Making connections: Children’s Readers’ Advisory

How to find out what kids and teens want to read.
Hi, I'm looking for a book to read. I like cats, home candle-making, Harry Potter, and the sound of bubble wrap popping.

Here you go.

Whoa. I totally just made that list up. Minus the bubble wrap part.

www.bitstrips.com
Goal:

Know what to say or do to help a child or young adult patron find what they want to read...

YES, WE HAVE THAT BOOK WITH THE GREEN COVER BY THAT FAMOUS GUY

IT'S OVER IN THE BOOK SECTION
MAKING CONNECTIONS...

- Do what research suggests
- Overcome misconceptions
- "Interview" the patron
- Ask them if they want to read what others are reading
- Find out what they’ve read before and what they enjoyed
- Know what’s new
- Use library signage
- Use technology to connect with other professionals
Do what research suggests

Make a connection
Subject is only one piece of the puzzle...
4 Elements of Appeal

1. Pacing

2. Characterization

3. Storyline

4. Frame
Reader-centric vs. Book-centric
Overcome Misconceptions

Make a connection
Reader’s advisory common misconception:

You need to be well-read within the age group of the child you are trying to help find a book or it will be impossible to help them find what they are looking for. WRONG!

You can use:

- First lines
- Book covers and jackets
- Random lines with the kid (read out loud)
- Catalog
First lines for young adults...

“They say that just before you die your whole life flashes before your eyes, but that’s not how it happened for me.”
– *Before I Fall*, by Lauren Oliver

“Blue Sargent had forgotten how many times she’d been told that she would kill her true love.”
– *The Raven Boys*, by Maggie Stiefvater

“We went to the moon to have fun, but the moon turned out to completely suck”
– *Feed*, by M.T. Anderson
First lines for kids...

"Things are a lot different around here since that Unicorn moved in."

- Unicorn Things He's Pretty Great by Bob Shea

"The Herdmans were absolutely the worst kids in the history of the world."

- The Best Christmas Pageant Ever by Barbara Robinson

"It was a dark and stormy night."

- A Wrinkle in Time by Madeleine L'Engle
Free first lines resources/displays for elementary

Looking back, none of this would have happened if I’d brought lip gloss the night of the Homecoming Dance.
The catalog is your friend:
Reader’s advisory misconception:

Your enthusiasm about the books you like will rub off on the patron. MAYBE, but...

Students want you to be excited about the books they perceive you are recommending to them because they think you’ve picked it just for THEM. OR, that they found it on their own with only a little bit of your help.
Reader’s advisory common misconception:

Younger patrons are essentially different from adult patrons.  **WRONG!**

Like adult patrons, they just want to find a “good” book but sometimes they don’t know where to begin.

So ask them questions, but those questions may need to be a bit different.
Let's practice . . .

A) What kind of genre do you like to read?
B) What type of pace do you like a story to have?

A) What kind of characterization do you like to see in a story?
B) What kind of storyline or plot appeals to you?
“Interview” the Patron

Make a connection
Conversing with Young Patrons - a Flow Chart

Reader or Dormant Reader?

Are you reading for fun or an assignment?

Just for Fun?

Interests? What do you like to do for fun? Outside or inside? School/Outside of school?

Inside: What kind of TV shows, movies, videos, games do you watch/play?

What part did you enjoy? What it was about, character, pace, the setting, or all the details?

Fiction or nonfiction? Genre?

What is a previous book that you've read and enjoyed?

Assignment? Requirements?

What do you like to do when you're outside?
Questions You Might Ask a Reader:

- What kind of books have you read in the past that you enjoyed?
- What series have you read in the past?
- What TV shows do you enjoy?
- Do you like a story to focus on the plot more or the characters?
- Do you generally enjoy fiction or nonfiction?
- What genres do you like most?
- What is your all-time favorite book?
- Do you like to read what’s popular or do you prefer to read books no one has heard about?
Questions you might ask a dormant reader:

- What is the last book you remember reading that you kind of liked?
- What did you like about it?
- What makes you not want to read right now?
- What would a book have to have in it to make you want to read it?
- What kind of movies, TV shows, videos or games do you like to play or watch?
- Do you like to be outside more or inside? What do you like to do when you are outside/inside?
- What do you like to do for fun?
Five Finger Test

Test your book by reading one page. Hold up one finger for each word you don’t know. Then, read below.

1. Easy to read. Have fun!
2. Just right. Enjoy!
3. Challenging, but try it, you will like it.
4. Very challenging. Read with a partner.
5. Too hard. Save it for later or have someone read it to you.
Questions to ask if they are reading for fun

● What are some activities you like to do if you are inside?
● What are some things you like to do if you are outside?
● What are some of your interests? Hobbies?
● What kind of games do you like to play?
● Do you like to read facts of topics or do you like to read made-up stories?
● What do you enjoy most about a story: the setting, if it moves fast with lots of action or slow with lots of details, the characters, or if the events in the story are extremely interesting?
● What kinds of stories do you like to read? Suspenseful? Mysterious? Stories that seem true but aren’t? Stories about real people?
Questions to ask readers looking for something VERY SPECIFIC

● Specific trend?

WHAT ABOUT THIS BOOK DO YOU THINK YOU WILL LIKE BESIDES THE FACT THAT IT HAS __________ IN IT?

● Specific cover they’ve seen before?  Use a Google search/catalog.

● What’s popular?  See our lists.
Ask if they want to read what other readers are reading.
Popular Funny Books/Autors - Elementary
Popular series - elementary
Popular series - Middle School
Popular scary books/mysteries - elementary
Popular Scary books/Mysteries - Middle school
Graphic novels - elementary
Graphic novels - MS
Popular topics - Elementary

- Ghosts/Big Foot/Lochness
- Unicorns/Narwhal
- Monster/UFO's
- Optical Illusions
- Scary stories-Folklore
- Language
- Dinosaurs
- Animals
- Sharks/snakes
- Pets-dogs/snakes/horses

- Planes/helicopters
- Coding/STEM
- Magic/cooking/how-to books
- Sports
- Joke/Riddle books
- Biographies
- World War II
- Books that are movies
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Popular topics - MS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adventure</td>
<td>Mysteries</td>
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<tr>
<td>Award Books</td>
<td>Mythology</td>
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<tr>
<td>Biographies</td>
<td>Novels in Verse</td>
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<tr>
<td>Coding/STEM</td>
<td>Poetry</td>
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<tr>
<td>Drawing/How To Books</td>
<td>Realistic Fiction</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dystopian</td>
<td>Romance/Love</td>
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<tr>
<td>Funny</td>
<td>Social Justice or Social Issues</td>
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<tr>
<td>Horror/Scary</td>
<td>Sports</td>
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<tr>
<td>LGBTQ</td>
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Find out what they’ve read before that they enjoyed

MAKE A CONNECTION
How to find read-alikes

1) Catalog: Same author searches

2) Brightly

( http://www.readbrightly.com/ )

3) NovelList
Know What’s New

Make a Connection
What’s new in children’s literature

- Publisher Newsletters
- ReadBrightly.com
- Watermark: Indie Next
- WPL: Book Pages
- Scholastic Book Club flyers
- Go Shopping: Walk the children’s section in Barnes & Noble, Watermark, Target or Wal-Mart
Utilize Existing Signage & Displays

Make a connection
Ideas for reader’s advisory interactive displays

If you like

then try here’s why

The Ciphers by Libba Bray
Darker Shell by M.M. Barrie
Dawson’s Angel by Cassandra Clare
Something Strange and Deadly by Susan Dennard
Grave Mercy by Robin LaFevers
Shadowfell by Jodi Meadows

Both are paranormal mysteries set in Manhattan in the early 1900s.

Both feature a girl trying to save her brother and have steampunk elements.

Both are set in fantastical lands where a girl with magical powers must save her kingdom.
As a Resource, Use Technology to Follow other Professionals

Make a connection
Professionals to follow on social media

Twitter
- @usd259libraries
- @goodreads
- @ksschoollib
- @yalsa
- @teenreads
- @fierceReads
- @BookBub

Instagram
- Scholasticinc
- Mrsb_reads
- Librarianlaci
- Libraryjems
- Mrsoslibrary
- Boss_librarian
- Kidlitbookaday
Authors to follow on social media

- Marissa Meyer - @marissa_meyer
- Kwame Alexander - @kwamealexander
- Ally Carter - @officiallyAlly
- Sharon Draper - @sharonmdraper
- Rachel Russell - @DorkDiaries
- Cassandra Clare - @Cassieclare
- Sarah Dessen - @sarahdessen
- Meg Cabot - @megcabot
- Jason Reynolds - @JasonReynolds83
- Rick Riordan - @camphalfblood
- Gene Luan Yang - @geneelvenyang
- Mo Willems- @MoWillems
- Jon Klassen- @burstofbeaden
- J.K. Rowling- @jk_rowling
- Neil Gaiman- @neilhimself
- Rainbow Rowell- @rainbowrowell
- Patricia Polacco- @PatriciaPolacco
- R.L. Stine- @RL_Stine
When all else fails, ask the reader if they have a cat or a dog!
Let’s practice making a connection

Reader’s Advisory Scenarios
Connect with our panel...

USD 259 Elementary & MS Librarians
Questions for our panel...

Young Adult Librarians

Wendy Fjorden, previous high school librarian, current district library support, and future middle school librarian (wfjorden@usd259.net and @WendyFjorden)

Kelly Frederick, previous high school librarian and current middle school librarian (kfrederick@usd259.net and @MayberryLMC)

Christy Goentzel, middle school librarian (cgoentzel@usd259.net and @wpsbrookslib)
Questions for our panel

Children’s Librarians

Tina Qualls, elementary school librarian (tqualls@usd259.net and @BTM_Library)

Rhonda Willome, elementary school librarian, (rwillome@usd259.net and @lo_library)

Andrew Gonzalez, elementary school librarian (agonzalez@usd259.net and @MrGLibraryMan)

Lauree Moore, elementary school librarian (lmoore@usd259.net and @LibraryMaus)
Now you can connect with the next reader that crosses your path . . .

Thank you!
RESOURCES

Flow Chart Book Lists-
https://karissamlis.files.wordpress.com/2015/01/flow-chart-booklists.pdf

Personalized Book Suggestion Form- (scroll about halfway down)-
https://ontarianlibrarian.com/2015/02/13/interactive-readers-advisory-flow-chart-display/comment-page-1/

Questions and Answers for display or flowchart-
https://karissamlis.files.wordpress.com/2015/01/questions-and-answers.pdf
Resources

Teachers Pay Teachers-

Teachers Pay Teachers-
BIBLIOGRAPHY

- https://ontarianlibrarian.com/2015/02/13/interactive-readers-advisory-flow-chart-display/comment-page-1/
- https://bookriot.com/2017/02/07/95-authors-to-follow-on-twitter/