

Top 20 Literacy Web Resources

Web links with booklists, free audio and video profiles of authors, and compilations of prize-winning titles are always popular with Big Fresh readers. Here are the most clicked links in this category:

1. If you're looking to venture beyond the Caldecott or Newbery winners in updating the prizewinning books available in your library, you might enjoy this web listing with links to recent award-winning books from throughout the world, and in more specialized categories: [Click Here](#)
2. Scholastic has compiled a Resource Round-Up for teachers designing author studies, with comprehensive links to materials throughout their site and beyond: [Click Here](#)
3. Reading Rockets has video and audio interviews with many authors who are elementary school favorites at this link: [Click Here](#)
4. An ongoing frustration for teachers and literacy specialists is how quickly many quality children's books go out of print. Book Closeouts specializes in out of print and remaindered editions of books, and they've created a section at their website highlighting award-winning children's and adult books at 30-80% off list prices. If you're looking for an out-of-print finalist for a recent award, you may be able to find it here: [Click Here](#)
5. The Library of Congress has compiled a remarkable collection of poetry audio and video resources on the web. This site is worth bookmarking, since it includes many broadcasts not readily accessible through search engines: [Click Here](#)
6. Guys Read is the website founded by Jon Scieszka, acclaimed author and former elementary teacher. The site has terrific resources for educators, parents, and students, and is easy to navigate. This link takes you to guys' picks of favorite books at different grade levels: [Click Here](#)
7. Shared reading isn't just for young children. In this brief article from Education World, Janet Allen shows the power of shared reading with middle and high school students, including tips for success and recommended texts: [Click Here](#)

Anything connected to advance planning and time management intrigues literacy leaders. Four articles made the cut in this category.

8. Guest Teacher Handbooks are a wonderful way to make the day go more smoothly for substitute teachers. At this time of year, they are also a terrific literacy project for students. The class collaborates on this written document that substitute teachers or classroom volunteers can use to understand the normal class routines. This article from the Responsive Classrooms website gives detailed instruction on how to create one of these handbooks within a class, and then spread the expectation for Guest Handbooks in every classroom throughout the school: [Click Here](#)
9. The November Learning site has a nifty guide available for download, "Writing Winning Grants." The author, Alan November, notes that just the process of sitting down together and coming up with common goals can unify a community. The 22-page guide includes prompts, templates, and worksheets to take you step-by-step through grant writing skills: [Click Here](#)
10. From Online Organising, the "20 Ways to Say No" tipsheet is a ready reference of thoughtful, fair reasons for turning down tasks. Here's my secret - I've copied and pasted my favorites from the list in the front of my planbook/calendar. Half the time when people think I'm checking on a date, I'm actually looking at my cribsheet to find the most graceful way to turn down the work: [Click Here](#)
11. "Surviving Email Overload" is an article by the authors of a book on managing email. The essay includes some simple strategies you can implement tomorrow to cut down on the messages you send and receive: [Click Here](#)

Good beginnings and endings matter, especially when it comes to school routines. And between school years, summer learning is of increasing importance for sustaining literacy growth. The favorites in this category all promote stronger rituals and routines before, during, and after a summer break.

12. The Institute for Summer Learning at Johns Hopkins has a wealth of materials on their website, including an event planning kit for National Summer Learning Day, which takes place in mid-July: [Click Here](#)

13. Did you know there is a foundation dedicated to building community involvement in the launch of the school year? If you haven't been able to muster enthusiasm yet for the start of the year, visit this site and you'll find their cheerfulness is contagious. The First Day Foundation, based in Vermont, has free planning kits, as well as suggestions for first day celebrations that range from simple to elaborate: [Click Here](#)
14. Scholastic has a wealth of intriguing suggestions off the beaten track for closing out the school year on a positive note: [Click Here](#)

Two articles on professional learning for literacy leaders were highly clicked by our readers.

15. "I Finally Drank the Koolaid" has an irresistible title, and is award-winning teacher Bill Ferriter's funny account of challenging most professional development initiatives in his district - until he saw the power of the teaming model. This might be a good article for a staff meeting that includes introducing or assessing the quality of the team meetings in your school: [Click Here](#)
16. Thirteen, the web-based resource of WNET in New York, has a free online self-paced assessment course on the "backwards planning" model of curriculum development, featuring Heidi Hayes Jacobs. This is all part of their "Concept to Classroom" series of free multimedia professional development offerings: [Click Here](#)

Interest continues to grow in classroom design issues, and the following two favorites reflect a movement toward more inviting classroom design.

17. From the Design Share website, a resource on design for learning, this article on lighting and color in classrooms includes the 7 Biggest Myths about Classroom Color and Light: [Click Here](#)
18. Looking for a research base on school wall displays to support more of a student-centered approach? "Consider the Walls" by Patricia Tarr from NAEYC is a short, practical article rich in research detailing how too much "visual noise" can inhibit student learning. Tarr also includes a brief list of seven questions to consider in creating wall displays that might be helpful in a staff discussion on learning environments: [Click Here](#)

Finally, the two articles that aren't easily to categorize, but they definitely intrigued our readers:

19. The Grammar Slammer is a concise online ready reference of common grammar terms, errors, and examples of usage. It's a terrific site to bookmark and return to whenever you have questions about proper usage. And if you need a grin, they inexplicably include a recipe for clam chowder in their list of common language terms. Perhaps regular ingestion of homemade chowder leads to proper grammar? [Click Here](#)
20. What a fun idea for a contest - the First Book organization did a national survey of the question, "What was the book that got you hooked?" You can read the top 50 picks nationally here. See if your book made the list, as well as the choices of thousands of readers of all ages. The top 50 list has lots of possibilities for class discussions or an interactive wall display in a classroom or teacher work area: [Click Here](#)