

# *the* GREAT *American* READ READING RESOURCES

## OVERVIEW

In spring 2018, PBS launched The Great American Read, a multi-media celebration of the power of reading and the joy of books. The campaign has three key pieces –television broadcasts, a national vote to determine America’s favorite book (fiction), and hosted by communities, libraries and PBS stations. This toolkit provides materials to encourage lively discussions around the vote for a best-loved novel, which asks readers to choose from a list of 100 books provided by PBS. The list was compiled from favorite titles suggested by more than 7,000 people in a national poll.

The winning book will be announced in October.

The Great American Read provides a rewarding opportunity for parents, teachers, librarians, mentors, friends – and anyone who loves to read -- to initiate robust discussions about why reading is important to them and why they value a specific book. Many resources in the toolkit explore themes and techniques in selected books on the PBS list while others provide resources for starting book discussions.

We are just getting started on the toolkit and will add new resources as they become available.

## SUGGESTED AUDIENCES

The [100 books on the PBS list](#) used for voting include a range of genres from young adult fiction to thrillers to historical fiction to classics. Resources for youngest readers will be added over the summer to complement a PBS summer reading program for children.



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## RESOURCES FOR BOOKS ON THE PBS LIST

### PBS Learning Media

All classroom resources are TEKS-aligned

- [The Great American Read teaching collection](#)  
**Includes:** video clips, discussion questions, lesson plans, student handouts, primary source sets and classroom handouts.  
**Content:** This collection of free resources highlights books from The Great American Read that find their ways into classrooms and onto summer reading lists for middle and high school grades. The 22 books range from *To Kill a Mockingbird* to *Anne of Green Gables* to *The Color Purple* to *Wuthering Heights* to *Things Fall Apart*. The resources vary by book, but many seek to contextualize the authors and the impact these books have had on specific readers and throughout history.
- [Great Expectations](#), from PBS Masterpiece series  
**Includes:** video clips, background essays, teaching tips and lesson plan  
**Content:** These video clips and supporting materials from a television adaptation of the favorite Charles Dickens novel explore major themes and plot points, inviting readers to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of main characters and understand how social forces affect their actions.

### National Council of Teachers of English

- [Bringing the Great American Read into the Classroom](#)  
Digging through this compilation of resources is a pleasure. These materials for nearly half of the 100 PBS books are designed for teachers but parents, librarians and enterprising students will find them useful, too.



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## RESOURCES FOR ENGAGING WITH BOOKS

### American Library Association

(Partner with PBS in The Great American Read)

- [Let's Talk About It](#)

This rich reading and book discussion program involves reading a common series of books and discussing them in the context of a larger, overarching theme. Reading and discussion groups explore the theme through the lens of the humanities - that is, by relating the readings to historical trends and events, other works of literature, philosophical and ethical considerations. The more than 30 themes include such stimulating topics as “Destruction or Redemption: Images of Romantic Love” and “Love and Forgiveness” and “Making Sense of the American Civil War” and “What America Reads: Myth Making in Popular Fiction.” A list of books accompanies each theme. © Copyright 1996-2017, American Library Association (This document may be reprinted and distributed for non-commercial and educational purposes only, and not for resale. No resale use may be made of material on this website at any time. All other rights reserved.)

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- [Discussing Literature | Conversations in Literature](#)

These activities are designed to spur classroom discussion and encourage active questioning. Teacher guides to creating literature circles and other resources are listed here. This page links to a full “Conversations in Literature” toolkit for training teachers to lead discussions of literature, from the Annenberg Foundation.

- [Engaging With Literature](#)

These video clips, lesson plans and other support materials are designed to engage students in grades 3 – 5 in explorations of literature. All pages link to a full “Engaging With Literature” toolkit from the Annenberg Foundation.



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