

Running a **BETWEEN THE LIONS[®]** Read Aloud Book Club II

The following ideas will help you launch a BETWEEN THE LIONS Read Aloud Book Club in your community. Feel free to adapt any of these ideas to fit the needs of your ongoing children's programming.

Resources for You

The *BETWEEN THE LIONS Read Aloud Book Club II* was created for young children 5 to 7 years old and their families. Each book club card features discussion questions and suggested activities for one of six engaging, culturally diverse children's books:

- *Action Jackson* by Jan Greenberg and Sandra Jordan
- *Arthur's TV Trouble* by Marc Brown
- *Earl's Too Cool for Me* by Leah Komaiko
- *The Name Jar* by Yangsook Choi
- *Once Upon a Time* by Niki Daly
- *Too Much Talk* by Angela Shelf Medearis

Developing Local Partnerships

Use the *BETWEEN THE LIONS Read Aloud Book Club II* as an opportunity to initiate or enhance relationships with schools, afterschool programs, community-based organizations, or library patrons. Contact these groups to discuss club recruitment and other possible collaborations. Work with local community groups to set up a Read Aloud Book Club where older kids read to younger kids. You can train the older kids to act as readers and to help lead discussions and activities.

Promoting the BETWEEN THE LIONS Read Aloud Book Club

To promote your BETWEEN THE LIONS Read Aloud Book Club and recruit members, post an announcement on your Web site. Send email announcements about the book club to local educational and children's organizations so they can forward the invitation to their email lists. Announce your Read Aloud Book Club in a local newspaper and school or community bulletins. Make flyers to send home with patrons at the library, encouraging them to join the book club with their children or grandchildren. Display flyers throughout your organization and community.



Facilitating a BETWEEN THE LIONS Read Aloud Book Club

- Select a group leader—you or a volunteer—who will organize meetings and contact participating families. Determine meeting logistics ahead of time. Where will the BETWEEN THE LIONS Read Aloud Book Club meet, and how often? How long will meetings last? Which of the suggested activities will the group do together at the meeting? What will children take home with them after the meeting?
- The group leader can lead the discussion for each book and establish ground rules for the meeting. You can use the questions provided on the activity cards to start your discussion or make up your own. Pick an activity leader (the group leader or someone else). Pair the selected book with an activity suggested in the “Fun Things To Do” section or develop your own book-related activity.
- Before children leave the book club, help them choose a book to take home with them (if that is an option where your book club is meeting). If you can, check with the children’s librarian to see if multiple copies of the book club selection are available before the children come. Have those ready to be checked out at the end of the meeting.

Additional Resources

- The *BETWEEN THE LIONS Read Aloud Book Club I* features discussion and activity ideas for the following children’s books: *Abiyoyo* by Pete Seeger, *Click, Clack, Moo* by Doreen Cronin, *Flower Garden* by Eve Bunting, *Hats, Hats, Hats* by Ann Morris, *One Duck Stuck* by Phyllis Root, and *New Shoes for Sylvia* by Johanna Hurwitz.

To obtain an electronic version of the *BETWEEN THE LIONS Read Aloud Book Club I*, please contact Gay Mohrbacher, Outreach Coordinator, at gay_mohrbacher@wgbh.org

- To purchase BETWEEN THE LIONS videos, call WGBH Boston Video at 1-800-949-8670. BETWEEN THE LIONS videos are also available through major distributors of educational videos.
- Look for *The BETWEEN THE LIONS Book for Parents: Everything You Need to Know to Help Your Child Learn to Read* by Linda K. Rath, Ed. D., and Louise Kennedy (2004). This lively guide for parents of children ages 4 to 7 is full of information, activities, and tips for helping children learn to read.

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Action Jackson

by Jan Greenberg and Sandra Jordan

On BETWEEN THE LIONS Episode #401, *Art Party*, Leona and Lionel share very different interpretations of a Henri Rousseau painting.

BOOK TALK

Before you read *Action Jackson*

Start a conversation that will get children excited about the story. You may want to provide a simple introduction, such as, *This story shows how a famous American artist, Jackson Pollock, made a painting called "Lavender Mist."* Asking questions is a great way to get children involved. Try these to get started:

- Do you like to paint or draw?
- What different ways can you paint? (Using brushes, fingers, other...)
- What do you think the painting *Lavender Mist* looks like? (Before they guess, you may want to describe *lavender* and *mist*.)

As you read *Action Jackson*

Encourage children to ask questions, predict what will happen next in the story, or laugh out loud. Point out interesting pictures or words as you read. If a word is unusual or advanced, help children think about its meaning in the story, then define it for them using simple terms.

Word Watch:

- *coax*: to try to persuade, sometimes by using flattery
- *canvas*: a piece of material or paper or cardboard that you paint on

After you read *Action Jackson*

Ask children whether or not they liked the story and find out why. Help them explore the story and make personal connections with the characters and respond to the art. Ask questions, such as:

- What colors can you find in Jackson's *Lavender Mist*? How does the painting make you feel?
- Do you have a favorite place to paint or draw? If so, what is it?
- What materials do you like to use for drawing or painting? Why?



FUN THINGS TO DO

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Activity #1: Have children make their own drip (“action”) painting. Decide what type of paint to use. To keep things clean, spread newspaper on the floor or conduct the activity outside. Give everyone a smock, or let parents know in advance that children will be painting and may get their clothes dirty. Hand each child a piece of paper to spread out on the floor. Provide assorted sponges, paintbrushes, spatulas, marbles, and string. Have children flick, sweep, drip, or splatter paint onto their “canvases” using different colors, instruments, and techniques. Encourage them to paint “like a dancer” as Pollock did. Afterwards, ask children how they felt while they were painting. Make sure the paintings are dry before displaying them or letting children take them home. Have children think of names (or numbers!) for their painting, then label and sign them.

Activity #2: Choose a painting or sculpture that excites you, find a photo of it, and make an enlargement. Then pin it up on an easel and have children offer different descriptions and interpretations of what they see in the picture. Like Leona and Lionel in *Art Party*, have each child tell a story based on the picture. The scene in the painting could be the beginning, middle, or end of their story. Explain to children that even trained art critics often disagree about whether they like a certain painting and what the painting means to them.

Activity #3: Invite a local artist or illustrator to visit, show the children some of their art, talk about their creative process, and do a live demonstration. Before the artist comes in, brainstorm questions children can ask the artist. Another option would be to have the artist lead children in an art activity (making stamps or block paintings, tattoos, henna, batik, etc.). End with an art “opening,” a celebration that often takes place the first day of an art exhibit, where refreshments are often served. Create flyers to let parents know when and where the children’s art opening will be. Ask the local artist to attend as a guest of honor. At the opening, provide snacks and music for the visiting art lovers to enjoy.

Bonus Ideas

- Have children do individual chalk drawings outside, or have them work together on a chalk mural.
- Take the group of children to an art museum or an art gallery. Ask a docent or a parent volunteer to lead the tour and talk to the children about art history and different art styles.
- Learn more about Jackson Pollock by exploring Web sites such as www.artcyclopedia.com/artists/pollock_jackson.html.
- Read other fun books about art, such as *Jamaica Louise James* by Amy Hest, *The Lion and the Little Red Bird* by Elisa Kleven, or *Willy’s Pictures* by Anthony Browne.

Arthur's TV Trouble

by Marc Brown

On BETWEEN THE LIONS Episode #402, *Grow, Mane, Grow!*, Lionel tries to find a quick fix for growing an adult mane but learns to read the small print before buying (or believing) everything he sees advertised.

BOOK TALK

Before you read *Arthur's TV Trouble*

Start a conversation that will get children excited about the story. You may want to provide a simple introduction, such as, *This story is about a time when Arthur bought a Treat Timer because he saw an ad for it on TV.* Asking questions is a great way to get children involved. Try these to get started:

- What is advertising? Where and when do you see or hear it?
- How do you decide if you really need to buy something?

As you read *Arthur's TV Trouble*

Encourage children to ask questions, predict what will happen next in the story, or laugh out loud. Point out interesting pictures or words as you read. If a word seems unfamiliar, help children think about its meaning in the story, then define it for them using simple terms.

Word Watch:

- *daydream*: to dream about something pleasant while awake
- *assemble*: to build something from loose parts

After you read *Arthur's TV Trouble*

Ask children whether or not they liked the story and find out why. Help them explore the story and make personal connections with the characters or plot. Ask questions, such as:

- Why did Arthur want to buy the Treat Timer for Pal?
- How was Arthur able to pay for the machine he wanted?
- Have you ever been disappointed with something you bought?



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Activity #1: Have children create their own commercial. Give each child (or group of children) an ordinary item to advertise (a belt, sunglasses, etc.). For a radio ad, have children think of words to go along with an existing tune, or come up with their own jingle for a radio ad. Tape the ads and then replay them for children to hear. Discuss how the ads are similar or different. For a TV commercial use scroll paper and two dowels (or pencils for a smaller version). Have children draw and write the commercial on the scroll paper from left to right. To have it play, scroll the dowels (or pencils) so that the paper moves from left to right. You can add music for full effect.

Activity #2: Arthur thought that buying the Treat Timer for Pal would show Pal that he loved him. It didn't work out the way he imagined, though. Pal was so scared he ran away from Arthur and the machine. Talk about other ways to show people you love them. Have each child choose someone they love. Then ask them to draw a picture of something they could do for that person to show they love them without buying them anything.

Activity #3: Help children develop their media literacy skills by talking about some ads from magazines. Ask children to find an ad they like and bring it in. Then discuss the ads. How does each company present its product? What do your eyes focus on? Which colors are used? Does the ad use a famous person's picture to grab your attention? What words or ideas are used to make you want what's advertised?

Bonus Ideas

- Have children work in groups to design a logo for their own company. Or bring in a cereal box covered with blank paper and have them design the package for a new kind of cereal they invent. For more ideas, see pbskids.org/arthur/grownups/medialiteracy/index.html
- View and discuss BETWEEN THE LIONS Episode #310, *Treats!*, in which a "Dream Team" ad agency is hired to create a TV commercial for the library. Or view ARTHUR Episode #307, *Arthur Rides the Bandwagon*, and visit pbskids.org/arthur/grownups/medialiteracy/index.html for discussion starters about advertising.
- Read *Bea and Mr. Jones* by Amy Schwartz and talk more about what advertisers do, or read *The Grass Is Always Greener* by Jez Alborough.

Earl's Too Cool for Me

by Leah Komaiko

On BETWEEN THE LIONS Episode #304, *Too Cool*, Lionel's family helps him invite Derek Cheetah, the new kid at school, to join his baseball team, even though Lionel thinks Derek is "too cool" to be his friend.

BOOK TALK

Before you read *Earl's Too Cool for Me*

Start a conversation that will get children excited about the story. You may want to provide a simple introduction, such as, *This story is about a little boy who does the coolest things...and another boy who wants to be his friend.* Asking questions is a great way to get children involved. Try these to get started:

- What special things can you or your friends do? (*twist my tongue, build a city out of blocks, ride a bike, jump rope*)
- What does the word "cool" mean?
- Have you ever felt shy about saying hello to someone?

As you read *Earl's Too Cool for Me*

Encourage children to ask questions, predict what will happen next in the story, or laugh out loud. Point out interesting pictures or words as you read. If a word is unusual or advanced, help children think about its meaning in the story, then define it for them using simple terms.

Word Watch:

- *Milky Way*: the galaxy containing our solar system, which looks like a broad band of white (milky) light in the night sky
- *Zulu*: the language of the Bantu people of southeast Africa

After you read *Earl's Too Cool for Me*

Ask children whether or not they liked the story and find out why. Help them explore the story and make personal connections with the characters or plot. Ask questions, such as:

- What was the boy afraid of at first?
- How did the boy become friends with Earl?
- Do you ride a bike? Who goes with you when you ride?



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Activity #1: Explore the many different meanings of “cool.” Start with the literal meaning of *cool* (*moderately cold, giving relief from heat, to make less warm, “cool off”*) and have children brainstorm some *cool* things (e.g., *lemonade, shade under trees*). Write them on a piece of chart paper or dry erase board for all to see. Then branch out to the more idiomatic meanings of the word, such as *cool it* (relax) or *cool colors* (blue, green, etc.) and to what *cool* means in slang (*excellent, first-rate, hip, popular, fun, awesome, someone you admire*). Have volunteers illustrate the board or chart paper with cool things (cool shades, cool clothes, cool friends, a cool place to live, etc.).

Activity #2: Have children make sunglasses, hats, or masks that they think are cool. Find a simple outline for the item you choose and have children decorate them however they wish using crayons, markers, stickers, glitter, etc. Then have them sign their name. Or children can make a “cool” collage (using magazine cutouts) or draw a “cool” picture of someone in their life who is cool and explain why. (*My sister and my dad are cool because they help me make tacos.*) You might want to display their cool creations and have children help you think of a cool name for the display.

Activity #3: Writing can also be cool! Have children write a letter to someone they think is cool. This could be Lionel, Leona, or another character from BETWEEN THE LIONS, or anyone the child really likes—a family member or friend, a favorite teacher, a special pet, or Earl himself. Ask for volunteers to read their letters aloud. You can collect all the letters, make a cover page, and assemble the pages into a “cool” book and put it on display.

Bonus Ideas

- Have children work on their own or together to write a poem, song (rhyming or not rhyming), or story about someone cool they know. Or have them think of some new rhyming lines for Earl (e.g., *He reads long books in just one minute. He has a closet with a mummy in it!*).
- Serve ice pops at the end of the book club meeting since they are “cool”!
- Read other fun books about making friends or having cool ideas, such as *Halmoni and the Picnic* by Karen Dugan, *Weslandia* by Paul Fleischman, or *The Other Side* by Jacqueline Woodson.

The Name Jar

by Yangsook Choi

On BETWEEN THE LIONS Episode #301, *Hay Day*, Leona, Lionel, and his friend Gus meet Rumpelstiltskin at the library and help young Queen Fay guess his name. Their help saves her from having to give up her baby to Rumpelstiltskin.

BOOK TALK

Before you read *The Name Jar*

Start a conversation that will get children excited about the story. You may want to provide a simple introduction, such as, *This is a story about Unhei, a girl who recently moved from Korea to America and is getting used to a new school.* Asking questions is a great way to get children involved. Try these to get started:

- Do you know anyone from Korea or from any other country outside the U.S.?
- Have you ever changed schools? What was the first day like?
- If you could pick any name for yourself, what would it be?

As you read *The Name Jar*

Encourage children to ask questions, predict what will happen next in the story, or laugh out loud. Also point out interesting pictures or words as you read. If a word seems unfamiliar, help children think about its meaning in the story, then define it for them using simple terms.

Word Watch:

- *blush*: to become red or rosy in the face from embarrassment
- *signature*: your own name, written by you

After you read *The Name Jar*

Ask children whether or not they liked the story and find out why. Help them explore the story and make personal connections with the characters or plot.

Ask questions, such as:

- Have you or your family ever flown on a plane? Where?
- How was Joey trying to help Unhei?
- Why did Unhei keep her Korean name?



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Activity #1: Unhei loves the Korean name stamp her grandmother gave her. Have children make their own stamp. Ask them to think of a symbol for their name and draw it on a piece of paper. Have children draw the pattern onto the flat side of a potato or an apple that has been cut in half, using a marker. You will need to carefully carve around the outline of the pattern with a small sharp knife. Then cut away about a half inch of the surrounding part of the potato, the part you don't want to show when the print is made. Have children dip the stamps lightly into some washable paint, enough to coat the raised part of the stamp's surface. They can then press the stamp on a piece of paper. Children can bring both the artwork and their stamp home.

Activity #2: Have children play a name game. Write each child's name on two cards, turn all the cards face down and mix them up. Then have children find pairs of name cards that match, as in the game Memory. Or have children play the word game *A My Name Is Alice and I Like ____* (something that starts with an *a*). If you prefer, have children write the first letter of their name on a piece of paper, then draw things they like that begin with the same first letter as their own name. For instance, if a child's name starts with *M* she might draw marbles, a moose, and melons.

Activity #3: Create your own name jar. Have each child put the name of a favorite book character into a jar (or a hat or a box). Then have each child draw a name out of the jar. If children want, have them tell about the character each time a name is drawn. Alternatively, have each child think up a favorite name or nickname and make and decorate a nametag for themselves. This special name can be their book club name.

Bonus Ideas

- View the "What's Your Name" song on BETWEEN THE LIONS Episodes #102, #113, #128, or #130. Help children make up a rap featuring all their names.
- If any children in your group know another language, ask them to pronounce or write something in that language and share with the group. Show children samples of different writing systems used around the world.
- Have the group compare and contrast their names (first letter, what it rhymes with, how many letters, etc.).
- Read other books about names, such as *Chrysanthemum* by Kevin Henkes, *Sachiko Means Happiness* by Kimiko Sakai, or *My Name is Yoon* by Helen Recorvits.

Once Upon a Time

by Niki Daly

On BETWEEN THE LIONS Episode #202, *Humph! Humph! Humph!*, Lionel's friend Gus is embarrassed to admit to Lionel and Leona that he doesn't know how to read. When Lionel finds out, he offers to help teach him.

BOOK TALK

Before you read *Once Upon a Time*

Start a conversation that will get children excited about the story. You may want to provide a simple introduction, such as, *This story is about a young girl in South Africa who has a hard time in school until she finds some help.* Asking questions is a great way to get children involved. Try these to get started:

- Is there anything you're trying to learn that seems hard to do?
- When you need help with something you want to learn, who do you ask?

As you read *Once Upon a Time*

Encourage children to ask questions, predict what will happen next in the story, or laugh out loud. Point out interesting pictures or words as you read. If a word seems unfamiliar, help children think about its meaning in the story, then define it for them using simple terms.

Word Watch:

- *stammer*: to speak with pauses or repetitions, to stutter
- *ridge*: a long, narrow chain of hills or mountains (or other raised surface)

After you read *Once Upon a Time*

Ask children whether or not they liked the story and find out why. Help them explore the story and make personal connections with the characters or plot. Ask questions, such as:

- Why didn't Sarie enjoy school at the beginning?
- Who helped Sarie practice her reading?
Where did they like to sit?
- Is there a book you like to read over and over? What is it?



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Activity #1: Have children write and illustrate a story about something that has been difficult for them to learn (swimming, riding a bike, making cookies, etc.). Give them several pages to draw and write on, and have them draw the people who they want to help them (or are already helping them) with the difficult task. (If this presents a challenge, ask children to draw and write about something hard they would like to learn in the future, instead.) Once they finish the story, staple or hole punch the pages to make a book that they can bring home to show their families.

Activity #2: Sometimes it makes it easier or more fun to read when you have a special place for reading. Ask children to help you create a special reading area in a corner of the room where your book club meets. Use mural paper or a large carton to make it look like Auntie Anna's car from the story, where Sarie liked to read her favorite book. Have children decorate the "car" and make signs for their reading area. Then ask them to help you decide what else they might like in the reading corner (a rug, pillows, chairs, pictures).

Activity #3: Make or bring in a play microphone and have children be journalists and interview Sarie. You may want to help children research what life is like for families in South Africa. Then have children think of questions to ask Sarie about school, her aunt, the books she likes to read, or anything else about Sarie's story that stirs their curiosity. Designate one child as the reporter. Invite another child to role-play Sarie and respond to the reporter's questions, imagining what Sarie must have felt. (Children can take turns playing both roles.) Have the reporter and Sarie alternate using the microphone as people would in a real news interview.

Bonus Ideas

- Have children read simple books to children who are younger than themselves and may be having difficulty reading.
- Even though some things are hard, children are already good at many things. Help children recall some things they are good at or really enjoy. Then help them write an "I am _____" poem about themselves. (For an example, read *I Am: I Am a Dancer* by Eleanor Schick.) Give sentence starters such as "I like to _____" and "I know how to _____" to make it easier for children to begin.
- Read other books about learning to read, having difficulty reading, or loving to read, such as *The Wednesday Surprise* by Eve Bunting, *Thank You, Mr. Falker* by Patricia Polacco, or *More Than Anything Else* by Marie Bradby.

Too Much Talk

by Angela Shelf Medearis

On BETWEEN THE LIONS Episode #212, *Oh, Yes, It Can!*, storyteller Karen Kandel retells a West African folktale. In the tale, a yam, a fish trap, a piece of cloth, and a stool all begin to talk, surprising the villagers (and the Lion family!) when they come to life.

BOOK TALK

Before you read *Too Much Talk*

Start a conversation that will get children excited about the story. You may want to provide a simple introduction. For this story, it may help to bring in a yam to show children what it is, then say, "In our story today a yam is going to start talking to a farmer!" Asking questions is a great way to get children involved. Try these to get started:

- What would your shoes say right now if they could talk? Or what would my pencil say? How about the chair I am sitting on? What would it say?
- When you are surprised, what face do you make? Or what do you say?

As you read *Too Much Talk*

Encourage children to ask questions, predict what will happen next in the story, or laugh out loud. In this story, teach children the refrain, "That can't happen!" and encourage audience participation. Also point out interesting pictures or words as you read. If a word is unusual or advanced, help children think about its meaning in the story, then define it for them using simple terms.

Word Watch:

- *weaver*: a person who makes cloth using a loom
- *glide*: to move smoothly, freely

After you read *Too Much Talk*

Ask children whether or not they liked the story and find out why. Help them explore the story and make personal connections with the characters or plot. Ask questions, such as:

- How many things talked in the story? What were they?
- When the farmer told the fisherman that his yam talked, what did the fisherman say? (*Oh, that can't happen.*)



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Activity #1: In cartoons, a character's speech is often placed inside a "speech bubble" to show who's talking. Trace a large speech bubble onto a piece of paper and leave room for children to draw below the bubble. Make copies and hand one to each child, and provide crayons or markers. Point out things in the room and have children choose one and draw it. Have them dictate what that thing would say if it could talk. Write the saying in the speech bubble. Put the cartoons on display for all to see. Have children explain their cartoon drawings.

Activity #2: The illustrations in *Too Much Talk* resemble African face masks. If possible, bring in several African masks and have children take turns trying them on. Have children make their own masks, using either paper plates, papier-maché, cardboard, clay, or fabric. (For some ARTHUR mask templates and instructions, visit <http://pbskids.org/arthur/print/masks/index.html> or go to <http://pbskids.org/zoom/do/masks.html> for Zoom™ tips on making clay masks.) Provide markers, feathers, beads, string, pieces of fabric, dried pasta, washable paint, and glue for children to use to decorate the masks.

Activity #3: Have children re-enact *Too Much Talk*. You can play the narrator while they act out the other characters (and the things that talk). Have the children playing the villagers run around the room to pass on the news to the other villagers. For a challenge, have children change some of the lines, add characters, or choose a new ending if they want. Bring in props and costumes for children to use for an even livelier re-enactment.

Bonus Ideas

- Explain to children what a cumulative tale is. Then have them make up a cumulative tale of their own by taking turns while sitting in a circle. Lead them with cue words like "One day..." "Why..." "Well," "That can't happen ..." Oh, yes, it can!" "Aiyeel!" or make up a new pattern.
- Invite a storyteller to come to your library, classroom, or center and perform a retelling of a folk tale, or ask a mask maker to come show children how to make masks.
- Read other books about things that talk, such as *Anansi and the Talking Melon* by Eric A. Kimmel, *Food Fight!* by Carol Diggory Shields, *My Crayons Talk* by Patricia Hubbard, or *The Talking Eggs* by Robert D. San Souci.