

Junior Great Books Read-Aloud Program Assessment

When primary-grades students develop critical thinking, they lay the foundation for active engagement and meaning making as readers. The seemingly simple activities of the Junior Great Books Read-Aloud Program scaffold students' critical thinking in many ways, as long as you lead the activities with an expectation of divergent ideas, and ask follow-up questions based on an open-minded curiosity about students thinking.

Since these assessments require you to observe or to take dictation from students, you may want to assess just a small group of your students at one time.

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Activity Score and Activity Mini-Rubrics

The activity score is a simple and flexible way to track your students' engagement and critical thinking in Read-Aloud program activities.

The mini-rubrics below will help you focus on critical thinking objectives in each activity. Each mini-rubric shows appropriate behaviors labeled 0, ✓, + and ++ in order of proficiency.

This is a rough, rule-of-thumb assessment, but as you tally scores over time they will result in an accurate picture of each student's individual achievement.

How to Use the Mini-Rubrics

You may use any of the activities in a unit for an activity score. To give scores:

1. Decide on the objectives that you most want to assess for each classroom activity.
2. Review the appropriate mini-rubric, or write your own rubric of behaviors you expect to see in that activity.
3. While you lead students in an activity, keep the relevant mini-rubric in mind.
4. Directly after your Junior Great Books session, mentally review each student's participation and record the scores.

Mini-Rubrics for Junior Great Books Read-Aloud

First and Second Reading

Look for students to:

| |
|---|
| 0—Listen but lose interest often |
| ✓—Listen but lose interest occasionally |
| +—Listen consistently |

G.B.'s Questions or Sharing Questions Discussion

When answering questions,

Look for students to:

| |
|---|
| 0—Make comments about the text without responding to the question |
| ✓—Give a simple answer to the question |
| +—Give a simple answer to the question with support based on the text, when asked |
| ++—Give a simple answer to the question and volunteer support based on the text |

When responding to others' comments,

Look for students to:

| |
|---|
| 0—Let attention wander, or concentrate mostly on what they want to say |
| ✓—Repeat or copy another's comment |
| +—Agree or disagree with another's comment and then give their own idea |
| ++—Give reasons for agreeing or disagreeing with another's comment |

In writing, art, or drama activities,

Look for students to:

| |
|--|
| 0—Bring in ideas unrelated to the story or poem |
| ✓—Express ideas related to the story or poem, but not responding to the prompt |
| +—Express simple ideas responding to the prompt |
| ++—Express ideas responding to the prompt with details from the story or poem |

Scoring Interpretive Drawings with the Drawing Rubric

Many prompts for Art Activities ask students for simple interpretations of the stories, and students who cannot yet write can convey their ideas through drawings. For instance, for “Hansel and Gretel,” students draw the bravest action one of the children does. Students express their interpretive ideas through their choices of scenes to draw, the details to include, the expressions for the characters’ faces and the captions or labels they dictate for their pictures.

Because this is not a test of drawing ability, have students dictate to you their responses to the prompt and their labels for things in their pictures so you can be sure what they intended.

How to Give the Assignment

1. Choose a story with an art activity based on an interpretive issue. Prompts that ask students to make judgments about characters and what they did in the story work well. To keep students focused on the text, avoid prompts that ask students what might happen to characters after the end of the story or what experiences they have that resemble those in the story. Refer to the Unit Overview to read the prompts.
2. Lead the story unit as you usually do, and discuss the story with your students.
3. Pass out blank pieces of drawing paper. Tell students, “I would like for you to draw a picture that shows your ideas about this story. Here’s what I want you to draw.” Then read the prompt from the art activity.
4. After the students have drawn for about 10 minutes, circulate among them and ask each one, “Tell me what’s in your picture and I’ll write it down.” Write what the student dictates as a caption at the bottom of the sheet. Encourage the student to explain parts of the picture, especially if you can’t tell what they are, and write down the student’s labels for them.
5. Read the dictation back to the student. Ask, “Did I write it down right?” If the student offers corrections or additions, incorporate them.
6. Assess students’ drawings using the Interpretive Drawing Rubric

Read-Aloud Interpretive Drawing Rubric

| | |
|----|--|
| 0— | The drawing and caption are unintelligible or not related to the story |
| 1— | The drawing and caption are related to the story, but not clearly responsive to the question <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Illustrations from the story have been copied or traced• Characters from the story are represented, but not events |
| 2— | The drawing and caption show a very simple response to the question, <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Part of an action or some of the relevant characters are shown• OR: Details from the story are seriously misunderstood |
| 3— | The drawing and caption show a more developed response to the question <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The whole action and most of the relevant characters are shown |
| 4— | The drawing and caption show a full response to the question, with full details from the story <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Characters’ feelings or thinking are portrayed• Many relevant details are included |

Using the My Question Rubric

Students' questions about Read-Aloud stories can give you good insights into their thinking about a story. In addition, when students write or dictate My Question, they develop habits of active learning and curiosity about meaning.

How to Give the Assignment

1. Use My Question with any story or poem in Read-Aloud. If you wish to compare students' later work with their earlier work, choose comparable kinds of reading.
2. Introduce the selection, and conduct the first and second readings as usual, pausing to discuss G.B.'s questions.
3. After reading, ask each student to dictate to you or to write his or her own question about the story.
4. Briefly confer with each student, asking, "How you think of this question? Why do you want to know the answer to this question?" and write down the response. This will help clarify the question for you and show you the thinking behind it. Students' initial questions often are worded in ways that misrepresent their thinking.
5. Assess students' questions using the My Question Rubric

My Question Rubric

| | |
|----|---|
| 0— | The response is unintelligible. |
| 1— | The response is a comment on the story or poem (something liked, disliked, etc.) rather than a question. |
| 2— | The question is clearly answered in the story or poem or reflects a misunderstanding of it. |
| 3— | The question deals with the causes of incidents, motives of characters, or meaning of words or phrases that are important in the story or poem. |
| 4— | The question deals with the causes of incidents, motives of characters, or meaning of words of phrases that are important in the story or poem, and the student explains how he or she thought of the question. |

As students progress, expect them to be able to write or dictate several questions rather than just one.

Reflecting with Students

Even young children can learn by reflecting on what they have done, if you focus on a few important issues. Reflecting on their group discussions helps them gradually understand what is expected of them.

How to Lead Reflection

Reflect about Sharing Questions Discussion, since that activity gives students their best opportunity to make use of all the strategies and skills developed in the other activities. Plan to reflect directly after Sharing Questions Discussion, so students will remember clearly what they did.

For your first reflection sessions, use just one behavior from How We Worked Together (see below). As students come to understand that behavior, gradually add others, one by one.

1. Before your discussion, chose your target behavior from How We Worked Together, and prepare paper copies or a transparency.
2. Directly after discussion, explain to students that you would like to think about their discussion together, so the class can get better at it. Give each student a copy of the target behavior or project the transparency.
3. Discuss with the class what the behavior means. At first, suggest examples you observed in discussion; later ask students to share examples.
4. Ask the students which smiley face they choose for that discussion, and why. Encourage students to give examples, and take notes on the board. Remember that students may have different ideas of how the discussion went.
5. Post the target behavior, the chosen smiley face(s) and your notes, and review them with your class before the next discussion.

How We Worked Together In Sharing Questions Discussion

Unit: _____ Date: _____

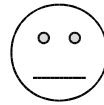
For each pair of statements, circle or color in the face that describes your group's work in discussion. Talk over what you did, and how you can do better next time.

We asked interesting questions.



Our questions were too easy.

We thought hard about the story.



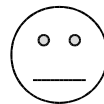
We didn't talk much about the story.

We gave reasons for our ideas.



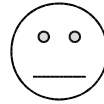
We didn't give reasons; it sounded like we were guessing.

We listened to each other.



We didn't pay much attention to each other.

Almost all of us contributed.



A few people did all the talking.

We were interested and learned a lot.



We were bored.

Next time we want to: _____

