

Tool:	Student-Approved Books
Category:	Classroom
Urban Specialist:	Jennifer K. Lubke
School Level:	K-12
Target Audience:	Pre-service teachers, novice teachers, in-service teachers
References:	Any reading program should include a recognition/incentive component for its participants. This is a culminating activity that not only provides students with incentive to read but reinforces students' evaluative and critical thinking skills, motivation in reading. <i>Reading Online</i> , 4 (8). Retrieved from http://www.readingonline.org

Rationale: Any reading program should include a recognition/incentive component for its participants. This is a culminating activity that not only provides students with incentive to read, but reinforces students' evaluative and critical thinking skills.

Description:

The inspiration for this activity came to me one day while I was walking through a local bookstore. As is the case in many of the large chain bookstores and even video rental shops, there was a "staff picks" section. Employees at the store record book recommendations on little cards that go on display next to the books. The item came to me: "Why can't our students do the same thing in our school library?" We have an ever-growing section of Accelerated Reader books within our library. Accelerated Reader is a reading improvement computer program that assesses reading levels as students self-select and read from a wide variety of classic and contemporary fiction books. After students complete a book, they take a short, online reading assessment that gives them instant results and rewards points to students who pass the test successfully. In my classroom students receive a daily participation grade for reading their AR book silently for 30 minutes. For extra credit, they may keep any points they earn from taking and passing an AR test. Additionally, if they pass an AR test and wish to recommend the book to their classmates, they may earn even more extra credit. Our school mascot is the falcon, so at our school, student-recommended books are called "Falcon Approved."

Materials

- Computer and printer
- 8 ½ x 11" cardstock that is compatible with your printer

Procedure

- 1) Design the "Student-Approved Book" display card. This may be easily done with a regular word processing program. Fit two cards per page by choosing the "landscape" feature on page set-up. Keep in mind that you will need to be able to fold the cards in half so they can stand up on display. There should be blank spaces for author, title, and the book reviewer's name. Create several blank lines for the student to write his or her

review. It might be helpful to give them a sentence stem, such as “I recommend this book because. . . .” You might also want to incorporate some clip art to “jazz up” the cards.

- 2) When the cards are ready, make them available to students who want to recommend books. When a student fills out a card, place it on display with the book in a prominent location so other students may read the review and check out the book, if desired.
- 3) Arrange a system with your school librarian so the recommended books and cards stay on prominent display for students to see.

You may want to award extra credit or bonus points to students for each book review they write.