPS FOR TEACHERS AND CLASSROOM RESOURCES

Book Flood: More Books, Stronger Readers

By Jennifer Gunn

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It seems obvious, right? If students have increased access to a diverse and abundant selection of books, they'll be more likely to discover something they like and read more. And yet, many of our nation's children lack access to books at home and have lackluster classroom libraries. Providing a bounty of books for students is called a Book Flood, and some experts say it's the key to building literacy amongst students and instilling a lifelong joy of reading.

The impact of exposure to books

According to the international study [Family Scholarly Culture and Educational Success: Books and Schooling in 27 Nations](#), the more books present in a home, the higher a child's education will be. Even just 20 books – any books – present in a child's home has a large impact on their trajectory to higher education. The researchers surmise that in homes where more books are present parents are increasingly likely to read and discuss books with children at a young age and use books to facilitate discussion or debate. Homes with books allow children to watch their parents read and are an environment where children can pick up books themselves.

There's also the possibility that children in homes with reading material develop a mindset that books and learning are valuable tools and worth their time. The effects of growing up with no books present in a household are grim – setting children years behind in achievement, perpetuating economic disparity and intellectual disadvantage. According to the U.S. Department of Education, sixty-one percent of low-income homes with children do not have any books in the home. "The most successful way to improve the reading achievement of low-income children is to increase their access to print. Communities ranking high in



Book flood theory

The book flood theory says that students who are exposed to a lot of books will pick up language and literacy more quickly. This includes filling classrooms and homes with volumes of books. Kelly Gallagher in [Readicide](#) says, "Let me be clear: If we are to have any chance of developing a reading habit in our students, they must be immersed in a K12 'book flood.'" Finding the right book can transform negative mindsets about reading and begin to develop a long-term literacy practice. The alternative is bleak. Children who do not practice reading regularly lack exposure to critical and sophisticated vocabulary (Cunningham & Stanovich, 1997) and "a gap in knowledge ensues that adversely impacts literacy into adulthood" (Hodgkinson, 1995; Neuman & Celano, 2006).

What you can do to create a book flood

How can schools make their book budgets count and help families acquire books at home for students? Here are some ideas you can implement right now to bring a book flood to your school community.

Stock that classroom library

Check out these resources for seriously discounted or free books to stock your classroom library.

- [Donor's Choose](#)
- [First Book](#)
- [Project Cicero](#)
- [Kids Needs to Read](#)
- [Library of Congress Surplus Book Program](#)
- [Reading Resource Project](#)
- [Books for Kids](#)
- [Scholastic Clearance](#)
- [Get Caught Reading Posters](#)
- [Philadelphia Reads Book Bank](#)
- [Bernie's Book Bank \(Chicago\)](#)
- [The Children's Book Bank \(Portland\)](#)
- [The Children's Book Project \(San Francisco\)](#)
- [National Home Library Foundation](#)
- [The Lois Lenski Covey Foundation](#)
- [Snapdragon Book Foundation](#)
- [Build-A-Bear Workshop Bear Hugs Foundation](#)
- [Maryland Book Bank](#)
- [Books Are Gems \(El Paso\)](#)

FUN FACT: Book Flood or Jolabokafloð is an Icelandic tradition. In the months before Christmas, tons of new books are released in preparation for the holiday. On Christmas Eve, families give each other books as gifts and then they all get cozy and read together!

Help families get involved

Check out these resources for getting books for families at home and for getting parents involved in literacy.



- [Reach Out and Read](#)
- [Reading is Fundamental Family Resources](#)
- [Imagination Library](#)
- [Send Home Family Literacy Kits:](#) Send home a book and a list of reading activities parents can engage in with their child at home.
- [Host Adult Literacy Classes](#) at your school to boost the literacy levels of parents.
- [Print out and send home vocabulary flashcards](#) for parents and students to practice with each other.

together with your local library and host a family literacy night where students and their families can come to the library, check out books and spend some time reading together.

Connect your classroom libraries

[Libib](#) is an app that makes your school's classrooms function like a library. Simply catalog books by classroom in the app, and teachers and students can check or and borrow books from every classroom, widening the book choice for your students.

Hit those garage sales

Garage sales and thrift shops are a great place to pick up books for pennies. Pick up some cheap books and make a Free Books Bin or [Little Free Library](#) for kids to take books home.

Host a community book drive

Get in touch with your community organizations or religious centers and host a local book drive. Ask for book donations of new and used books and fill up that classroom library or give books to students to take home.

Book giveaways

Set aside a few hundred dollars of school budget money each year — or fundraiser! — to buy books for book giveaways. Throughout the year, or perhaps every Friday, recognize the achievements of students and give away a few books! Or have a weekly book raffle in the cafeteria! Make books an exciting prize, and give the gift of books for students to enjoy at home.

Change the game for your students

"For the majority of young people, enthusiastic and habitual reading is the single most predictive personal habit for the ability to achieve desirable life outcomes" (Bayless, 2010). Investing in long-term literacy is one of the most impactful things you can do for your students. So get out there, educators! Use these ideas and create your own school book flood!

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