

Resource Guide Exploring with Characters

Collections

Courageous Characters

Thrilling Tales

Stories of Friendship and Family

The following activities and resources were selected to support classroom instruction and family literacy engagement. In addition to these instructor resources, each book in the collection has three short engagement activities for adults and families.

Suggestions for Using the Collection and Activities

- ◆ Explore the books in this guide by clicking on the book titles in the table below.
- ◆ Notice that the books in these collections provide text across a span of reading levels for adults and include books that are engaging for children and families to read together.
- ◆ Access the short, guided activities for each book that offer suggestions for both instructors and families. You may access the activities by clicking on the book titles in the table below. The activities are attached to each book.
- ◆ Allow learners individual time to access the application and explore the collection and guided activities.
 - Use this link <https://booksmart.worldreader.org/library-code> to access ReadLife Bookshelf. Readers are then asked to enter a library code. The ReadLife Bookshelf library code is **BAFB**. The first “bookshelf” (row) has the title *ReadLife Bookshelf – Family Reading Collection*. Readers enter the code once per device.
- ◆ Readers will be prompted to create an account and profile after they read three books. Click [here](#) to watch a video on how to create a profile in BookSmart – the application that powers ReadLife Bookshelf.
 - For more detailed instructions, click [here](#). You can share this slide deck with readers and families for an easy set up.
- ◆ If using the reading collections for the first time, model how the age and language filters work in the application, and how to locate the search function, so books can be easily found.
- ◆ Decide how you will interact with these topics and curated text collections. This resource guide has suggestions to support in-person adult learner

instruction and offers online resources for instructors. Consider using the materials as starting points for larger units or creative activities to engage with topics and texts.

- ◆ Utilize the print-ready family engagement activity sheets for learners who are parents or caregivers. They are tailored to these collections and are easy to print and share!
- ◆ Use these collections and guide to help develop and foster a reading life for your learners and their families!
- ◆ Guides for past collections may be found on our [ReadLife Bookshelf Resource Page](#).

Courageous Characters - September Collection

Engaging Books for Adults		
Book Title	Author	Lexile Reading Level
<i>News for You: Europe's Space Agency Welcomes First Parastronaut</i>	New Readers Press (ProLiteracy)	610-800
<i>News for You: La agencia especial de Europa da la bienvenida al primer parastronauta</i>	New Readers Press (ProLiteracy)	610-800
<i>Un talent oculto</i>	Stephanie Chamberlain	610-800
<i>Hidden Talent</i>	Stephanie Chamberlain	630
Engaging Books for Adults and Children		
<i>Firefighter (People I Meet)</i>	Douglas Bender	AD90
<i>Bombero (La gente que conozco)</i>	Douglas Bender	280
<i>Something in the Woods</i>	Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy	410-600
<i>Kooky's First Day of School</i>	BG Bradford	410-600
<i>A Barcelona Adventure</i>	Nicola Thornton	810-1000
<i>Una Aventura en Barcelona</i>	Nicola Thornton	810-1000

Thrilling Tales - October Collection

Engaging Books for Adults		
Book Title	Author	Lexile Reading Level
<i>The Secret of the Blue Box</i>	Anna Cole	410-600
<i>El secreto de la caja azul</i>	Anna Cole	410-600
<i>News for You: ¿Están observándonos los extraterrestres? Un estudio halla numerosas estrellas que tienen una vista clara de la Tierra</i>	New Readers Press (ProLiteracy)	610-800
<i>News for You: Are Aliens Watching Us? Study Finds Many Stars With Clear View of Earth</i>	New Readers Press (ProLiteracy)	760
Engaging Books for Adults and Children		
<i>Don Vampiro</i>	Estephany Maradiaga	10-200
<i>Mr. Vampire</i>	Estephany Maradiaga	210-400
<i>Kooky is Afraid of the Dark</i>	Anna Hamzah	410-600
<i>Into the Deep</i>	Jon Groves	410-600
<i>Black Widow Spider (Deadliest Animals)</i>	Amy Culliford	810-1000
<i>La viuda Negra (Los animales más letales)</i>	Amy Culliford	810-1000

Stories of Friendship and Family – November Collection

Engaging Books for Adults		
Book Title	Author	Lexile Reading Level
<i>News for You: Un trasplante une a dos deportistas profesionales</i>	New Readers Press (ProLiteracy)	460
<i>News for You: Transplant Connects Two Pro Athletes</i>	New Readers Press (ProLiteracy)	520

<i>Lucky Henry Walker: Hurricane Refugee</i>	John Porter	530
<i>Ellis Island: Rosalia's Story</i>	Janet Hardy-Gould	800
Engaging Books for Adults and Children		
<i>We Are Family: Picnic in the Park</i>	Rebecca Fenton	NP
<i>Ways to Say I Love You</i>	Oxford University Press	210-400
<i>Dance Class</i>	Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy	210-400
<i>Josefina's Habichuelas/ Las habichuelas de Josefina</i>	Jasminne Mendez	410-600
<i>The Curious Cardinal</i>	Mark Valdez	410-600
<i>El cardenal curioso</i>	Mark Valdez	410-600

Activities to Support Exploring Character

Characterization is a story element that an author uses to explain and develop characters. This allows the reader to become familiar with them as the story progresses. Characterization helps readers picture what a character looks, sounds, and acts like in a story. To explore *character*, consider how you will build anticipation, background knowledge, and schema for your learners. To do this, consider addressing the following questions with your learners:

- What does the term “character” mean to you?
- What makes a character interesting in a text?
- What is one of your most favorite characters from a text and why?
- What are some ways that you have related to characters in a text?

There are many ways to get your learners thinking, collaborating, and actively engaging with each other. Consider any of the following activities:

- **Listening Triangles:** This activity will foster collaborative discussion among learners, as well as build speaking, listening, and comprehension skills.
- **Cooperative Learning Roles:** This activity is ideal for groups with at least four learners, but roles can be adapted to specific tasks and group sizes. This activity gives each learner a targeted role within the larger group and fosters collaboration and cooperation among learners.

- **Hot Seat:** This activity incorporates the idea of a Socratic Seminar by advancing learner engagement to the next level. The “hot seat” encourages active listening and participation among a group discussion and propels the discussion in many different directions by allowing participants to advance the discussion at hand.

Writing about Character

Writing about characters deepens comprehension for readers and builds upon their own writing skills. When readers are asked to write about characters in a text, it strengthens their own abilities to develop characters within a piece they may be writing. Consider using the following activities to support learners as they write about characters and characterization:

- **"I Am" Poem:** This activity will help writers think about the traits and characteristics that make them unique as individuals. They can then use this template to think about a character in a writing piece they want to develop or describe from a text they are reading. This activity is adaptable to learners of all abilities, as well as fiction or nonfiction characters/figures.
- **Origin Story:** This activity will have writers working in groups to develop characters through short scenes and origin stories. It will guide writers through how to write their stories using prompting questions relating to a process of putting together a peanut butter and jelly sandwich. Writers will have a lot of fun with this and develop their writing and collaboration skills.
- **Character Map:** This lesson plan will provide learners with graphic organizers and step-by-step prompts to develop strong characters. These activities can also be used to support learners in analyzing characters they are reading about in texts. The lesson plan is adaptable for learners of all abilities and can be used for both fictional and nonfictional characters/figures.

Online Resources to Explore Character

The following resources will help instructors gather more ideas and insights for teaching texts within these collections:

- **CommonLit:** This resource provides educators with free lesson plans, texts, and assessments about fiction and nonfiction literary topics. Texts are adaptable to learners of all abilities and some can be translated into a different language for Multilingual Learners of English.
- **ReadWriteThink:** This free resource for educators will provide a variety of lesson plans, unit plans, and stories, that can be used to foster comprehension about character development and character traits.

- **NCTE:** This resource from the National Council of Teachers of English, will provide educators with lesson plans, reference guides, and texts to support any literacy skill development. All resources can be adapted to learners of all abilities.

Expanded Engagement – Adult Learner Text: *Hidden Talent*

Consider the following resources for adult learners as they read *Hidden Talent* and explore and learn about their own courage and hidden talents.

- **Overcoming Obstacles:** This unit plan offers a variety of activities ranging in level of complexity that can be adapted to any learner or educational setting. The activities within the unit can be taught in order or may be used as stand-alone activities to support learners thinking about themselves as individuals and how they fit within a greater society.
- **Ever Done That?:** This lesson plan will help learners explore their inner courage by asking them to think about their own vulnerabilities. This lesson is full of individual, paired, and group activities that will promote text-self connections for learners with the text *Hidden Talents*. It can be adapted for learners of all ages.
- **Courage:** This lesson can be completed over the course of a few hours or can be broken up into smaller chunks. It combines text-self-world connections by fostering the link between courage and historical events. The activities within the lesson are adaptable for learners of all abilities and interest levels.

Expanded Engagement: News for You: Are Aliens Watching Us? Study Finds Many Stars with Clear View of Earth

Consider the following resources for adult learners and families as they read *News for You: Are Aliens Watching Us? Study Finds Many Stars with Clear View of Earth* and explore and learn more about Earth and Space.

- **Science Buddies:** This website will provide educators with a variety of lesson plans about **Earth** and space. The lesson plans include short videos, experiments, and various activities that can be completed in any educational setting. Learners will love these interactive and hand-on activities for learning about space.
- **NASA:** This website provides a wealth of resources for STEM education for learners of all ages. These activities promote text-self-world connections for readers as they explore many of the topics covered in *News for You: Are Aliens Watching Us? Study Finds Many Stars with Clear View of Earth* and gain a deeper understanding of the complexities of Earth and space.

- [**World Wildlife Foundation \(WWF\)**](#): This resource provides educators with a variety of lesson plans about various topics relating to animals, plants, and the Earth in general. Learners will have fun exploring the various topics offered and the important ways humans need to work together to provide sustainability for our planet.

Family Engagement

The family reading engagement activities on the next two pages may be shared directly with adult learners and their families, so they can explore these themes and books together. The pages are ready to print and share!

- The activity sheets explore *characters* within stories.
 - The first activity sheet is a “before, during, and after reading” template.
 - Encourage parents to choose a book to read with their child. They can use these questions and prompts to support conversations about the book and characters within the book!
 - The second activity sheet is targeted to support reading skill development. The activities also promote building excitement to read a book and to learn about characters within the story.
 - For both activity sheets, consider pairing an adult learner text with a children’s text. Think about the type of conversations that might be promoted by the parent and child exploring the same theme.



Family Reading Time

Dear Families,

Family reading time is fun! Choose a book from ReadLife Bookshelf to read together. Use *before, during, and after reading* questions to help your child make connections between the book and themselves and even to other parts of their life.

The following are some examples:

□ Before Reading

Look at the front cover with your child. Explore the pictures and text, and ask them:

- Does this book remind you of anything?
- What do we already know about _____?
- What do you predict will happen to the character in this book and why?
- How do you think the character is going to act in the story? Why?



□ During Reading

- If you were in this book, what do you think you would be hearing? Seeing? Tasting? Smelling? Feeling?
- What has happened to the character(s) so far?
- Have you ever done anything like the character or been in a situation that is similar, or like, what is happening in the story? What was the same for both of you? What was different?
- What is the problem this character is going through? How do you think it will turn out?
- What details do we know so far from the book to help us with our thinking?

□ After Reading

- Tell me about the story in your own words.
 - Think about how the character acted at the beginning of the story and the end of the story. Did they change? How? Why?
 - What would you like to ask the author (or characters) of the book?
 - What did you like most about the story? Why?
 - Do you think it was a good ending? What would you have changed?
- ◆ After reading the book in ReadLife Bookshelf, you will notice activities at the bottom of the screen. Explore these activities with your child!

Exploring Characters in Books!

Dear Families,

Talking about characters in books is fun! Choose a book from ReadLife Bookshelf to read together. Talk about the characters in the book and try one of these activities or all of them!

- **Create:** Create a drawing of your favorite character(s) from the book. It may be fun to start with a silhouette of the character (a silhouette is the shape or outline of something) or write the character's name in the middle of a piece of paper. Next, talk about your character:
 - What is the character thinking?
 - What does the character look like?
 - What do you think the character sounds like?
 - How does the character feel throughout the story?
 - Finish the conversation by adding details to your piece of paper about the character you chose!
- **Word Talk:** Encourage your reader to describe the character(s) from the story in a creative way.
 - Make it a game among your family to see who can be the most creative in describing the characters in the book!
 - Use some of the words you talked about in the *Create* activity above. Can you think of serious words? Silly words? Words about what the character looks like? Sounds like? Acts like?
- **Write:** Families will have fun writing their own stories about courageous, adventurous characters using the book you read together. See who can come up with the funniest, scariest, or overall best story among your family! Remember writing about a story can be simple – write a sentence, a paragraph, or more!
 - Write a different ending to the story.
 - Write a sequel – something that happens after the story ends – to the book.
 - Re-write a moment in the story and make a change to it that is surprising (this is called a *plot twist*)!
- **Go:** No matter where you live, you and your family can enjoy the outdoors together as you read and learn together.
 - Have a book party outdoors. Grab a blanket and lots of books to read together and on your own.
 - Practice writing by spelling out vocabulary words from the story. Write words in the sand using sticks or rocks. Use sidewalk chalk or write by using your finger to spell “in the air.”



- Tell your own stories. Look at the world around you. What is happening right now? What do you see? Smell? Hear? Create a story to share or create one together!