

Reading Circles

SINGLE LESSON – Project Development Guide with Templates and Examples



ACTIVE LEARNING
FOCUS

ABOUT THIS RESOURCE

This resource leads you through the process of developing and implementing **reading circles tailored to the learning and skill goals of your unit**.

In reading circles, students have the opportunity to practice reading, writing, listening and speaking. The project parameters encourage students to practice several important skills, in addition to showing mastery of your content area.

- Students conduct close reading and **interpretation** of a choice text,
- **collaborate** with peers in purposeful group roles, and
- **reflect** and **take a position** on the text's meaning, structure, and purpose.

This project provides several opportunities for student choice. The templates for the student-facing materials are heavily scaffolded to support students who are still developing readers.

HOW TO USE THIS RESOURCE

[Part 1: Project Brainstorming:](#)

Identify your learning goals and content parameters, choose your texts, and establish requirements for the final learning artifact (presentation, performance, etc.).

[Part 2: Example Project:](#)

Review the example project for inspiration.

[Part 3: Student Facing Materials:](#)

Edit and adapt templates to create student facing materials for your own project. Review and incorporate Opportunity Education's twelve [Learning Skills](#) into your role creation sheets.

PART 1: PROJECT BRAINSTORMING

Use the prompts below to develop your project. You may want to preview the example project and the student facing materials templates first.

1. Identify content specific learning goals or skills for this project. (e.g., students will be able to analyze literary motifs, analyze evidence from a primary source, mimic a literary style, analyze text features, explain a concept, etc.)

2. Choose 4-5 texts for students to choose from. Chosen texts should allow students to meet the learning or skill goals you identified above.

Each group of students will choose or be assigned a text to read and analyze throughout the unit. Texts can take any form or genre you choose: a novel, a series of short stories or poems, several informational texts/articles, etc.

Text should be appropriately leveled for your group of students; you may wish to have a balance of higher-level texts, mid-level texts, and texts for students who need more support with reading. Texts should be engaging.

Whichever kinds of texts you choose, consider the following criteria:

- texts should share at least one common aspect (i.e. a shared theme or subject, similar genre, a shared prominent literary feature, similar text structure, etc.)
- analysis of these texts will let students practice the desired skills and lead to a final product that achieves your learning goal.

Need some inspiration for learning skill goals? Check out OE's twelve [Learning Skills!](#)

Brainstorm text ideas using the table that follows.

Possible text and level	Unique features of this text	Purpose/meaning of this text	Potential learning and skill goals for this text

3. Identify your parameters for student choice.

Will students have free choice of text? Or will they learn about each text and then submit a list of their favorites, and you choose? How will you determine which students get which text?



DIFFERENTIATE

Students who choose the same text will be in the same group for daily group work. Keep grouping options in mind as you plan differentiated activities.

4. Identify any other content specific learning goals or skills. (e.g., students will be able to analyze literary motifs, analyze evidence from a primary source, mimic a literary style, analyze text features, explain a concept, etc.)

5. Determine the format or genre for the final product. What will students create to show what they learned from the text? How will this final product support the learning and skill goals? Will students complete the final product individually, or in groups?

6. Decide how you want students to share their final project (eg. in person performance, recorded video, etc.)

PART 2: EXAMPLE PROJECT

Independent Novel Reading Circles

PROJECT OVERVIEW:

You will choose one of seven novels to read for the next few weeks. You are responsible for reading your entire novel and being prepared for classroom activities. On reading due dates, you must come in having read your section of the novel in its entirety so that you may complete each daily activity and contribute to your group's discussion. Today, we will choose your novels! After I read a brief review of each novel, please write down notes that will help you decide which novel to choose. **You will rank your choices after all reviews have been read.**

Novel	My notes and feelings about this novel	My ranking (1-7, 1 is top choice)
<i>The Other Wes Moore</i> by Wes Moore		
<i>Into the Wild</i> by Jon Krakauer		
<i>Kabul Beauty School</i> by Deborah Rodriguez		
<i>The Lovely Bones</i> by Alice Sebold		
<i>The Pact</i> by Drs. Davis, Jenkins, and Hunt		

<i>The Art of Racing in the Rain</i> by Garth Stein		
<i>When I Was Puerto Rican</i> by Esmeralda Santiago		

EXAMPLE

Independent Novel Reading Circles Planning Guide and Reading Contract

Novel title:

Total # of pages:

Read the indicated pages by the following target dates:

Read to page _____	by April 25
Read to page _____	by May 5
Read to page _____	By May 7
Read to page _____	by May 13
Finish the novel	by May 15

You are responsible for completing the reading for each reading due date *before* you come to class each day. You will complete a different reading activity each day.

Each day in class, you will:

- Read quietly (10 min.)
- Complete an individual reading activity focused on practicing one or more Learning Skills in a way that helps you understand the text more deeply (20 min.)
- Participate in a group discussion to share what you analyzed in your reading activity (20 min.)

On each reading due date, you will have a different “role” to fulfill (see the list below). Each role will require you to analyze a specific aspect of the novel. You will share what you analyze with your group. Each student will complete each activity. This means all five roles in your packet must be thoroughly completed when you turn in your packet, regardless of whether or not you were in class the day the class completed it.

Character Captain/Setting Star

Skill Practice: Establish Meaning

For this role you will provide at least one example of an element of characterization for each character who has been introduced in your novel so far. You will also describe and draw the setting of your novel.

Conflict Coordinator

Skill Practice: Interpret, Reflect

For this role you will identify and describe three (3) conflicts present in your novel.

Literary Luminary

Skill Practice: Identify Patterns, Be Creative

For this role you will identify one symbol, one example of imagery and one example of foreshadowing from your novel. You will then create a simile and a metaphor for two characters from your novel.

Thematic Thinker

Skill Practice: Investigate, Interpret, and Take a Position

You will read four passages from novels we have read in class this year. You will then pick one passage that you feel best fits with your independent novel. Using the passage and your current independent novel, you will complete the compare/contrast chart. Then, you will use the chart to determine common themes between the passage and your current novel.

Poetic Pop Star

Skill Practice: Be Creative, Compose

Create a free verse poem (a poem with no set rhyme scheme) from the point of view of one character about a conflict present in your novel. You can include lines from the novel in the poem.

Each student will complete each activity. This means all five roles in your packet must be filled out when you turn in your packet, regardless of whether or not you were in class the day the class completed it.

Your group will also complete a final project together: a movie pitch project and presentation. Each student will submit an individual project planning sheet, but present as a group.

I have read and understand the expectations for this independent novel unit.

Student Signature

EXAMPLE

Role 1: Character Captain

Skill Practice: Establish Meaning

Directions: In the chart below, please provide at least one example of an element of characterization for each character who has been introduced in your novel so far. **After you complete the chart, label the character you believe is the protagonist with a P.**

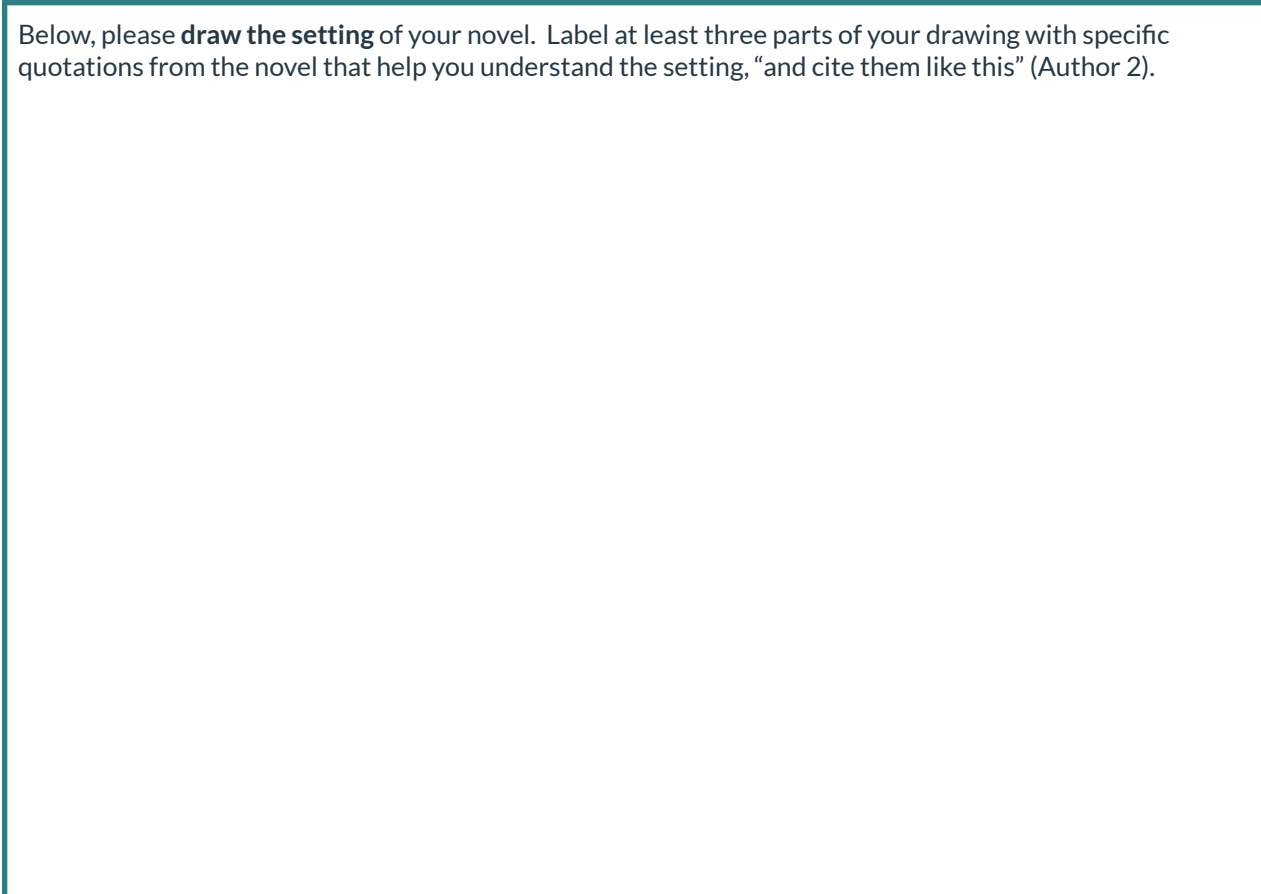
Character/page # where character is introduced	Text evidence with citation ex. "I love English" (Author 2).	Element of characterization (appearance, thoughts/feeling, dialogue, actions)	Character trait revealed by the evidence
Character name + brief description p.			
Character name + brief description p.			
Character name + brief description p.			
Character name + brief description p.			

EXAMPLE

Role 2: Setting Star

Skill Practice: Establish Meaning

Directions: In the first row of the chart, please give details about the setting of your novel. **Be specific.** If you have multiple settings, please choose one setting to describe.

Time period description:	Location description:
<p>Below, please draw the setting of your novel. Label at least three parts of your drawing with specific quotations from the novel that help you understand the setting, “and cite them like this” (Author 2).</p> 	

EXAMPLE

Role 3: Conflict Coordinator

Skill Practice: Interpret, Reflect

Directions: In the chart below, please identify and describe three (3) conflicts present in your novel. Fill out the **middle** column of the chart first.

Identify the cause of the conflict	Identify the conflict (include characters involved in the conflict)	Describe the effect of the conflict
	Circle one: internal or external?	
	Circle one: internal or external?	
	Circle one: internal or external?	

EXAMPLE

Role 4: Literary Luminary

Skill Practice: Identify Patterns, Be Creative

Directions: Complete the chart below by identifying at least one symbol, one example of imagery and one example of foreshadowing from your novel.

Literary element	Text evidence with citation ex. "I love English" (Author 2).	Effect of literary element (what do you understand more about a character, conflict, or theme because of this literary element?)
Symbol		
Imagery <i>Circle type</i> (auditory, visual, tactile, gustatory, olfactory)		
Foreshadowing		

Directions: Read the definitions of simile and metaphor below. Then, create a simile for one character in your novel, and a metaphor for another character in your novel in the chart on the next page.

Simile – comparison between two unlike things using the words “like” or “as”

Metaphor – direct comparison between two unlike things without using the words “like” or “as”

Character name	Metaphor for this character	What two things are being compared?	What does this metaphor show about this character?
Character name	Simile for this character	What two things are being compared?	What does this simile show about this character?

EXAMPLE

Role 5: Thematic Thinker

Skill Practice: Investigate, Interpret, and Take a Position

Directions: Read the four passages from novels we have read in class this year. Pick one passage that you feel best fits with your independent novel. Using the passage and your current independent novel, complete the compare/contrast chart below. Then, use the chart to determine common themes between the passage and your current novel.

Chosen passage: Re-read the passage and make some specific connections about the characters, setting, and conflicts shared between the passage and your independent novel. In the boxes below, show those connections by citing lines from both the passage and your independent novel.

Category (character, conflict or setting?)	Lines from passage Cite them, "like this" (Author 2).	Lines from your independent novel Cite them, "like this" (Author 2).

A **theme** is a central idea explored by a literary work or an author's message about life. Based on the connections you made in the chart between the novel and the passage, what might be **two** common themes shared between your novel and the passage you chose? State the themes in the space below.

Theme 1 -

Theme 2 -

EXAMPLE

Role 6: Poetic Pop Star

Skill Practice: Be Creative, Compose

Directions: Create a free verse poem (a poem with no set rhyme scheme) from the point of view of one character about a conflict present in your novel. Feel free to include lines from the novel in your poem, but be sure “to cite them if you do” (Author 2).

Character:

Conflict:

Include the following elements (in any order) in your free verse poem:

Alliteration

Metaphor

Simile

Visual imagery

Auditory imagery

Onomatopoeia

Symbol

Write your poem below. After writing, please highlight and label each literary element you have included with a different color. Create a key above by highlighting the list above.

EXAMPLE

Movie Poster and Pitch Project

Your group has been contacted by 20th Century Fox Studios to design a movie poster to advertise an original movie based on your independent novel!

For this project you will work with your group to **create and present** a movie poster to **sell the movie (think of it as a movie pitch)**...remember the more people who are enticed to see the movie because of your poster, the more money 20th Century Fox will be willing to pay you in royalties.

POSTER PLANNING

Complete all sections thoughtfully and carefully. Do not start working on your poster until all sections are complete. You will submit this sheet when you present.

Setting

Describe the setting of your independent novel (if there are multiple settings, choose one that you think is most representative of the whole novel):

Time:

Place:

At least two other important details:

What images could you draw or paste on the poster to represent the setting?

Cast of Stars

Choose at least three to five actual characters from your novel and pick an actor to portray each one. **On the poster, make sure to include pictures of the actors and label the pictures with the actors' names and the roles they will play in the movie.**

CHARACTER 1 –

Brief description:

Choose an actor to portray this character in the movie:

Why did you choose this actor?

CHARACTER 2 –

Brief description:

Choose an actor to portray this character in the movie:

Why did you choose this actor?

CHARACTER 3 –

Brief description:

Choose an actor to portray this character in the movie:

Why did you choose this actor?

CHARACTER 4 –

Brief description:

Choose an actor to portray this character in the movie:

Why did you choose this actor?

CHARACTER 5 –

Brief description:

Choose an actor to portray this character in the movie:

Why did you choose this actor?

Symbol

Use one **symbol** to represent a theme or conflict present in your novel. What object could you draw or paste on your poster to portray this symbol?

What does the symbol represent? (Describe the theme or conflict.)

Theme Song

Choose a song that connects to the theme or conflict you included in your symbol category. Put the artist and title of your song on the poster. Bring a copy of the lyrics to turn in when you present the poster. A clip of the song must be played with the presentation, and you must explain why you are using this song with this novel.

Write the artist and title of the song below:

In the box below, include at least two lines from the lyrics of your song	Explain how these two lines connect to the theme or conflict by citing at least one quote from your novel

Tag Line

Include a tagline or catchphrase for your film. (E.g. for The Lord of the Rings the tag line was “One ring to rule them all”, or for Spiderman it was “Go for the ultimate spin”, or for Gladiator it was “A hero will rise”, etc.)

Write your tagline here:

Title

On the poster, include the title of your book as the title of your movie.

EXAMPLE

Movie Poster and Pitch Feedback Guide

Movie Poster

Criteria	Not Yet	On Your Way	Mission Accomplished	Above and Beyond!
Representation of setting	Does not include	Includes representation of setting	Includes a thoughtful, neat, colorful representation	Includes an insightful or exemplary representation
Representation of cast of stars	Does not include	Includes representation of cast of stars	Includes a thoughtful, neat, colorful representation	Includes an insightful or exemplary representation
Representation of symbol	Does not include	Includes representation of symbol	Includes a thoughtful, neat, colorful representation	Includes an insightful or exemplary representation
Representation of theme song	Does not include	Includes representation of theme song	Includes a thoughtful, neat, colorful representation	Includes an insightful or exemplary representation
Representation of tag line	Does not include	Includes representation of tag line	Includes a thoughtful, neat, colorful representation	Includes an insightful or exemplary representation

Presentation

Criteria	Not Yet	On Your Way	Mission Accomplished	Above and Beyond!
Plan: Presentation demonstrates preparation and effective use of class time	Not demonstrated	Somewhat demonstrated	Demonstrated	Demonstrated in an exemplary manner
Focus: Explanations of elements on the poster are clear, thorough and relevant	Not at all clear, thorough, and relevant	Somewhat clear, thorough, and relevant	Clear, thorough, and relevant	Extremely clear, thorough, and relevant
Take a Position: Selection and timing of theme song are appropriate and relevant, with a convincing explanation showing connections	Not appropriate, relevant, or convincing	Somewhat appropriate, relevant, and convincing	Appropriate, relevant, and convincing	Extremely appropriate, relevant, and convincing
Share: Appropriate eye contact, voice volume, and professional demeanor	Not appropriate	Somewhat appropriate	Appropriate	Extremely appropriate

PART 3: STUDENT FACING MATERIALS

The following pages are templates for you to develop materials for your students. Follow the prompts to build a packet of student-facing materials for implementation.

- Complete all pages of the template, using your answers to the brainstorm and referring to the example project as needed. Any text in *[brackets]* will need to be edited by you, according to your project parameters.
- Decide if you will create reading deadlines or if you will develop target dates in collaboration with your students.
- Review the feedback template and edit according to your learning and skill goals.
- Implementation suggestion: plan a structure for reflection and feedback as students work in groups during class time (e.g. structured group check-ins/conferences, daily exit ticket reflections on the success/challenges of collaboration, etc.)

<< TEMPLATE >>

Reading Circles: [Insert Project Name Here]

PROJECT OVERVIEW

[Explain the project and any parameters you have set. Explain what will happen in class, how students will choose texts, and what the expectations are for in class and out of class reading and work. Explain how students will choose texts.]

[Genre of text]	My notes and feelings about this text	My ranking [include ranking scale]
[Text title and author]	<i>[add or delete rows, as necessary]</i>	
[Text title and author]		
[Text title and author]		
[Text title and author]		
[Text title and author]		
[Text title and author]		
[Text title and author]		

[Insert Project Title] Reading Circles Planning Guide and Reading Contract

Title:

Total # of pages:

Read the indicated pages by the following target dates:

Read to page _____	[add date]
Read to page _____	[add date]
Read to page _____	[add date]
Read to page _____	[add date]
Finish the text	[add date]

You are responsible for completing the reading for each reading due date *before* you come to class each day. You will complete a different reading activity each day.

Each day in class, you will:

- *[explain what students will do first to review their text]* (10 min.)
- *[explain what students will do individually]* (20 min.)
- Participate in a group discussion *[explain what they will do in the group discussion]* (20 min.)

On each reading due date, you will have a different “role” to fulfill. Each role will require you to analyze a specific aspect of the novel and practice a specific skill. You will share what you analyze with your group.

Role explanations:

[Role Title]

[Role explanation and how this role contributes to the group.]

[Role Title]

[Role explanation and how this role contributes to the group.]

[Role Title]

[Role explanation and how this role contributes to the group.]

[Role Title]

[Role explanation and how this role contributes to the group.]

[Role Title]

[Role explanation and how this role contributes to the group.]

Each student will complete each activity. This means all *[insert number of roles]* roles in your packet must be completed when you turn in your packet, regardless of whether or not you were in class the day the class worked on it.



[Explain the final product here and how group members will be graded.]

I have read and understand the expectations for this reading circle unit.

Student Signature

**Copy and paste this template to make role sheets for each role*

Role [1]: [Role Title]

Directions: *[Explain what students should do for this role after reading (see the list below for ideas on how to create each role). Consider including a table or other graphic organizer for each role for students to organize their notes and ideas. Use the  [Active Learning Menu](#) and  [Differentiation infographic](#) for templates and ideas!]*

The list below includes ideas of how to create roles based on Opportunity Education's twelve [Learning Skills](#).

1. **Establish Meaning:** create a role for students to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of foundational information
2. **Ask Questions:** create a role for students to ask questions about the text and come up with possible answers; students can share their questions with the group during group work time and discuss possible answers
3. **Investigate:** create a role for students to either investigate the text by looking for evidence to support a position or point of view, or conduct outside research to enhance their understanding of the context (historical, cultural, religious, etc.) of the text
4. **Interpret:** create a role for students to analyze evidence from the text
5. **Identify Patterns:** create a role for students to find similarities and differences and draw connections between different elements of the text (and/or other texts)
6. **Be Creative:** invite students to show what they know/have learned through visual arts or multimedia
7. **Assess Arguments:** invite students to evaluate points of view, evidence, and positions with attention to context and text features
8. **Take a Position:** invite students to develop a position about the text and support it with reasons and evidence from the text
9. **Reflect:** create a role for students to reflect personally on the text, through writing or visual arts
10. **Collaborate:** create a role for students to give and receive peer feedback
11. **Compose:** create a role for students to brainstorm, design, and produce a product that demonstrates knowledge and connects ideas
12. **Share:** invite students to choose a medium and appropriate audience and share a piece of work about the text

Final Product: [TEMPLATE]

[Include an explanation of the final product, information on if students will work independently or in groups, and how students will share their final product.]

Final Product Planning

Complete all sections thoughtfully and carefully. Do not start working on *[insert final product title here]* until all sections have been completed and your final product planning sheet has been approved. You will submit this planning organizer when you present.

[Create your planning sheet here, incorporating work that students did for each role. Consider creating tables and graphic organizers for students to organize their notes and ideas.]

[Insert final product title here] Feedback Guide

[Use, add, delete, or modify rows as necessary, based on learning goals and skill goals]

Criteria	Not Yet	On Your Way	Mission Accomplished	Above and Beyond!
[Component]	Does not include	Includes	Includes a thoughtful, representation	Includes an insightful or exemplary representation
[Component]	Does not include	Includes	Includes a thoughtful, representation	Includes an insightful or exemplary representation
[Component]	Does not include	Includes	Includes a thoughtful, representation	Includes an insightful or exemplary representation
[Component]	Does not include	Includes	Includes a thoughtful, representation	Includes an insightful or exemplary representation
[Component]	Does not include	Includes	Includes a thoughtful, representation	Includes an insightful or exemplary representation
[Component]	Does not include	Includes	Includes a thoughtful, representation	Includes an insightful or exemplary representation

Criteria	Not Yet	On Your Way	Mission Accomplished	Above and Beyond!
[Component]	Not demonstrated	Somewhat demonstrated	Demonstrated	Demonstrated in an exemplary manner
[Component]	Not at all clear, thorough, and relevant	Somewhat clear, thorough, and relevant	Clear, thorough, and relevant	Extremely clear, thorough, and relevant
[Component]	Not appropriate, relevant, or convincing	Somewhat appropriate, relevant, and convincing	Appropriate, relevant, and convincing	Extremely appropriate, relevant, and convincing
[Component]	Not appropriate	Somewhat appropriate	Appropriate	Extremely appropriate

Get more resources like this at www.opportunityeducation.org/resources