



Good Books for Building Background Knowledge

Picture Books

Rosalie, Joan Hewett

Let the Celebrations Begin! Margaret Wild

Amazing Grace, Mary Hoffman

Lou Gehrig: The Luckiest Man, David A. Adler

The Lotus Seed, Sherry Garland

Longer Books

Exploring the Titanic, Robert D. Ballard (64 pages)

Neighborhood Odes, Gary Soto (poetry)

Bull Run, Paul Fleischman (104 pages)

The Slave Dancer, Paula Fox (152 pages)

Walk Two Moons, Sharon Creech (280 pages)

Tips

- Bring your background knowledge with you to everything you read. Your memories and experiences have a critical impact on how you understand and respond to what you read.
- Activate what you know so that new ideas and information will “stick” in your existing storehouse of information.
- Note connecting points as you read to help you better remember and enjoy your reading.
- Apply background knowledge to help you go beyond the words on the page, allowing you to think back to past memories and experiences, to remember and understand similar texts, and to relate to the world around you.
- When you lack sufficient information to understand what’s happening, seek more background knowledge. Call on an outside source (teacher, friend, expert, dictionary, encyclopedia, reference book, and so on) to fill you in so you can carry on.
- Background knowledge is the cornerstone of the thinking strategies. When you know how to activate pertinent background knowledge, you see more detailed mental images, ask deeper questions, and are better able to extend your thinking.