



## Celebration and Engagement Ideas

### Make it a Classroom Event!

#### In-Person Read-Aloud Tips

- 1. Get comfy**  
Get students into a comfortable listening position. Carpet squares or a similar setting can be a fun way to do this.
- 2. Help students see**  
Hold the book wide open and facing students. If students aren't all directly in front of you, rotate the book periodically so all students can see the pictures. Project a digital version of the book if possible.
- 3. Read slowly**  
Take your time!
- 4. Get animated!**  
Use voices for characters, hand motions, facial expressions, and volume changes to help kids get engaged.
- 5. Involve students in the story**  
Are there things students can act out or contribute to the story? Are there pictures you can refer to? Quick "yes or no" questions can also help students connect to the story and stay engaged.
- 6. Prepare for questions**  
Young students can get sidetracked easily. Be ready to redirect students who have stories or lots of questions.
- 7. End with discussion**  
Help your students fully grasp the story by talking about it afterward! Ask questions like: What is the big idea of the story? What is something new you learned? What surprised you?
- 8. Follow up with an activity**  
Solidify the students' learning with an educational activity.
- 9. Challenge students to select a book and read independently**  
Students may be motivated to find a book that is of interest to them and continue reading.



## Celebration and Engagement Ideas

### Extend the Reading Experience

Use these activities to connect the books to Iowa Academic Standards and National Agriculture Literacy Outcomes!

- ***My Family's Soybean Farm* by Katie Olthoff**
  - [Soybean Germination and Growth](#) (K-2): Students will learn about the growth and development stages of soybeans, look at different ways soybeans are used, and make a picture book demonstrating the life cycle of a soybean.
  - [From Soybeans to Car Parts](#) (3-5): Students investigate the collaborative work of an agricultural scientist and engineer who found new uses for soybeans and discuss careers in science and engineering, biobased products, and the use of renewable resources.
  - Explore careers in agriculture using Iowa Agriculture Literacy Foundation's [career posters](#)
- ***Flower Talk* by Sara Levine**
  - [The Amazing Honeybee](#) (K-2): Students investigate the three types of honey bees in a colony, identify their roles, and recognize honey bees as part of a community that works together.
  - [Plant Parts Matching](#) (3-5): Students will learn about plant, seed, and flower parts and their functions.
- ***From Seed to Plant* by Gail Gibbons**
  - [Plant Tops and Bottoms](#) (K-2): Students identify where fruits and vegetables belong on the MyPlate diagram and describe the major parts of plants—roots, stems, leaves, flowers, and fruits—according to if they are produced on the top or bottom of a plant.
  - [Parts of a Seed](#) (3-5): Students will learn about two types of plants and the parts of their seeds, using Iowa corn and soybeans as examples.
- ***The Beeman* by Laurie Krebs**
  - [Bees-Life Cycle & Pollination](#) (K-2): Students will learn the life cycle of a honey bee and their importance to agriculture through pollination.
  - [Growing Almonds: Fact or Opinion](#) (3-5): Students investigate the process of getting almonds from farm to table and distinguish the difference between facts and opinions as they explore each stage and season of almond growth.
- ***From Wax to Crayon* by Inez Snyder**
  - [Agriculture Bingo](#) (3-5): Students will be familiarized with the importance of agriculture and how it touches their everyday lives.
  - [By-Product Riddle](#) (3-5): Students will learn and exercise knowledge of the uses of by-products of common Midwestern crops.
- ***Bailey the Bee* Iowa State University Extension & Outreach/Integrated Pest Management**
  - [Fabulous Flowers](#) (K-2): The students examine the functions of flowers and determine that some flowers are edible.



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- [Apple Production](#) (3-5): Students will learn and identify factors that go into producing an apple. They will learn how an apple grows throughout each season and how each season is important for apple production.

### **Additional Agriculture Literacy Resources:**

Digital versions of the *My Family's Farm* book series and additional lesson plans to go with each are available at: <https://www.iowaagliteracy.org/Tools-Resources/Publications/My-Familys-Farm>.

Digital versions of *Iowa Ag Today* (Elementary) [Iowa Ag Today Elementary Edition](#)

Digital versions of *Iowa Ag Today* (Middle School) [Iowa Ag Today Middle School Edition](#)



## Celebration and Engagement Ideas

### Make it a Virtual Event!

#### Virtual Tips and Ideas

1. **Organize a Facebook Live event with your local library**

Broadcast directly from Facebook. Viewers can interact and ask questions live or view the recording later at their convenience. Be sure to practice and set up a good camera angle. Ensure that the internet connection is strong. Make sure the audio on the video is clear. Be sure to get the author's and/or publisher's permission to do a read-aloud.

2. **Host a meeting of a book club**

Challenge students to read the same book independently and then come together virtually to discuss it. Challenge students to each read different books independently and then come together virtually to give a book talk about what they read.

3. **Invite the author or a guest reader to do a reading.**

New faces and voices are often welcomed by listeners.

4. **Offer a supplemental virtual guest speaker or activity**

After students read a book, a guest speaker could provide an activity. Supplies could be sent to the classroom to be distributed, or you can work with the school to create kits to send home for each student. Request a guest speaker here:

<https://app.etapestry.com/onlineforms/IowaAgricultureLiteracyFounda/guestspeaker.html>

5. **Slide Party**

Ask students to prepare a slide presentation (Google Slides; PowerPoint) on a topic of their choice related to a book and share it with others on a videochat platform. Slides can be about a lot of things—students can create slides to introduce themselves, share interests, make a comic, teach others about something they are passionate about, or talk about a favorite book, series, or character in detail.

6. **Grab and Go Kits**

Create packets of books and activities (see suggested activities) and let families pick them up. Invite families to share pictures or stories about reading together on your county or city's social media page.

7. **Mystery Readers**

Traditionally, Mystery Readers are special guests who come —after a mysterious build up—to read aloud to youth. Mystery Readers can be parents, grandparents, older siblings, or other members of the community (someone associated with agriculture?). Schedule virtual Mystery Readers! Build up suspense by asking Mystery Readers for clues about themselves and share these with youth throughout the week so they can unravel who will be reading with them next. Try using polling or forms to share clues and get children engaged in the guesswork.



## Celebration and Engagement Ideas

### 8. FarmChat® Scavenger Hunt

Read an agriculture book with students. Together, make a list of items to look for on a farm. Then show a [FarmChat®](#). During the chat, can children find something at the farm that is pictured in the book?

### 9. Breakout EDU or Virtual Escape Room

A Breakout Edu (education) and virtual escape rooms are puzzle games where youth answer questions about the book and figure out clues to unlock something. When they have the right answer, they get a code that “unlocks” a door or lock. To do a digital breakout, make clues based on a book and create your locks through Google form questions with data validation. You can also create the room using Google Slides. Get more information:

- [Digital escape room ideas](#)
- [Video on how to create with Google forms](#)
- [Video on how to create with Google Slides](#)



## Celebration and Engagement Ideas

### Make it a Community Event!

#### Ideas

##### 1. Reading Drive In

Invite families to an evening out of reading fun! As members of your community read aloud a variety of agricultural books, live stream their read alouds on a large screen set up in the school or community center parking lot for families to enjoy from their vehicles. Have readers use props, costumes, music, or interesting virtual backdrops to make the stories come alive for your audience.

##### 2. StoryWalk

StoryWalk is a fun activity that places a children's story—a deconstructed book, page by page—along a walking route in your community. Developed by Anne Ferguson in Montpelier, Vermont, a StoryWalk combines reading a children's book aloud while taking a walk. To make a StoryWalk, you'll need two copies of a book. Mount each page spread on cardstock and laminate with a heavy weight lamination. You should also create a "Welcome" page that explains how the StoryWalk works and includes the front cover of the book. Depending on where you set up your Read Across Iowa StoryWalk (library or school grounds, park, trails, or storefront windows along main street), you'll also need wooden stakes for each laminated page spread and heavy-duty adhesive-backed Velcro to attach them. Window installations can be secured using suction cups, clips, or removable tape. Your StoryWalk could also feature student writing, photography, and artwork rather than published works.

##### 3. Ag Literacy Open House

Partner with community ag experts and ag students to lead hands on demonstrations, activities, or read alouds. Set up stations with the books from the kit. Each spot could have a quick activity that aligns with the book (planting seeds, discussion questions, products from agriculture, ag tools/equipment, chat with a farmer/expert).

##### 4. Little Free Library

Work with youth, parents, and community groups to create a free community book sharing box. Develop an action plan to open or revitalize a Little Free Library in your community. This book exchange, where neighbors, friends, and students can share their favorite books and stories, is a great way to learn through and with others. Celebrate with story time at the opening of your own Little Free Library! See the Little Free Library website for information, <https://littlefreelibrary.org/>.