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TAMING THE

WILD

Text

**Literacy Strategies
for Today's Reader**



Reading Critically

PAM ALLYN AND MONICA BURNS



Reading Socially



Reading Closely



Reading Deeply



Reading Widely

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Introduction

Why Reading Feels Different Now

It is a new era for reading. Though the child in bed with a flashlight may seem like a quaint image from the past, the idea of illuminated reading under the covers can be as true today as it was yesterday. Today's child can become immersed in the world of reading, but the light of the story glowing in the late corners of the evening may come from a screen rather than a flashlight. The reader of today is reading but not always one book at a time. This reader is athletic: jumping from idea to idea, genre to genre. He or she is reading across many platforms, many types of text, from visual to print, from moving images to primary source photographs. However, the child with the flashlight is still within us and within our children. The print book is not gone, and the technology has not taken over. Rather, the world is becoming a truly blended one. Reading is a lasting innovation in many forms. It sustains us, guides us, and makes us whole.



Many books have proposed that reading on paper is out of style, that adults are the “digital immigrants” and students are the “digital natives,” that teachers and parents have to catch up to them, and that the only way kids will keep reading is if they are flooded with tablets and other technologies in classrooms.

But just when many thought the end of print was near, in 2016, sales of children’s books exceeded sales of adult books. Overall, sales of print books are climbing, and new independent bookstores are opening at a relatively steady clip. The American Booksellers Association (ABA) reported that 60 independent bookstores opened in 31 states and the District of Columbia in 2015, besting 2016’s total by one. And so, in the midst of the new era, readers are becoming more comfortable using many platforms, and students are growing up in a world that will have more options than ever. So it is not an “either/or” world of reading; it is a world of open possibility for countless kinds of reading to exist for children. Teachers and parents must strive to develop children who can tame the wild text anywhere, in any form.

What Readers Need

Reading has become wilder than ever. The world now is full of many types of text emerging through new technologies. Grammar is changing, devices are changing—even fonts are changing and evolving. It is a very exciting time to be a reader. But a reader’s needs, like that child under the covers with the flashlight, don’t change that much. All readers need are:

- A choice in the text that they read
- Access to a wide variety of texts
- Time to read (and time specifically to peruse and choose what they read)
- Mentor readers who guide and inspire them
- An environment in which it feels safe to take risks
- Affirmative feedback regarding reading progress
- The opportunity to have an ever-changing identity as a reader (I am the kind of reader who...)
- A community of supportive and encouraging fellow readers

This book highlights key ways in which teachers can tame the wildness of all the texts children are reading. By providing structures and strategies that support the growing reader, teachers can launch their students into the world of 21st century reading.

This book is about teaching students to read on every platform and in every genre, to struggle with text, to break through to new ideas when reading text, and to become the kind of fearless reader who tames the wild text.



Independent Reading Tips

When classroom libraries are organized with books categorized in meaningful ways, students begin to connect themes and find similar structures among texts. Whether using book baskets or e-reader “shelves,” you can help students make these connections by grouping books in engaging and exciting ways. For example, a survival-themed basket would contain fiction titles such as *Sign of the Beaver*, *Nature Girl*, and *Number the Stars* as well as informational text such as *Survival Kid: A Practical Guide to Wilderness Survival*. Storm-safety pamphlets, *Backpacker* or *National Geographic Kids* magazines, and articles from news sources would make great additions to this category as well. These engaging grouping techniques are more likely to pique the interest of a reader than a category simply titled “Lois Lowry” or “Gary Paulsen.”



Dear Families,

Children who read widely are able to access different types of text during each day—both inside and outside the classroom. As parents and caregivers, you can help model a love of and an appreciation for a wide range of reading materials. You may gravitate toward a favorite genre in the same way your children do, but the conversations you can have with your children about your own reading life will help them understand their journeys as readers.

In your home, take a moment to talk about your favorites—how you love to read historical fiction but will try out a science fiction book if it is highly recommended by a special family member. After reading an interesting news article on your smartphone, pause to have a conversation with your children about how you love reading text that teaches you something new or makes you wonder. When you read aloud with your children each evening, introduce an unexpected text like a magazine article on a heroic figure or an interactive storybook on a topic they have never heard of before. You can even read a funny cartoon or a silly note from Grandma. If you love sports and always check the scores, refer to this as reading, too. You have the power to introduce a range of text to your children to help them read widely.

Keep a record on your refrigerator of all the different types of text your family reads: cereal boxes, game instructions, and text messages all count. Use the “Genre Bingo” board as a fun way to keep track. Ask your children questions such as the following:

- What new kinds of reading would you like to do together?
- What is a type of reading you haven't tried yet?
- What is your favorite genre?

It is important that we value all the many kinds of reading our children do and want to do. Reading Widely, the first of our Five Habits, will soon become something they do every day.

With appreciation,

Activity: Shelfie Book Recommendation

Goal:

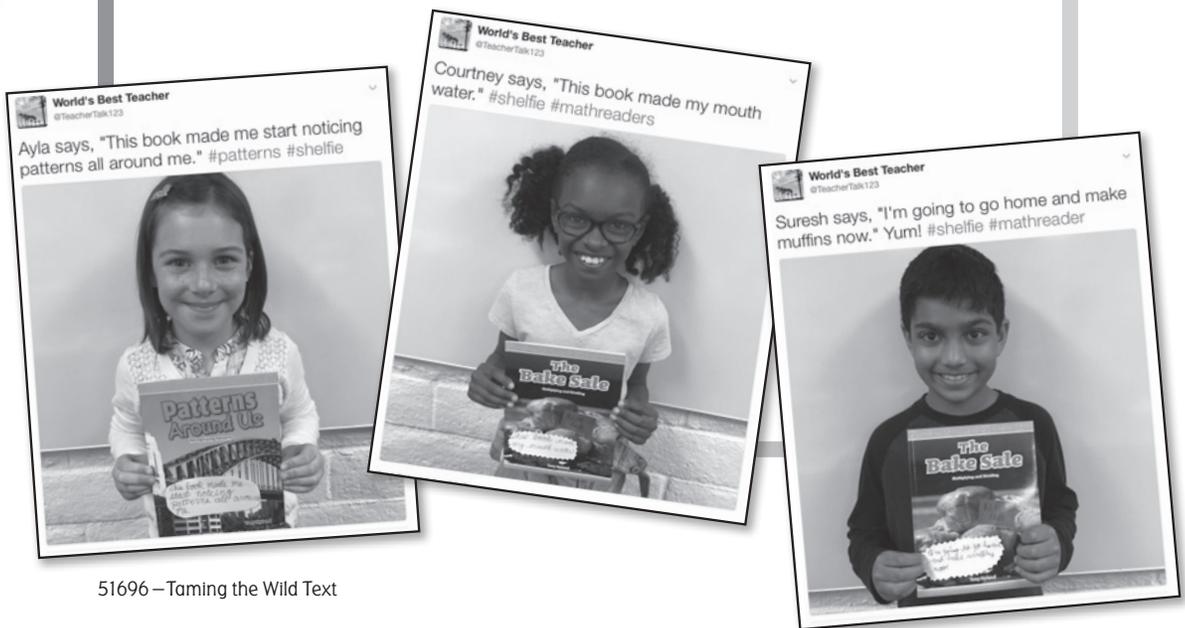
- Students will turn a shelfie into a book recommendation.

Preparation:

- Compile examples of shelfies you've taken or found on social media.

Steps for Success:

1. Introduce the idea of a shelfie to students. Share examples.
2. After students have finished reading a book, set up a protocol for how they will go about taking a shelfie. This will vary depending on how many devices your students have access to and the workflow in your classroom.
3. Once students have snapped their shelfie, you can introduce how you'd like them to respond to the book. You may ask them to add a hashtag, a comment, a favorite quote from the book, or a longer recommendation. Be sure to set expectations and share exemplars of finished products.
4. Once students have completed their shelfies, display their pictures on a bulletin board, post their pictures on an online forum or social media (with permission), or create a slide show to play in the library.



Keyword Search

Topic: _____

Question	Keywords to help me find my answer

Fact Finding Reflection

1. Fact: _____

Website Citation: _____

2. Fact: _____

Website Citation: _____

3. Fact: _____

Website Citation: _____