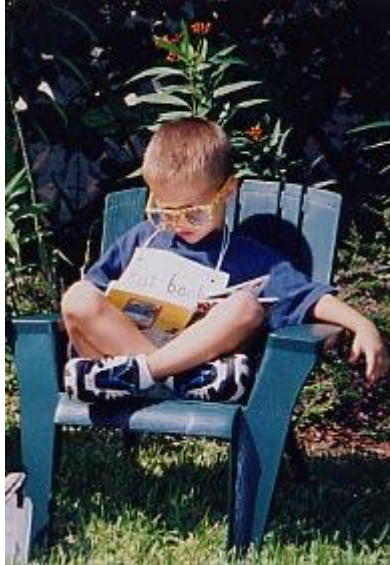


# Planting a Love for Literature

Incorporating Reading Activities into the Garden



## Standards

ELACC4RL1: Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

ELACC4RL2: Determine a theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text; summarize the text.

ELACC4RL3: Describe in depth a character, setting, or event in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., a character's thoughts, words, or actions).

ELACC4RI1: Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

ELACC4RI2: Determine the main idea of a text and explain how it is supported by key details; summarize the text.

ELACC4RI3: Explain events, procedures, ideas, or concepts in a historical, scientific, or technical text, including what happened and why, based on specific information in the text.

ELACC4RF4: Read with sufficient accuracy and fluency to support comprehension.

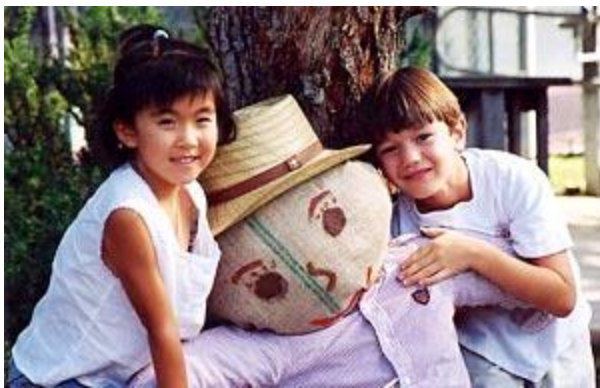
- a. Read on-level text with purpose and understanding.
- b. Read on-level prose and poetry orally with accuracy, appropriate rate, and expression on successive readings.
- c. Use context to confirm or self-correct word recognition and understanding, rereading as necessary.

## Overview

Nothing opens up the world to a child like mastering the skill of reading. Literacy provides students with the key to succeed in school and in the workplace. Learning to read is not an easy task for all children, so educators must find ways to motivate students to stick with it. What better way to inspire students than to bring their stories to life in a garden?

Combining literature and gardening activities brings a hands-on element to a subject normally taught lecture-style, providing inspiration and motivation for students who struggle to focus in traditional classroom settings. When students can listen to and/or read garden stories and then translate their literary experiences into real life experiences, reading takes on new meaning and becomes less abstract.

Science and math are the most common subjects taught in the garden context because it lends itself to scientific inquiry and provides opportunities to practice basic mathematical functions. But the garden can as easily be a tool for literature lessons, allowing kids to use their imaginations to create three-dimensional experiences from two-dimensional text. The words come to life when a garden activity accompanies the lesson. Here are a few suggestions for combining garden and reading activities:



**Act out a story.** As a class, read a book with a garden storyline. Link the book to the garden by performing the same tasks as the book's characters or growing the same plants mentioned in the book.

**Design your own story garden.** Design a garden around the theme of a book. Many a school has launched into gardening thanks to Beatrix Potter's *Peter Rabbit*, planting the vegetables mentioned in the book and populating their plot with rabbit statues. Who knows, you might even end up with a real, live bunny (and learn how farmer McGregor felt)! Others, after reading *The Secret Garden* by Frances Hodgson Burnett, have been inspired to create their own cozy green hideaways. High school students may design a Shakespeare garden around the plants mentioned in his various plays and poetry.

**Read to grow awareness.** Participate in [Heifer International's Read to Feed program](#) to raise money for sustainable hunger relief around the world. It's a great way to introduce the issues of hunger and food security to your students, as well as to enhance geography and cultural studies.

**Relax and read in the garden.** The garden provides a relaxing and inspiring environment, especially for students uncomfortable in the traditional classroom setting. Read books and poems while sitting in the garden to associate the activity of reading with a comforting atmosphere.

<http://www.kidsgardening.org/article/planting-love-literature>