

GRAND CONVERSATION

PURPOSE:

Grand Conversation is a book discussion in which students deepen their comprehension and reflect on their understanding during the responding step of the reading process. (Eeds & Wells, 1989; Peterson & Eeds, 1990).

PROCEDURE:

Students sit in a circle so that they can see each other during a 10-30 minute grand conversation. The teacher serves as a facilitator.

1. **Read the book.** Students prepare for the grand conversation by reading the book or a part of the book.
2. **Prepare for the grand conversation.** Students may respond to the book in a quick write or in a reading log in order to begin reflecting on the story.
3. **Discuss the book.** Students come together as a class or in a smaller group to discuss the book. The students take turns asking questions and sharing their ideas about the events in the story, the literary language and favorite quotes, the author's craft, and the illustrations. To start the Grand Conversation, the teacher asks students to share their personal responses. Students may read from their quick writes or reading log entries. All students participate, build on classmates' comments and ask for clarifications. In order that everyone gets to participate, many teachers ask students to make no more than two or three comments until everyone has spoken once. Students should

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refer back to the book or read a short section to make a point. Teachers can also participate in the discussions, offering comments and clarifying conclusions.

4. **Ask questions.** After students have had a chance to share their reflections, teachers ask questions to focus students. Teachers might focus on theme, character, illustrations, author, or an element of story structure. Teachers may ask students to make predictions before continuing to read the next chapter of a book.
5. **Write in reading logs.** Teachers may have students write (or write again) in a reading log. This step is optional, but students often have many ideas for reading log entries after participating in the discussion. Also, students may record their predictions before continuing to read chapter books.

