



RECORDBOOKS

resource guide

LARRY SWARTZ AND DEBBIE NYMAN


LORIMER
CHILDREN & TEENS

RECORDBOOKS

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**JAMES LORIMER & COMPANY LTD., PUBLISHERS
TORONTO**



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Ltd., Publishers
First published in the United States in 2015

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Library and Archives Canada Cataloguing in Publication information available upon request.

ISBN 978-1-4594-0758-9

James Lorimer & Company Ltd., Publishers
317 Adelaide Street West, Suite 1002
Toronto, ON, Canada
M5V 1P9
www.lorimer.ca

Distributed in the United States by:
Orca Book Publishers
P.O. Box 468
Custer, WA, USA
98240-0468

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

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Creating Caring Classrooms (with Kathleen Gould Lundy). Pembroke Publishers, 2011.

Drama Schemes, Themes & Dreams (with Debbie Nyman). Pembroke Publishers, 2010.

Good Books Matter (with Shelley Stagg Peterson). Pembroke Publishers, 2008.

The Novel Experience: Steps for Choosing and Using Fiction in the Classroom: Pembroke Publishers, 2006.

Literacy Techniques, 2nd Edition (with David Booth). Pembroke Publishers, 2004.

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INTRODUCTION

About This guide

The Lorimer Recordbooks guide provides teachers with

- an outline for helping students to choose non-fiction stories in the Recordbooks series,
- a choice of twenty-four response activities that offer students opportunities to make sense of what they have read in a variety of modes,
- teacher- and self-assessment profiles, and
- blackline masters for each activity as required.

Responding to Books

Students should be encouraged to experience a variety of response modes. Whenever possible, students should be given choices in the response activities they will be participating in. Students can work on activities independently, with a partner, or perhaps in groups of four or five. Activities fit into one of the following response modes:

- Reading Activities
- Writing Activities
- Oral Language
- The Arts
- Media and Technology
- Language, Vocabulary, and Style

Extensions at the end of some activities invite students to celebrate their reading of a Recordbooks story by sharing their opinions and promoting the books they have enjoyed with others.

Assessing the Learning

Three assessment profiles provide templates for teacher- and self-assessment of a student's Recordbook reading and comprehension.

- Assessment Profile #1: Reading Observation Checklist
- Assessment Profile #2: Self-Assessment
- Assessment Profile #3: My Independent Reading

Appendix (Blackline Masters)

In some cases, a reproducible blackline master is needed to complete an activity. In each instance, the activity will reference the page number of the blackline master within the appendix at the end of this guide. Each blackline master also references the number of the activity it is for.

ABOUT THE LORIMER RECORDBOOKS SERIES

Lorimer Recordbooks Offer:

- Sport-centred biographies highlighting key social issues
- Writing with a flair that makes sports icons come alive
- Biographies of men and women athletes
- Tackling real issues, such as racism, diversity, and conflict
- Photos and sports trivia sidebars
- Knowledgeable authors highlight social controversies
- Short chapters, easy-to-read, hi-lo format
- Ideal for ESL and adult literacy programs

Goals of the Program

- To provide opportunities for students to choose and complete non-fiction books independently
- To provide quality examples of non-fiction texts that support and challenge students using a variety of text features
- To develop an understanding of perseverance, determination, and overcoming obstacles by reading true stories about inspirational people
- To offer a range of response activities that includes reading, writing, oral communication, the arts, and research in order to help students make sense of what they read
- To enrich reading comprehension strategies (e.g., visualizing, questioning, making connections, making inferences, etc.) through response activities
- To complete response activities that help students consider the biographies of heroes as well as various means of presenting information, including language, style, and format
- To connect reading to cross-curricular subjects
- To make links from the world of books to students' own life experiences
- To develop critical-thinking skills by having students reflect on and review the books they are reading
- To encourage students to widen their reading repertoire by reading a number of non-fiction books in a series
- To enrich students' enjoyment of reading by experiencing success in completing one or more non-fiction/biographical texts, and participating in activities that encourage personal response
- To provide students with the means to experience success in completing a rigorous informational text study that encourages inquiry, discussion, and collaboration, with opportunities to apply evidence-based reasoning

ALIGNING THE RECORDBOOKS SERIES AND THE COMMON CORE STANDARDS

The Lorimer Recordbooks series is designed to meet the academic expectations of Common Core Standards by:

- providing informational texts that are relevant to the students' lives;
- engaging learners with multiple learning modalities, enabling them to achieve success as they complete books that respect their interests and reading levels;
- offering realistic storylines that use real-life role models who overcame various relatable obstacles such as limited life experiences, deficiencies in abilities, and limited access to resources and time; and
- challenging students with appropriate levels of rigour, while encouraging inquiry, discussion, and collaboration, and opportunities to apply evidence-based reasoning

Response activities also provide opportunities for students to challenge themselves. The activities are designed to promote collaboration and organization as students write, read, and talk about the texts.

Lorimer's Recordbooks provide students with the opportunity to investigate and explore informational texts while integrating them seamlessly into ELA, social science, and physical education curricula. Cross-curricular applications are given consideration by inviting a range of written modes, visual and dramatic arts responses, media and technology use, and vocabulary and language usage that comply with language arts, mathematics, physical education and health, social studies, and history curriculum expectations.

Reading activities that pair fiction and non-fiction texts offer teachers a program that incorporates informational texts into English Language Arts classes while including broader literacy skills in their non-ELA classes.

A SERIES-CENTRED APPROACH TO TEACHING

Reading fiction and non-fiction provides us with opportunities to reflect on human behaviours, emotions, values, relationships, and conflicts. When we read a story, whether it be based in fact or fiction, we are invited to step outside our own lives and to become spectators observing events that might or might not occur in our own lives. At the same time, we become participants in these events as we are drawn into the story and share the feelings and experiences of the people on the page.

There are a few essential ways to organize a series-based reading program:

Whole class, which can take two forms:

- All students experience the same book, OR
- The teacher reads a book aloud to the whole class.

Small groups where teachers form small reading groups in one of two ways:

- Members of the group read the same book, OR
- Each member of the group reads different selections by the same author, or books that explore a similar theme or genre.

Reading groups can be formed according to criteria such as

- homogeneous abilities,
- heterogeneous abilities,
- social skills,
- gender,
- interests, and
- random selection.

Independent Reading

There are several factors that influence students' choices of books, but ultimately choice is essential to ensure success. In this way, students are given some control over their own learning.

The following chart outlines the strengths and challenges offered by each approach to organizing a creative non-fiction reading program.

ORGANIZING A NON-FICTION READING PROGRAM

	STRENGTHS	CHALLENGES
WHOLE CLASS	<p>Minimal organization is required.</p> <p>Before, during, and after responses are easy to manage.</p> <p>Student progress in relatively easy to monitor and assess.</p>	<p>No individual student choice is permitted.</p> <p>The diversity of readers' abilities and interests is not addressed.</p> <p>Students cannot pace the reading experience for themselves.</p>
SMALL GROUPS	<p>Only a small number of novels in a set is required.</p> <p>Groups can be organized by gender, interests, and ability.</p> <p>Rich, interactive response opportunities are provided.</p>	<p>Careful monitoring is needed to ensure that groups stay on task.</p> <p>Students need prior experience of collaboration within a group.</p> <p>The teacher must balance group interaction with instruction.</p>
INDEPENDENT READING	<p>Students enjoy choosing their own material to read.</p> <p>Individual needs and interests are accommodated.</p> <p>Only one copy of a book per student is required.</p>	<p>The teacher must ensure that all students are reading deeply.</p> <p>Each student's reading progress must be tracked.</p> <p>The teacher must monitor and assess a wide range of reading behaviours and responses.</p>

ORGANIZING THE LORIMER RECORDBOOKS READING PROGRAM

Regardless of the time period in which it occurs, daily independent reading is an essential part of a literature-based program. To begin, at least twenty minutes per day should be devoted to this activity. Our students can witness the fact that we are readers when we discuss our own reading interests and habits, how we choose books, and our reactions to the books we read. The main role of the teacher is one of guide and facilitator.

Students need to take control over their learning and should be given opportunities with:

Time to Choose

Students should be given opportunities to choose books from the Recordbooks program independently, with some guidance and consultation with the teacher.

Some factors that draw students toward reading a particular biography include:

- the reputation of the historical/contemporary subject
- the gender of the subject
- the historical context of the story
- the title of the book
- the jacket blurb
- personal interests
- teacher recommendations
- peer recommendations

The page length and format of the Lorimer titles are consistent. In some cases, multiple copies of a title may be available in a classroom setting, which therefore allows for pair or small group investigations.

Time to Read

Students read a Recordbooks title by having an allotted time set aside to read within a classroom program, as well as being encouraged to continue reading the book outside the classroom.

Time to Respond

Students need to choose from a range of response activities that include reading, writing, the arts, technology and media, style and language, and reviewing the book as a whole.

Opportunities should be given to experience a variety of responses as well as a variety of group contexts for completing and sharing response activities (i.e., working alone, with a partner, in small groups, and with the whole class).

Time to Celebrate

When students share their viewpoints with their classmates in small or large group settings, they have a chance to reveal some of their reactions to the story elements as well as to appreciate the viewpoints of others.

The process of students recommending books to peers needs to be a part of the classroom reading experience.

A LITERATURE CIRCLE APPROACH

A literature circle typically comprises a group of students who are reading the same book and who come together in small heterogeneous groups to discuss, react, and share. The purpose of the circle is to promote reading and responses to literature through discussion and to provide opportunities for students to work in small groups. Students take charge of their learning and improve listening and comprehension skills as ideas are exchanged. Generally, literature circles give students the opportunity to appreciate that everyone has different points of view while all have the opportunity to speak and be heard.

Teachers are often encouraged to assign roles to students to focus their attention on particular aspects of the book and facilitate group management. Harvey Daniels, the pioneer of the Literature Circle program, suggests that students be assigned different roles for each literature circle meeting. Sample roles include:

- **Discussion Director:** raises issues for the group to discuss based on the reading completed over a period of one or two days.
- **Linguist:** draws attention to interesting words in the story, perhaps finding examples of effective use of the author's language and literacy techniques.
Reteller: summarizes the day's reading for the group.
- **Questioner:** presents puzzling issues and can help readers make connections to their own personal experiences.
- **Literary Artist:** chooses an event or mood conveyed in the reading and illustrates it for the group.
- **Historian:** provides relevant historical context for the story, providing group members with insights into the culture or a particular problem during the period of time that the story is taking place.

Assigning roles might be a good way to begin, but these roles sometimes get in the way of interesting, thoughtful from-the-heart conversation. Daniels himself offers caution, saying that the roles were meant to be used on a temporary basis until students become familiar with the routines and expectations of literature circles.

A literature circle approach may be useful with the Recordbooks series. Teachers may organize the class into groups of four to six, with each student reading the same book. It is recommended that a journal be used as both a follow-up to the discussion and as preparation and guiding statements during the discussion. Journal entries can be prepared before meeting as a group. Students can share their entries in literature circle discussions. Alternatively, students can write journal entries following a discussion they've had with others about the books they've read.

READING RESPONSE JOURNALS

The **Reading Response Journal** (also called a dialogue journal or a literature log) is a convenient and flexible tool to help readers reflect on their reading. Keeping a journal permits readers to communicate and explore the ideas and feelings that a story — especially one drawn from real life events — evokes, and to relate what they read to their own lives. It can be both enjoyable and informative to share journals with others. A teacher, friend, or family member who reads selected entries can begin a dialogue with the reader by offering comments on their responses, pointing out connections with their thinking, and expressing their viewpoints.

Reading response journals foster a connection between reading and writing and place readers at the centre of their learning. These journals can serve as a record of the reader's thinking about literature and of his or her reactions as a reader. They prompt learners to reflect on, interact with, and find personal meaning in works of literature. They encourage storytelling, questioning, imagining, and speculating. A journal provides ongoing information about readers' thinking and learning — for students as readers and for teachers as audiences and guides. A reading response journal is a powerful way to stimulate interaction among teacher, text, and learner.

Journal Prompts

The following sample journal prompts can help students reflect on their reading as they record their responses:

1. What are you enjoying/not enjoying about the book?
2. What, if anything, puzzles you as you read the book?
3. Is the language easy or hard to read? Do you sometimes reread parts?
4. During your reading, do you “see” the story in your mind? Draw illustrations of scenes that you visualize.
5. What problems emerge in the book? How do you think these problems will be resolved?
6. What words, phrases, or sentences made an impression on you?
7. What interests you about the people in the story?
8. What advice would you give to one of the people in the book?
9. What advice would you give to the author of the book?
10. How do you feel about the way the author tells the story? Is the tone engaging and conversational or formal?
11. Have you or has someone you know experienced events similar to the ones that took place in the book?
12. What did the story make you wonder about?
13. What do you think the author is trying to say about determination and people's place in the world around them?
14. Do you think the chapter titles are appropriate? How well do they summarize the events of the chapters?
15. What will you tell your friends about this book?

RESPONSE ACTIVITIES

The following activities will be appropriate for Whole Class (WC), Small Group (SG), or Independent Reading (IR) approaches as delineated in each activity.

	WHOLE CLASS (WC)	SMALL GROUP (SG)	INDEPENDENT READING (IR)	PAGE
#1 Facts and Questions		✓	✓	16
#2 Gathering Information: Text Features		✓	✓	17
#3 Numbers Tell the Story			✓	18
#4 That Reminds Me . . .			✓	19
#5 Reading the Prologue			✓	20
#6 Becoming a Media Reporter		✓	✓	21
#7 Help Wanted	✓	✓	✓	22
#8 Inside Their Heads		✓	✓	23
#9 A Place in History		✓	✓	24
#10 On a Desert Island		✓	✓	25
#11 Person of the Year	✓	✓	✓	26
#12 Just the Facts			✓	27
#13 Reaction Survey		✓	✓	28
#14 A Graduation Speech	✓		✓	29
#15 The Pyramid		✓	✓	30
#16 Story Map		✓	✓	31
#17 A Graphic Story			✓	32
#18 Designing a Monument			✓	33
#19 A Class Blog: People Who Inspire	✓		✓	34
#20 Every Picture Tells a Story			✓	35
#21 Scavenger Hunt	✓	✓	✓	36
#22 Voice: From Biography to Autobiography	✓	✓	✓	37
#23 Pitching a “Biopic”	✓	✓	✓	38
#24 Pitching a New Recordbooks Biography	✓		✓	39



ACTIVITY 1

FACTS AND QUESTIONS

Response Mode: Reading (SG, IR)

Literacy Focus: Writing Lists, Questioning

Curriculum Connection: Reading, Writing

Comprehension Strategy: Determining Important Ideas, Questioning

Students complete the chart (see Blackline Master #1 on p. 45) to record important ideas about the featured person and list questions they have about his or her character and circumstances. It is recommended that students complete this chart as they continue to read the book, chapter by chapter.

Note: If more than one person is featured in the book, students may prefer to have a separate chart for each person.



ACTIVITY 2

GATHERING INFORMATION: TEXT FEATURES

Response Mode: Reading (IR, SG)

Literacy Focus: Style, Vocabulary, Format

Curriculum Connection: History, Social Studies

Comprehension Strategy: Identifying Text Features

Each of the books in the Recordbooks series includes text features (photographs, lists, a glossary, etc.) that provide additional information about the central character of the biography the students have read.

Students can complete the Blackline Master #2 on (see p. 46) that identifies different text features of a Recordbooks selection.

Extension

Students work with one or two classmates to share their responses. Students can discuss which of these text features they found to be helpful or informative.



ACTIVITY 3

NUMBERS TELL THE STORY

Response Mode: Reading (IR)

Literacy Focus: Synthesizing Information

Curriculum Connection: Mathematics

Comprehension Strategy: Determining Important Ideas, Statistics, Research

Numbers and statistics tell part of the story of what makes an athlete remarkable. Ask students to:

- Select 5 important numbers in the subject's journey to the record books;
- Explain the significance of each number to the subject's career or accomplishments;
- Explain the significance of the number as it relates to the sport in general. (Did it break a record? If not, how does it compare to others in the sport? Why is it remarkable in the greater context?)

For example: Annaleise Carr was **14** when she swam Lake Ontario, placing her in the record books for being the youngest person at that time to swim across the lake. The previous record holder was Jade Scognamillo at 15 years of age.



ACTIVITY 4

THAT REMINDS ME . . .

Response Mode: Reading (IR)

Literacy Focus: Reading, Writing Lists

Curriculum Connection: Reading, Writing, Media Literacy

Comprehension Strategy: Making Text-to-self Connections

Remind the students that often when we read a book, we make personal connections to the story, because it reminds us of other books we have read, films we have seen, people we know, incidents we have experienced (or someone we know has experienced), or emotions we've felt.

Encourage students to identify moments when they connected to the people and events of the story. To begin, students can use sticky notes to designate pages where these connections were made.

Alternatively, students can use Blackline Master #3 on p. 47 to make notes on how the book reminded them of one or more of the following:

- People they know
- Relationships in their lives
- Adventures/incidents from the past
- Adventures/incidents that happened to someone they know
- Places they've visited
- Conversations they've had
- News events
- Feelings they've had
- Problems/conflicts with which they are familiar
- Other books they've read
- Films or television shows they've seen
- World events from history
- Recent news events

Extension

Students can work in groups to share their connections with the story. Group members may have read the same book or not. As students tell their stories, other group members may tell stories that they are reminded of. Encourage students to explain how the Recordbooks title inspired these connections.



ACTIVITY 5

READING THE PROLOGUE

Response Mode: Reading (IR)

Literacy Focus: Synthesizing Information

Curriculum Connection: History, Health, and Physical Education

Comprehension Strategy: Determining Important Ideas, Making Predictions, Identifying Text Features, Questioning, Close Reading

Explain to the students that the prologue to a book, like an introduction, provides a glimpse into the **who**, **what**, and **where**'s of the book they are about to read. A prologue might provide some essential background information about the book or a particular point of view about the story. The prologue might raise questions in the readers' heads that will be answered as they continue to read.

Students can focus on the prologue of their Recordbooks selection by answering the following:

1. Who wrote the prologue?
2. What are three important pieces of information you learned in this prologue?
3. What are three questions that you hope will be answered as you continue to read the story?
4. Why do you think this prologue has been included in the book?
5. Do you think it's important to read a prologue of a book? Explain why or why not.



ACTIVITY 6

BECOMING A MEDIA REPORTER

Response Mode: Writing (SG, IR)

Literacy Focus: Plot, Character

Curriculum Connection: Dramatic Arts, Social Studies, Media

Comprehension Strategy: Synthesizing

Tell the students to imagine that they have been hired as newspaper reporters. For their first assignment, students will choose an exciting event from the book they have read and then write a newspaper article about the event. To prepare for this writing assignment, students can consider which section of the newspaper the story might be featured in. Is this a front-page story? Who might be interested in reading this story? Where might this story appear outside of the sports pages? Remind the students of the five W's of journalism:

1. Who
2. What
3. Where
4. When
5. Why

Extension

Once students have prepared a draft they can revise and edit the piece to create a short article that might appear in the newspaper. A headline and “photograph” (illustration) might be included to capture readers’ attention.



ACTIVITY 7

HELP WANTED

Response Mode: Writing (WC, IR, SG)

Literacy Focus: Writing a Job Application, Interviewing

Curriculum Connection: Drama, Guidance

Comprehension Strategy: Determining Important Ideas, Making Inferences, Researching

Students become a character in the book they've read. This does not necessarily have to be the main subject of the biography, though it certainly could be. They are applying for a job and must complete an application form (see Blackline Master #4 on p. 48). Students answer the questions in role of character. They can use information from the biography and perhaps research further details that they think would help to fill out the applications.

Extension

Once completed, students work in groups of two or three to conduct a job interview. Each person should have an opportunity to role play the person who is being interviewed for a job. Students can decide beforehand what job the person is applying for.



ACTIVITY 8

INSIDE THEIR HEADS

Response Mode: Writing (IR, SG)

Literacy Focus: Writing an In-role Journal

Curriculum Connection: Drama, Character Education (Empathy)

Comprehension Strategy: Summarizing, Making Inferences

Writing a journal entry through the eyes of someone else helps students to understand how that person might feel about the problems, people, and events around them. Remind the students that a journal is a medium that allows writers to be reflective. Not only does the writer record events that have happened but he or she is encouraged to share the thoughts, feelings, attitudes, and conflicts that are going on inside another person's mind.

Students choose any person from a Recordbooks selection. Tell the students to imagine that he or she keeps a journal of the events in the story. In the role of that person, students write their thoughts and feelings about an event or experience. Students might:

- write a journal entry that focuses on the events of a single chapter
- describe a specific athletic/game event that the character was involved with
- create a series of journal entries to describe what happens over time

Extension

Students exchange in-role journal entries with a partner and interview each other in character. The interviewer could also take on the role of the friend, parent, teacher, or coach of the interviewee.



ACTIVITY 9

A PLACE IN HISTORY

Response Mode: Writing (SG, IR)

Literacy Focus: Researching Information

Curriculum Connection: Social Studies, History

Comprehension Strategy: Determining Important Ideas, Summarizing

Ask the students to select an important date in the subject's accomplishments, such as the date of a victory either for the individual or for the team and research other important events on that day or in that year that might be connected in some way to the subject. This project can be completed individually or in small groups. Students can use the Internet and can also find this information within the Recordbooks biography in the information boxes.

Encourage students to make connections between what was happening in history and what was happening in the lives of the athletes they've been reading about. Once they have assembled their research, students can present their findings to the class as an oral presentation or on a poster board with images to illustrate their reports.

For example, in *Willie O'Ree: The story of the first black player in the NHL*, there is an information box on Rosa Parks. In the same year that Willie was trying to play in the NHL, Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat on a bus in Alabama, beginning a boycott to protest racism in the United States.



ACTIVITY 10

ON A DESERT ISLAND

Response Mode: Writing (SG, IR)

Literacy Focus: Writing Lists, Character

Curriculum Connection: Drama, Synthesizing Information

Comprehension Strategy: Determining Important Ideas; Making Inferences

Tell the students to imagine that the hero from a Recordbooks story has been stranded on a desert island with no chance of rescue for at least one month. Fortunately, the character is prepared for such an emergency and has packed a bag/knapsack. Students can describe the items the character packed in his or her emergency bag and explain their choices.

In the character's bag are . . .

- Three books
- An iPod with three songs
- Three changes of clothes
- Three survival items
- Three possessions, mementos from his or her life

Extension

Once completed, students can work with one or two classmates who have read the same book. Students compare lists and are then told that the character has to remove two books, two songs, two change of clothes, two survival items, and three possessions. Students work together to prepare a new list of items carried in an emergency bag.



ACTIVITY 11

PERSON OF THE YEAR

Response Mode: Writing (IR, SG, WC)

Literacy Focus: Writing an Article

Curriculum Connection: Drama, Creative Writing

Comprehension Strategy: Summarizing, Determining Important Ideas, Close Reading

Each year, a number of magazines honour people who have made positive contributions to society. Tell the students to choose a significant year and imagine that the subject of their Recordbooks selection has been voted “Person of the Year.” Students can write an article that describes this person and explains what he or she did that year to deserve such an honour. For their articles, students can consider:

- the person’s skills and talents
- a few significant background event in the person’s life
- some of the problems he or she has faced
- a remarkable achievement
- how that person has helped others, as well as how others have helped him/her

In the article students might include:

- actual quotes from the athlete found in the text or through research
- an imagined magazine cover that features the main character
- illustrations/copies of photographs

Extension

Students can meet in groups of four to six in order to exchange completed magazine articles with members of the group. As a group, students discuss which person has contributed the most to society and deserves to be named as the Overall Person of the Year.



ACTIVITY 12

JUST THE FACTS

Response Mode: Writing (IR)

Literacy Focus: Listing Facts

Curriculum Connection: Social Studies

Comprehension Strategy: Determining Important Ideas, Synthesizing Information, Close Reading

Discuss the difference between fact and opinion with the students. Ask them to find examples in their chosen biography of both facts and the author's opinions. Encourage the students to notice the difference in the choice of words when presenting a fact about the subject from expressing an opinion. Ask the students to go through the text and select 10 facts to create a Fact Sheet that tells the story of the subject. Students can organize the facts chronologically or they can order them by importance. Then have them find 10 opinion phrases to create a Judgment Sheet. How do the Fact and the Judgment points connect? Do the facts tend to support the opinions?

Extension

Have students swap their Fact Sheets with a partner. Then, have each student write a few "opinion" sentences based on the points presented on the Fact Sheet.



ACTIVITY 13

REACTION SURVEY

Response Mode: Oral Language (SG, IR)

Literacy Focus: Recording Reactions, Plot, Character

Curriculum Connection: Character Education

Comprehension Strategy: Making Text-to-Self Connections

Completing some or all of these statements may help students reflect on their feelings toward the plot, problem, and people presented in a book. Students can record reactions as they continue to read the book or after completing it. A statement can be used more than once (e.g. there may be two events that surprised the reader).

See Blackline Master #5 on p. 49.

Extension: Sharing Reactions with Others

Students meet in groups with three or four classmates. Group members could have read the same biography or different books. In groups, students share the range of emotions that they had when reading the book. Students are encouraged to describe what happened in the story that inspired these reactions. Students can also discuss similarities and differences in their responses.



ACTIVITY 14

A GRADUATION SPEECH

Response Mode: Oral Language (WC, IR)

Literacy Focus: Writing a Speech, Delivering a Speech

Curriculum Connection: Guidance, Social Studies

Comprehension Strategy: Making Inferences, Synthesizing Information

Ask the students to imagine that the subject of their biography has been invited to address the graduating class at their school as a guest speaker. Write the three- to five-minute speech that your subject might present. Students should include specific references to significant experiences and accomplishments, as well as one or two quotes from the biography to inspire and give advice to students on what it takes to become successful.

Extension

Some students can volunteer to read the graduation speech to the class. The audience can ask questions of the speaker about his or her experiences.

ACTIVITY 15

THE PYRAMID

Response Mode: Oral Language (SG, IR)

Literacy Focus: Giving Opinions

Curriculum Connection: Reading Comprehension

Comprehension Strategy: Summarizing

Students will be given an opportunity to discuss the book they have read with someone who has read a different biography. To prepare for the conversation, students complete the following outline to summarize the story in 36 words. (See Blackline Master #6 on p. 50)

A pyramid-shaped graphic organizer consisting of eight horizontal lines of decreasing length from bottom to top, intended for students to write words summarizing a book.

- ONE word that explains the theme of the book
- TWO words that give your opinion of the book
- THREE words that describe the setting
- FOUR words that describe the main character
- FIVE characters' names
- SIX new words you learned by reading the book
- SEVEN words that summarize the main problem of the book
- EIGHT words that summarize the plot

Extension

Once the first activity is completed, students can then meet with one or two others who have completed a book pyramid for different books. Students discuss their books and provide reasons for their choice of words for the pyramid. Though this 36-word pyramid summarizes the book succinctly, students should be prepared to tell more about the subject, plot, and problems of the book. Group members are encouraged to ask questions to get more information about the Recordbooks selection.



ACTIVITY 16

STORY MAP

Response Mode: The Arts (SG, IR)

Literacy Focus: Illustrating, Labelling

Curriculum Connection: Social Studies, Visual Arts

Comprehension Strategy: Determining Important Events, Sequencing

Part A:

Students can discuss maps and how they have been useful to them in life (or not).

Remind students that when we look at maps, we are determining information by looking at visual information, key guides, symbols, and labels. Students can discuss:

- When was the last time you used a paper map? a GPS?
- How have maps been useful to you in the past?
- What are some different kinds of maps you are familiar with?
- What are some different kinds of maps you have used in real life?
- What might be challenging about interpreting maps?
- Why are maps important?

Part B:

Provide students with a large sheet of paper to create a map that tells the life story — not just the geographic location — of the subject of their biography. While there are going to be actual, literal places that are an important part of the person's life, encourage student to be creative as well. For example, symbols can be used to represent important events of the person's life as well as locations.

Encourage students to use any visual format to present the information. For example, maps could be displayed as a journey (road map), highlighting events that have happened at the beginning, middle, or end of the story. Signs can be posted along the road/highway to represent important events in the book.

Part C:

Once completed, students can meet in groups. Group members can interpret the words and pictures on the maps to examine and evaluate the person's life story.



ACTIVITY 17

A GRAPHIC STORY

Response Mode: The Arts (IR)

Literacy Focus: Narration, Dialogue

Curriculum Connection: Visual Arts, Media, Technology

Comprehension Strategy: Summarizing, Identifying Text Features

Students can choose a significant event from the biography and create a page for a graphic novel or comic book, using six to eight panels to tell the story. For the graphic presentation, students might consider:

- Who will appear in the illustrations?
- Will the panels show a scene up close, at a middle distance, or far away?
- How will the setting of the story be captured?
- How will narrative captions be used to tell the reader what is happening in some panels?
- Who will be speaking in speech bubbles? Will there be thought bubbles?

NOTE: If one is available, students may wish to use a computer program (e.g., Comic Life) that helps them create a graphic story.

Some students may wish to create a comic that is longer than 6 to 8 panels.

If more than one student has read the same book, students can work collaboratively to create a graphic story drawn from a single chapter or several chapters.



ACTIVITY 18

DESIGNING A MONUMENT

Response Mode: The Arts (IR)

Literacy Focus: Designing and Representing, Writing Description

Curriculum Connection: Visual Arts

Comprehension Strategy: Making Inferences

Invite the students to design a monument to honour the work and contribution of the person in the biography. For this activity, challenge the students to design a monument without including a figure of the person. Instead have them consider symbols, images, and shapes to represent the person's qualities and accomplishments. Students can create a pencil drawing or, if there is sculpting material available such as modelling clay, they could create a 3-dimensional sculpture. Instruct the students to write an artist's statement explaining their choices for the monument and describing how they came to create the monument. Students can display the drawings and sculptures along with the artist's statement.



ACTIVITY 19

A CLASS BLOG: PEOPLE WHO INSPIRE

Response Mode: Media and Technology (WC, IR)

Literacy Focus: Writing Opinions

Curriculum Connection: Social Media, Writing

Comprehension Strategy: Summarizing

Assist students in creating a class blog to share their thoughts and opinions on the lives that they have been reading about. Encourage the students to discuss qualities they share, obstacles and challenges they have overcome, and their influences and accomplishments. The blog can also be a place to post relevant websites, articles, podcasts, and images for students to learn more about these inspiring people.



ACTIVITY 20

EVERY PICTURE TELLS A STORY

Response Mode: Media and Technology (IR)

Literacy Focus: Interpreting Non-verbal Information

Curriculum Connection: Media, Visual Arts

Comprehension Strategy: Determining Important Ideas, Making Inferences, Asking Questions

Invite the students to re-visit the biography through careful examination of the photographs. Ask the students to choose two photos that reveal important information about the person: his or her achievements, inner qualities and values, influences, etc.

For each photo ask the students to:

- List 5 things they learned about the person from this photo
- List 5 things they wonder about when they examine the photo

Extension

Tell students to imagine they are the photographer who took the photo and write a brief description of the experience of taking this photo and what they learned about the person in that moment. For example, (taken from *Willie O'Ree: The first black hockey player in the NHL*) “I took the photo of Willie and his teammates in the Boston Bruins dressing room. They had just finished practice and were tired but they smiled for the photo . . .”

Students can share one of the photos with the analysis as a way of introducing the person in the biography.



ACTIVITY 21

SCAVENGER HUNT

Language, Vocabulary and Style (WC, SG, IR)

Text Focus: Language, Vocabulary, and Style

Curriculum Connections: Spelling, grammar, Literary Devices

Comprehension Strategy: Close Reading, Evaluating Word Choices

This activity helps students to investigate the words, sentences, and dialogue an author used in a book. For each item listed below, students record a matching sentence, phrase, or word from the book. Students could work independently or with one or two classmates who have read the same story. Note: Depending on the selection, one or two instructions may not be applicable. These can be omitted. (See Blackline Master #7 on p. 51).

Once completed, students can meet with others and compare how each of the items have been completed.

1. Write the first sentence of the story.
2. Write the last sentence of the story.
3. Copy the first line of dialogue that is used in Chapter 33.
4. Turn to pages 48 and 49. Find and record the shortest line of dialogue on those pages.
5. Find the first three words on the top of pages 20, 21, 22. Circle any words with two syllables.
6. Turn to the second last page of the book. Write three of the longest words you can find on the page.
7. Turn to page 88. Find two words that begin with the same initial as your first name.
8. Record any two questions found in Chapter 7.
9. Find and record the first sentence of the second paragraph on the third page.
10. Find and record any sentence in the book that is exactly 12 words long.
11. Find and record 3-5 vocabulary words that you think are “typical” of a teenager.
12. Find and record one or more sentences that paint a strong picture in your mind.

Extension

Using the index of the book, list:

- Three place names
- Three names of people
- Three vocabulary words that were previously unfamiliar



ACTIVITY 22

VOICE: FROM BIOGRAPHY TO AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Response Mode: Language, Vocabulary, Style (WC, SG, IR)

Literacy Focus: Writing Autobiography

Curriculum Connection: Writing

Comprehension Strategy: Understanding Voice

Almost all of the books in the Recordbooks series are written in the third person; that is, they are **biographical**. Any story written in first person would be **autobiographical**.

Have the students choose one chapter from the Recordbooks selection they are reading. Challenge them to transform a short excerpt from this chapter into the first person by changing from the third-person voice to the first person.

NOTE: If the Recordbooks is told in the first person (autobiography), students can transform the selection into the third person (biography).



ACTIVITY 23

PITCHING A “BIOPIC”

Response Mode: Celebrating and Sharing the Learning, Media and Technology (WC, SG, IR)

Literacy Focus: Persuasive Writing, Oral Communication

Curriculum Connection: Writing, Media, Drama

Comprehension Strategy: Synthesizing, Determining Important Ideas

This activity invites students to promote a **biography** (or **autobiography**) that they have enjoyed. By stepping into role as movie producers, students can review and celebrate the biography they have read and share their learning with classmates.

Tell the students to imagine that a movie director is interested in making a new biopic film (or television movie) of a person who has made a contribution to society or the sports world. A biopic is a movie that is centred on the life of someone who has been in the news or made a contribution to society. The biographies that students have read can serve as significant stories for movie productions.

To prepare to meet the “director” (perhaps a teacher in role), each student should prepare a sales pitch to promote the movie. The following outline can be used to outline significant features of the film.

- **SYNOPSIS:** Summarize the subject’s life in 50 words or less.
- **CAST OF CHARACTERS:** List the important people in the subject’s life. What are some words to describe each person? (Students may also wish to suggest actors or actresses that they think might play these roles.)
- **SETTING:** Where will most of the movie take place?
- **TARGET AUDIENCE:** Who might be interested in seeing this movie? Why?
- **LESSON(s) :** How might this story help audiences understand the life of a dedicated and successful athlete? Is there a lesson(s) to be learned? What contributions of the subject would be of interest to a general audience?
- **SIGNIFICANT SCENE:** Describe one scene that might be particularly appealing for a movie audience.
- Describe the opening and closing scenes. Would you tell the story in chronological order or would you focus on important events?

Once students have completed the written sales pitch, they can meet in small groups to present their ideas. Alternatively, the class can gather together to promote their movie to a director. Students can be challenged to convince the director that this movie might appeal to a general audience.

Extension

Some students may wish to also design a poster that might be used to advertise the movie. The poster can include a scene from the book.



ACTIVITY 24

PITCHING A NEW RECORDBOOKS BIOGRAPHY

Response Mode: Celebrating and Sharing the Learning (WC, IR)

Literacy Focus: Persuasive Writing, Researching

Curriculum Connection: Writing, Social Studies, Popular Culture, Oral Language

Comprehension Strategy: Summarizing

Invite the students to consider another Canadian athlete who they think would make a good subject for the Recordbooks series. (Students may wish to consult the series website to see the complete list of athletes who have already be profiled — www.lorimer.ca/recordbooks.)

Students can consider the various resources that they would need to access in order to write a biography, and make a list of these resources:

- Create a list of websites and Internet resources.
- Who will you interview? Make a list of question you would ask.
- Why do you think this person would be interesting for your classmates?
- Write the opening paragraph to the biography.

Extension

a) Students can write a letter of proposal to the series publisher. In this letter, students can prepare a brief outline of a person who inspires them and explain why this person might have an appeal to readers of their age group. What interesting facts or events might they outline in their letters to convince the publisher that this would be a worthwhile publication?

b) Once completed, students can pitch their ideas to the whole class. The class can work in role as an editor for the publisher who needs to decide which books they will publish. Those who are pitching their titles should be prepared to answer questions from the audience (i.e., acquisition editors).

ASSESSMENT PROFILE 1

READING OBSERVATION CHECKLIST

Name _____

STUDENT READING BEHAVIOURS

	Consistently	Often	Sometimes	Not Yet
Appears to enjoy reading a Recordbooks series novel				
Attempts to finish novel				
Can choose novel(s) independently				
Enjoys reading more than one novel in the Recordbooks series				
Concentrates when reading				
Focuses on meaning when reading				

STUDENT RESPONSES TO NOVELS

	Consistently	Often	Sometimes	Not Yet
Retells stories				
Talks about novels with peers				
Writes about novels				
Can respond in role				
Interprets aspects of the novel through art or other non-print media				
Asks thoughtful questions about the novel				
Relates novels to personal experiences				
Is aware of author's style, language, and vocabulary use				
Expresses opinions and demonstrates critical thinking				
Chooses response activities independently				
Chooses activities that focus on various aspects of the novel				
Is able to promote the novel to others				

Comments:

ASSESSMENT PROFILE 2

Self-Assessment: Reflecting on Your Reading

1. The selection I enjoyed reading the most in the Recordbooks series is . . .

because . . .

2. I like to respond to the books by...

	Often	Sometimes	Not Yet
Writing in a variety of genres (list, diary, letter, script)			
Writing in a personal response journal			
Writing in the role of a character			
Illustrating, designing, and constructing (visual arts)			
Improvising and role playing (drama)			
Discussing with a partner or in small groups (speaking)			
Discussing in large groups			
Researching more about a topic			

3. A reading/writing activity I particularly enjoyed was _____ because . . .

4. One way that reading the book has helped me with my reading is . . .

5. One way that reading the book has helped me with my writing is . . .

6. One way that talking about the book has helped me with my reading is . . .

7. Things that I find difficult when reading are . . .

Place a checkmark beside each point that you think can help you with your reading of novels.

- Reading a number of novels in the Recordbooks series____
- Reading a variety of non-fiction books____
- Reading longer books____
- Working with others who have read the same book that I read____
- Working with others who have read a different book than I read____
- Working closely with the teacher to guide me in my reading____
- Finding a quiet space and time to read____

MY INDEPENDENT READING

Title of Book _____

Author _____

Number of Pages _____

1. a) When did you start reading the book? _____

b) When did you finish reading the book? _____

2. On a scale from 1 to 10 (lowest to highest), how would you rate this story?
Explain your rating. What did you like? Dislike?

3. Summarize this story in exactly 25 words.

4. Find a sentence or paragraph from this book that you particularly liked.
Briefly explain your choice.

5. What did you learn about overcoming adversity by reading this story?

6. What about this biography reminded you of relationships or events in your own life
(or in the life of someone you know)?

7. What are three questions that you would like to ask the author?

8. Is the title of this biography effective? Explain why or why not.

FACTS AND QUESTIONS

Complete the following outline that will help you consider a variety of text features that appear in the Recordbooks selections.

QUESTIONS THAT CAME TO MIND ABOUT THE ATHLETE	
IMPORTANT INFORMATION I LEARNED ABOUT THE ATHLETE	
CHAPTER TITLE	

GATHERING INFORMATION: TEXT FEATURES

1. Title of Book
2. Subtitle
3. Author
4. Who is the book dedicated to?
5. What is the year of publication?
6. Does the book have . . .
 - A FOREWORD Y / N
 - A PROLOGUE Y / N
 - AN EPILOGUE Y / N
7. What are three words (and definitions) from the glossary section that explained something you didn't know?
8. List one chapter title that you think is particularly effective. Explain why.
9. Write one thing you learned about the author.
10. List three titles that appear in the bibliography section.
11. Choose one photograph that you found interesting. What page number did it appear on? What information did this picture provide?
12. Find one SIDEBAR (a boxed section outside of the main text) that provides information about a topic. What is something interesting you learned by reading one of these sidebars?
13. Write one sentence that appears in the ACKNOWLEDGEMENT section of the book.
14. List three place names that appear in the INDEX section of the book.
15. List one PHOTO CREDIT that is listed for an image that appears in the book.

THAT REMINDS ME . . .

Use the following chart to record the people, places, and events that you are reminded of as you read the book. It is not important to complete each of the statements listed below.

	Connections	Page # in the novel
People you know . . .		
Relationships you've had in your life . . .		
Adventures/incidents from the past . . .		
Adventures/incidents that happened to someone you know . . .		
Places you've visited . . .		
Conversations you've had . . .		
Feelings you've had . . .		
Problems/conflicts you are familiar with . . .		
Other books you've read . . .		
Films or television shows you've seen . . .		
World events from the past . . .		
Recent news events . . .		
Other . . .		

HELP WANTED

Complete the following job application form in role as someone from the book you have read. You can use information from the novel or invent details that you think connect to this character:

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

POSITION YOU ARE APPLYING FOR: _____

PREVIOUS WORK EXPERIENCE: _____

THREE SKILLS/STRENGTHS THAT WOULD SERVE YOU ON THE JOB:

INTERESTS/HOBBIES:

Three words that best describe you:

i. _____ ii _____
iii _____

Two reasons why you should be hired for this job:

i. _____
ii. _____

PART B: Complete the following statements with a brief explanation for each response.

1. If I were a colour I'd be . . .
2. If I were a number I'd be . . .
3. If I were an animal I'd be . . .
4. If I were a musical instrument I'd be . . .
5. Do you see yourself as a circle, a square, or a triangle? _____
6. Do you see yourself as a river, an ocean, or a waterfall? _____
7. Do you see yourself as a song, poem, painting, or a piece of sculpture?

A REACTION SURVEY

Often when we read a biography or autobiography, we have different feelings about what is happening in the story as well as feelings about a person's behaviours, problems, and treatment of others. This chart is an opportunity to record the reactions you had to different parts of a non-fiction story. If required, you can use a statement more than once.

Name _____

Title of Novel _____

I WAS . . .	REACTIONS	STORY EVENT
happy		
sad		
upset		
surprised		
angry		
disappointed		
excited		
puzzled		
pleased		
relieved		
disturbed		
bored		
amused		
other . . .		

Complete this statement:

I was reminded of something that happened to me when...

(Briefly describe the incident)

A STORY PYRAMID

Fill in the blanks to complete the following instructions.

ONE word that explains the theme of the book

TWO words that give your opinion of the book

THREE words that describe the setting

FOUR words that describe the main character

FIVE characters' names

SIX new words you learned by reading the book

SEVEN words that summarize the main problem of the book

EIGHT words that summarize the plot

SCAVENGER HUNT

Revisit your book to answer each of the following instructions.

1. Write the first sentence of the book.
2. Write the last sentence of the book.
3. Write three one-syllable nouns.
4. Write three two-syllable adjectives.
5. Write three verbs that end in “-ing”
6. Turn to Chapter 6. Find and record the shortest sentence on those pages.
7. Write the chapter title with the most number of words.
8. Turn to the second last page of the book. Write three of the longest words you can find on the page.
9. Record a question found in Chapter 5 or 6.
10. Find and record one or more sentences that paint a strong picture in your mind.

Extension

Using the index, list:

- Three place names
- Three names of people
- Three vocabulary words that were previously unfamiliar to you

NINE QUESTIONS TO ASK ABOUT A RECORDBOOKS SELECTION

1. If the younger version of the subject from this book registered in your school, how well might he or she fit in?
2. If you were to make a film of this story, what scene(s) might you skip if you couldn't feature them all? Why?
3. Why do you think the author wrote this book? What do you think someone would learn about inspiration by reading this biography?
4. What might you tell someone about this book — in exactly 50 words?
5. What is one event that happened in this story that reminded you of an event in your own life or in the life of someone you know?
6. Are all the chapter titles appropriate for this book? If not, suggest alternative titles.
7. Which sentence, paragraph, or section made a vivid impression on your imagination? Create an illustration that would represent this text.
8. What was the major social issue that the story dealt with? To what extent has society made improvements in this regard?
9. How did this Recordbooks selection help you grow as a reader?

This guide provides teachers with an overview of the series as well as over 20 whole class, small group, or independent reading activities activities, PLUS

- Culminating activities
- Assessment profiles
- Reproducible blackline masters

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Debbie Nyman has been a drama teacher and consultant for the past three decades for the Toronto District School Board. She has been involved in the development of documents at the board and provincial level. She has shared her extensive drama experience through hundreds of practical workshops for educators, administrators and young adolescents. Recently, Debbie has co-edited the resource *Truth in Play: Drama Strategies for Building Meaningful Performances* by Playwright's Canada Press.

