



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.



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Extend the Reading Experience

Use these activities to connect the books to science, social studies, and more!

- *From Strawberries to Jam*
 - [Farming Through the Seasons](#) (K-2): Students will learn about differences in seasons through the lens of what farmers do in each season.
 - [From Grape to Jelly](#) (5): Students work together to solve a problem by engineering a fridge/freezer grape jelly recipe. Through this lesson students learn about the physical properties of grapes and how to write a recipe using fractions. Using the engineering process, students gather data and refine their grape jelly.

- *My Family's Apple Farm*
 - [Iowa Specialty Crops](#) – Iowa (3): Students will identify what specialty crops are grown in Iowa and understand how eating fruits like apples can be a part of a healthy and balanced diet.
 - [Apple and Pumpkins - Compare and Contrast](#): Students will explore the life cycles and traits of apples and pumpkins.

- *The Vegetables We Eat*
 - [Plants Part Matching](#) (3-5): Students will learn plant, seed, and flower parts and their functions.
 - [From Farm to Lunch Tray](#) (3): Students will develop an understanding of where the food they eat for lunch originated.
 - Explore careers with specialty crops using the Iowa Agriculture Literacy Foundation's [Career Posters](#)

- *Farmer Eva's Green Garden Life*
 - [Farmers and Gardeners](#) (2-3): This lesson helps students understand some key differences and similarities between large-scale (farmer) and small-scale (gardeners) food production while helping students learn to make connections, communicate, and use visual aids to portray concepts.
 - [Agriculture Across the USA](#) (2): Students will use knowledge of climate and landforms to study food production regions throughout the United States.

- *The Pie That Molly Grew*
 - [Seed Germination Necklace](#) (K-2): students will plant a wheat kernel and soybean seed in a small clear bag and watch them grow to learn about germination. (connect with the Iowa Agriculture Literacy Foundation if you need seeds)
 - [Parts of a Seed](#) (4): Students will learn about two types of plants and the parts of their seeds, using Iowa corn and soybeans as examples.



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- [Biology of Soil](#) (3-5): Students will identify the many properties of soil and how it is made up many different types and textures (which can affect plants' growth and development).

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>.



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 to do a reading.**

New faces and guest readers are always great.

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.



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8. FarmChat® Scavenger Hunt

Read an agriculture book with students. Together make a list of items to look for on a farm. Then request or 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 (edu stands for 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](#)
- [Digital book on the Life Cycle of Soybeans](#)



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, physically-distanced 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. Reading Obstacle Course

Book fun, physical activity, and physical distancing all in one! Take advantage of empty parking lots or sidewalks and chalk up (or paint, duct tape) a path that gets kids hopping, jumping, spinning, balancing, marching, dancing, and zigzagging. Your chalk walk could include a variety of steps and directions based on literary references from the agricultural books. Focus around books that really move, such as *Farmer Will Allen and the Growing Table* and mimic shoveling to plant potatoes and dribbling a basketball. Or act out Sylvia's emotions in *Sylvia's Spinach*. Encourage an inspired interpretation of a title like *The Kid Who Changed the World* and have students imagine an invention they could create. New faces and guest readers are always great.

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](https://littlefreelibrary.org/) 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/>.