

BOOK CLUB

Why Start a Book Club?

The purpose of a book club is to provide the environment where learners who have read the same book gather to discuss it. This type of activity would be useful for older learners (around grade 6) as they can analyze the text for meaning and think critically about what they read. As such, book clubs can be utilized as a strategy to help learners with poor writing skills express their knowledge and opinions. Teachers may also use this structure to help them monitor their learners' comprehension skills in a less formal setting. Books clubs are equally useful for stronger skilled learners as it can provide the space for enrichment activities, and exploring more complex books not covered in class. In both cases, this is an excellent opportunity to further explore themes you have covered in the classroom. You may decide to solicit suggestions from your learners to ensure they are engaged with the content. As learners express their likes and dislikes, they feel empowered to take a more active role in their own learning.

Tip: For learners that do not have the necessary skills for independent reading, assign a reading partner so that they can help each other.

Teacher Preparation

- 1) Choose a theme that relates to the Kenyan upper primary syllabus. For example, if your classroom explores the theme of virtues, you can focus on that. Below are some suggested themes you might want to consider. These themes are explored in our suggested book list below:

- Courage
- Ethical Conduct
- Helping Others
- Integrity
- Responsibility

- 2) Look through READS to identify several books that touch upon that theme. Ensure these books are at the appropriate reading level for the learners in the book club.

Here are some suggestions:

- Magozwe
Additional themes: empowerment, honesty, patience, and perseverance.
- Thabo's Rescue Team 1
Additional themes: animal welfare, environmental protection, peace, respect, and unity.
- Keeper and his Special Nursery
Additional themes: animal welfare, love, and unity.

HOW TO ACCESS THE BOOKS

- 1) Open up the READS catalogue.
- 2) Click on the search button  and type in the title or a keyword (ex: "Magozwe").
- 3) Click on the submit button.
- 4) Find the story on the results page.
- 5) Click on the read button .
- 6) Choose a language. The story will load in a new tab.

3) Create a schedule. For example:

- Mondays: Introduce the book, and let learners know the timeframe they have to finish reading it. If possible, allow learners to sign up for times when they can use the computer to read the book.
- Mondays-Thursday: Learners read the book at their own pace.
- Fridays: Gather as a group to discuss the book.

Prepare discussion questions.

Lead the Discussion

GENERAL GUIDELINES

Teacher's role: ensure that the learners stay on track and are respectful of others' opinions.

Start the discussion by posing one of the prepared discussion questions. These questions do not have to be answered in any order. Rather allow the learners to guide the discussion and only interrupt when needed. Consider jumping in when:

- The discussion naturally dies down
- Learners start going off track
- A learner's statement is not clear and needs further explanation*
- Learners touch upon a question you had prepared and you want to probe deeper
- Learners are not being respectful of others' opinions**.

* If learners make vague statements, or if there is a disagreement amongst learners, ask them to provide specific examples from the book to help illustrate their point.

** If learners respond disrespectfully to those they don't agree with, remind them to express themselves in a polite manner. For example, they might phrase their rebuttal as "I don't see it like that. Here is what I think."

Large Groups

If you have a large number of learners in your book club, here are some suggestions to make the discussion process smoother:

1. Write each discussion question on sheets of paper.
2. Divide the learners into equal groups.
3. Hand each group random questions. All groups should have the same number of questions.
4. Have groups assign one learner to be their note taker, and another learner to be their speaker.
5. Give learners time to discuss their question(s) as a group. The note taker should write down what has been discussed.
6. Call everyone back together as a one big group.
7. Ask one of your discussion questions. The group that discussed this question should lead the conversation (mainly the assigned speaker), but all learners are



welcome to contribute. The other groups may need to be prompted to share their thoughts.

8. Repeat step 7 until all questions have been discussed.

POSSIBLE QUESTIONS

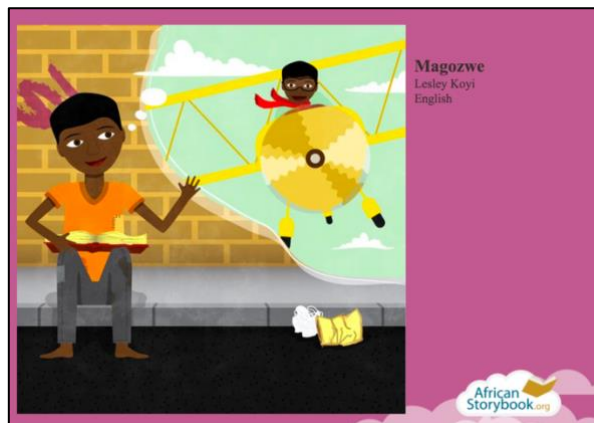
General (applies to any book they might read)

- Why does the character do what they do?
- Describe the relationship between the characters (marriage, family, friendship).
- How has the past influenced them?
- What has the character learned about themselves or their world?
- Why might the author have chosen to tell this story?
- What themes does the author write about (hints: look at the title and pictures)?
- Did you like the ending?
 - How would you change it?
 - What do you think should happen next?

Tip: You can also pick out a specific passage and ask learners to comment on it.

Magozwe

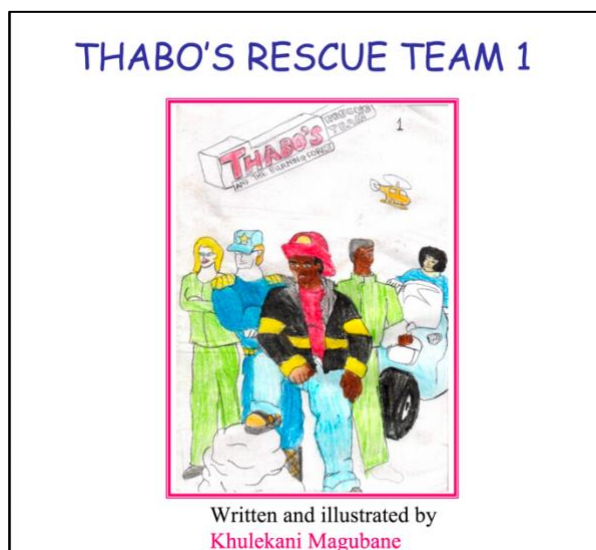
- When does Magozwe act bravely?
 - What do you feel is the bravest thing Magozwe does?
- In what ways do the following characters embody either integrity or unethicalness?
 - Magozwe
 - Magozwe's uncle
 - Thomas
- How do storybooks influence Magozwe?
 - Do you agree that a book can have such a strong impact on someone?
 - Has a book ever influenced you? If so, how?
- How do you feel about how Thomas helps Magozwe?
 - Should he have done more? Less?
 - What do you think would have happened to Magozwe if he never met Thomas?
 - Should more people have taken up the responsibility of helping Magozwe and the other boys?
 - Why is it important to help those in need?
- Do you think Thomas demonstrates patience? How?
 - Why do you think he is patient in that situation?
 - Do you think patience is an important quality to have? Why or why not?
- Do you feel that Magozwe demonstrates perseverance? How?
 - In what ways does his life get better?



- What do you think would have happened if he gave up?

Thabo's Rescue Team and the Burning Forest

- What impact do the poachers in the story have on their surroundings?
 - To the forest
 - To the animals
 - Are these realistic consequences of poaching?
 - How do you feel about poaching?
- Why does the rescue team try so hard to help the rhino and stop the fire?
- In what ways does the rescue team demonstrate unity?
 - What is their common goal? Would they achieve it without teamwork?
- In what ways does the rescue team demonstrate integrity?
 - What are the duties and obligations of a rescue team?
 - What benefits do they provide their community?
- How does the rescue team respond to the disasters they encounter?
 - Are these good characteristics to have?
 - What other characteristics should people show in emergencies?



Keeper and his Special Nursery

- Why is it important to have animal nurseries?
 - Under what conditions do the animals arrive at the nursery?
 - How does the keeper help the animals?
 - What strategies does he use to nurse the animals back to health?
- Do you think the keeper provides a safe and loving environment for the animals? Why would this be important?
- What personality does each animal show?
 - Why do you think the author gave the animals different personas?
- What virtues do you think the keeper and his helpers have (ex: kindness)?
- This story shows humans helping animals in need. Do you feel like this is a responsibility that all humans should share? Why or why not?

