



Kiwaniis Club of Ottawa
Serving the Children of the World

Kiwaniis Read-a-thon

School-Wide and Classroom Activities

Raising the profile of Read-a-thon school-wide will help you build excitement around Read-a-thon in your school. Teachers have provided the following school-wide and classroom activities that been successful in raising excitement about Read-a-thon in schools. Check them out to see what might be suitable for your students.

Also visit the *Links* section of our website for even more ideas:

1. **Host an Opening Assembly:** Kick off your school's Read-a-thon with a spirit-building assembly. Invite local sponsors, celebrities or athletes, authors, poets, or community leaders to get involved.
2. **Create a Bookworm:** Raise the profile of Read-a-thon! Create a "bookworm" in the main foyer or other high traffic area of your school. Have a class design and make the "head" of the bookworm. Have student volunteers cut out five-inch diameter circles. Select different colours for different classes or divisions and hand out to classes. Teachers give circles to students as they complete books (or chapters). Students write the name of the book, the author, and their name. Teachers schedule a regular time during the week to "visit" the bookworm to add circles to the bookworm.

TIP: Be warned! The bookworm grows very quickly. In the primary grades, teachers may want children to write more than one book on each circle.

TIP: Add a math element. At the end of the program, assign grade four students to measure the bookworm in centimetres, metres, or other measure. Assign grade three students to count the number of circles in the different colours and create a graph showing results.

Teachers provided these comments about other theme ideas: A baseball theme was used to keep track of books read; "baseball players" were put up as books were read. The "players" quickly encircled the school. Soccer balls were used in one school raising funds for new soccer jerseys. Hearts were used in another school for their "Love of Reading" theme. Grade 5 students built a pyramid to track the number of books read. This activity dovetailed with the Grade 5 Social Studies Ancient Civilizations Curriculum. Watching the pyramid build up fascinated the younger students.

3. **School-wide silent reading:** Designate a twenty-minute period once a week where the whole school reads together. Use the PA to announce when it begins and when it ends.

4. **Bring a Book Day:** Build a Mountain of Books for your school library by asking students to donate a new or gently-used book to the school library. Photocopy and distribute the Read-a-thon **Bookplate** that can be filled in by students who donate a book. Schedule time for each class to visit the Library to help build the mountain with their contributions. Ask a Junior Division Class to come in to count and sort the books after Bring-a-Book Day is over. Announce the number of books donated as soon as possible.
5. **Promote Participation:** Offer prizes (ribbons, **Certificates**, pizza lunches or maybe even an extended recess!) to classes with 100% participation—that is, everyone reads every-day. If your program is a fundraiser, participation is defined as having read one book, and has at least one pledge (of any amount.)
6. **Author/Celebrity visits:** Seek out local authors and ask them to visit your school to do a reading or lead a writer’s workshop. Approach local celebrities or sports figures to visit and read from one of their favourite books. Solicit ideas for possible visitors from parents and staff. Firemen, policemen, children’s librarians from local public library branches and/or politicians are all good leads.
7. **Top Ten List:** Ask the School Library Technician to put together your school’s **Top Ten Reads** by gathering class-created lists. Students could vote on their choices during their library time. Once tabulated, create a school-wide Top Ten Reads List. Let the students know that these books will be at the top of the Wish List for book acquisitions.
8. **Book Swap:** Start the Read-a-thon with a kick-off book swap. Students brought in books they had read and swapped them for others.
9. **Track Minutes:** Track minutes read in 15, 20 or 30 minutes blocks instead of books or pages. This levels the playing field for everyone no matter the grade, reading level or type of book that they read.
10. **Pizza prize lunches:** Reward the classes with 100% participation, with pizza or “movie dates” in each division.
11. **Start a DEAR program** in the classroom where all classes chose a time of day when they would ‘drop everything and read’ for 20 minutes a day during Read-a-thon
12. Hold a **Young Author’s Project** to complete as part of the Read-a-thon. Each student in the school writes an original story and the best 3 stories from each class read their stories to the whole school. Give out a prize for the best story in each class.

13. **Teacher's Challenges!** (i.e. at 500 books read teachers sang Karaoke for the students, at 1,500 books read administrators of the school skipped in the yard at recess, at 2,000 books read teachers arm-wrestled at lunch for the students to see, at 3,000 books read French teachers painted their faces, at 4,000 books read several intermediate teachers dresses as ACDC, and finally at 5,000 books read two teachers shaved their heads. Have fun and create school spirit!!
14. **School Idol:** Conclude your Read-a-thon with a "insert school name Idol" Talent Show with student performances of poems, music and dance.
15. **Exchange Classes:** Teachers exchange classes one afternoon to read their favourite books.
16. **Publish Original Work:** The Primary Division compile a collection of original student writing to "publish" in book form and display.
17. **School Book Exchange:** Organize a book exchange—a public collection that students may borrow from and add to at any time.
18. **Translate all handouts:** To support the diverse ethno-cultural and multilingual student populations, student handouts were translated before being sent home to parents.
19. **Special Guest Readers:** Invite special guests from the community to be readers in the classes.
20. **Hold a Draw:** Have students put their names in a hat for every book that they read. At the end of a week draw names give out prizes.
21. **Pajama Reading Buddy Day:** Older student become Reading Buddies Pajama Day to the younger grades. Buddies read with younger students. All students gave their buddies a homemade gift bookmark
22. **Favourite Character Day:** Staff and students dress up as your favourite book character. For example, Tom Sawyer, Anne of Green Gables, Arthur, Madeline, Clifford the Big Red Dog. Before silent reading time, go around the class and have students tell about the character they portray and why they chose it.
23. **Decorate your classroom doors** as the cover of a book.
24. **Daily Silent Reading:** Introduce or increase daily silent reading. Set aside 10 to 20 minutes per day of class time for silent reading. Give stickers to children who consistently do well during this quiet time and show progress in the book they are reading.

25. **Add a math element** to your Read-a-thon. Have students keep track of minutes or page read—individually and as a group—and teach children how to chart graphically their success daily.
26. **Pajama Day:** Designate one day as “Bedtime Story Day”. Tell students to wear their PJs to school and bring a favourite stuffed animal and bedtime story. Sing lullabies. Before silent reading time, ask children to tell about their favourite bedtime story or bedtime ritual.
27. **Theme Days:** Declare a given day, “Teddy Bear Book Day”, or “Mad Science Book Day”, or “Books with a Past (history) Day”. Encourage students to take a book out of the library with this theme. Ask the library technician to pull books from the shelves before you visit that match your theme to make it easier for students to find books that match your theme.
28. **Skits and Plays:** Organize students into small groups and ask them to create a skit or a play to animate part of a book.
29. **Charades:** Before silent reading every day, have a student (or several) pick a paper out of a hat that has the name of a book on it. Teachers should create this pool of names based on materials the students have covered that year, or the year before. Have the children act the book title out, and let the rest of the class try and guess what it is. Give a sticker to the child who guesses correctly.
30. **Reading Buddies:** Organize reading buddies whereby students in higher grades to read to, or mentor, students in lower grades. Set a regular time in the week where the two classes can get together to read together. Have “junior” reading buddies help track primary reading buddies reading on the Student Reading Record Form.
31. **Top Ten Reads:** Create your classes Top Ten Reads List. Have each child write down the names of *Three Favourite Books*. Set aside some class time for students to present their lists, and for them to discuss and debate the merits of each candidate. Arrive at your Top Ten List by voting or consensus, whatever works for your class. Let the children design and create a poster with their Top Ten Reads. Make sure they put their class designation on the poster. Display the poster in the Library.
32. **Especially for pre-readers:** Happy Book Day: Have each child select a favourite book from home. Ask them to bring the book to school. Invite parents to join their child in reading the book aloud to the class and talking about why they like the book. If appropriate, you may want to add a donation component. Parents could be invited to donate the book, or another one, to the school Library. If so, have the parent write inside the book, “This book was donated to our school/classroom library by (insert name and date).”