



**Be a Model Reader** is a reading reminder excerpted from *Reading Reminders: Tools, Tips, and Techniques* by Jim Burke.

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## Be a Model Reader

Our job as literature teachers should be to model reading and thinking about a text, not to dictate meaning.

CAROL JAGO, FROM  
*WITH RIGOR FOR ALL:  
TEACHING THE CLASSICS  
TO CONTEMPORARY  
STUDENTS*

### RATIONALE

Harkening back to the apprentice system, we must function as master readers whose job is to show the novice how it is done. We must also show them, through both words and deeds, why it should be done (and when and where it *can* be done).

### WHAT TO DO

- Get to know your students so that you can provide them with appropriate recommendations about what to read.
- Talk whenever appropriate about your own reading, not only to show them that you practice what you preach, but to illustrate how your reading applies to a range of situations. Specifically, talk about when, why, where, how, and what you read, so that they are able to see that books are a viable source of information.
- Talk to students about how you choose and read your books, with the goal of demystifying these processes.
- Model for them any assignments that you give. This means thinking aloud as you read so that they can hear how you approach reading any particular text.
- Set up a bulletin board in your room to post articles that support the idea of reading and its importance (e.g., article about a barber whose back room is an African American bookstore and reading room).
- Reinforce the importance of reading, but also of ideas, information, and thinking skills, all of which are best developed and improved through reading.
- Improve your ability to read aloud so that you can make a powerful impression during this activity.
- Talk about the role that you, as a parent, play in your child's literacy, to remind your students that whatever their attitude toward reading, it is something they would want their own children to be able to do well.

