



General Selection Criteria for Books

When considering selection of books—whether for a classroom library or a school library—there are some broad general questions that should be considered. Use the following guidelines when considering selecting new titles for purchase.

I. Audience

1. For whom will this book be selected? Who will read this book?
2. Is this title selected for pleasure reading, curriculum connection, research?
3. Does this book have limited or broad audience interest?
4. For what age and/or grade level is this book intended?
5. Is the potential purpose of this title reader-demand driven? If so, have you considered aliterate non-readers and their reading needs as well?

II. Diversity

How has the author considered the following:

1. Age diversity (Do you have balance for younger and older readers?)
2. Gender diversity (Consider boys' reading interests as well as girls and LGBTQ readers.)
3. Reading level: From hi-lo (high interest, low reading level) to books for gifted students
4. Special Needs students
5. A full range of titles with cultural, ethnic, and racial representation

III. Literary Content for Quality Literature

1. What features does this book that make it “high quality” literature: unique memorable characters the reader comes to care about; a complex, exciting and/or suspenseful plot; crisp clear dialogue; descriptions that hold rich original language; thought-provoking themes; and a satisfying ending.



IV. Visual Appeal

1. Whether it is illustrated or not, is the book visually appealing, overall?
2. Does the book have an enticing, attractive cover?
3. Is the book's length appropriate for its audience? Will students choose to self-select the book?
4. If illustrated, are illustrations in color or black-and-white? Are the illustrations engaging? Are there inviting illustrations that will attract visual learners?

One final consideration for educators adding titles to their school library or classroom collection is cost.

V. Budget

1. What is the cost of the book? Does the cost justify purchase?
2. Does the selection of this book overlap, for example, student demand and interest or content importance and curriculum need(s)?
3. Is the book supplemental to current titles of same subject or by same author?
4. How well-bound is the book? Will it stand up to multiple readings?
5. Is the title unique to the collection?