

Read Across Iowa 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.

- **My Family's Soybean Farm and Full of Beans: Henry Ford Grows a Car**
 - Soybean Lifecycle activity <https://www.iowaagliteracy.org/Article/Soybean-Life-Cycle-Model> Use models to help students understand the lifecycle of a soybean plant.
 - Mighty Soybean activity <https://www.iowaagliteracy.org/Article/Mighty-Soybean> Discuss how soybeans can germinate in hard ground and plant seeds in plaster of Paris.
- **Carlos and The Cornfield**
 - Dress Up a Corn Plant activity <https://www.iowaagliteracy.org/Article/Dress-Up-Like-a-Corn-Plant> Learn about what a corn plant goes through during its growing season, from germination to adverse weather to harvest.
 - Seed Germination Necklace activity <https://www.iowaagliteracy.org/Tools-Resources/Other/Links-Downloads> Let students watch the germination process of a corn kernel and soybean seed with this fun and easy activity.

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

- **My Family's Beef Farm**
 - Dress Up a Cow activity <https://www.iowaagliteracy.org/Tools-Resources/Other/Links-Downloads> What features do cattle have that are different from people? Talk hooves, tails, and stomach compartments while dressing up a student with this fun activity.
- **My Family's Wind Farm**
 - Turning Wind into Electricity activity <https://www.iowaagliteracy.org/Article/Windmills-vs-Wind-Turbines> Talk about how windmills and wind turbines work, then have students try to build their own using materials like paper cups, paperclips, and string.
- **My Family's Pig Farm**
 - Pigs and Pork Resources: <https://www.iowaagliteracy.org/Article/Pigs-Pork-Resources-from-Farm-to-Fork> Learn about all the natural, physical, and human resources needed to produce pork.
 - Pork Nutrition activity: <https://www.iowaagliteracy.org/Article/Pork-Production-Then-and-Now> Talk about the serving size and cooking temperature of pork with hands-on activities.
- **My Family's Apple Farm**
 - A is for Apples Lesson <https://iframe.agclassroom.org/iowa/lesson/print/374/> Have students use their five senses to investigate apples and create an apple model.
 - Food Safety from the Farm to the Grocery Store activity <https://www.iowaagliteracy.org/Article/Food-Safety-Apples> Have students act out the farm to table process and discuss the steps taken to ensure food safety along the way.

Make it a Virtual Event!

Virtual Tips

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 all 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 report 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.

Make it a Community Event!

Ideas

1. Reading Drive In

Invite families to a physically distanced 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 with clips or removable wall-safe 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. Be focused around books that really move, such as *Carlos and the Cornfield* and mimic digging holes to plant seeds in. Or like *Full of Beans: Henry Ford Grows a Car* and mimic driving a car. Be an inspired interpretation of a title like *Zora's Zucchini* and have students image summer vacation or watering plants. New faces and guest readers are always great.