


Literature



Circles

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Literacy Circles

There is no one right way to conduct literacy circles. The manner in which you use this strategy for reading responses is as individual as you are. The approach may change from class to class, teacher to teacher, student to student and sometimes-even day to day.

The students take ownership. The students take responsibility as readers, group members and organizers.

You will notice some very positive behaviours: animated discussion, serious participation, favourite passages being read aloud, text being re-read to prove points or settle arguments, and...

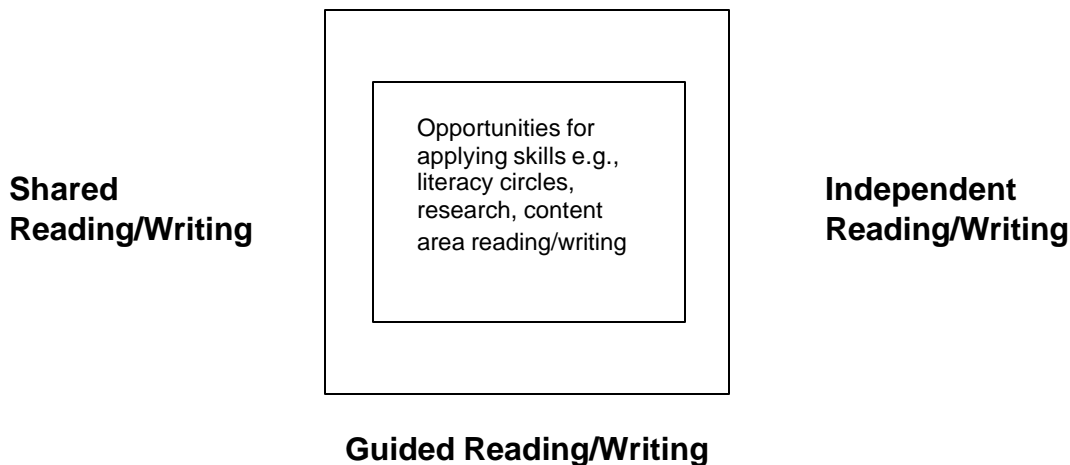
What Are Literacy Circles?

- Small groups of students meet to thoroughly discuss reading passages (can be poems, short stories, novels, fiction or non-fiction).
- The discussion is child directed and child centred.
- The discussion is guided by the students' response to what they have read.
- The circles allow students to engage in critical thinking and reflection through reading, discussing and responding to literature.

- **Students are enthusiastic, motivated and actively involved.**
- **Literacy circles are part of a balanced literacy program.**

Balanced Reading Program

Reading Aloud



From Chapter 1, [*Getting Started with Literature Circles*](#)
by Katherine L. Schlick Noe & Nancy J. Johnson.
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This table outlines the implementation of Literacy Circles over time. The approach you take will change as you and the students become more comfortable with the format.

	Beginners	More Experienced	Skilled
Timeline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 3-6 weeks - focus on learning the process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -3-6 weeks -focus on developing responses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 3-6 weeks focus on increasing complexity of responses
Schedule	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - teacher sets schedule of when to meet, length of cycle, when to prepare etc. - groups usually meet 1/week, read and prepare responses when not meeting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -teacher and students discuss length of cycle -groups meet and discuss when to meet, prepare etc. -groups usually meet 1/week, but may alter to fit their own needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - groups meet, discuss, and decide on their own when to meet, prepare etc.
Choosing Books	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - whole class reads the same book/passage etc. if sufficient copies are available - teacher chooses - anthologies - "that's what we have" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -2 or 3 choices of titles -books need to be relevant and interesting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 4 or 5 choices of titles - could be theme/subject related - author studies - genre studies
Forming Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - teacher forms groups - usually homogeneous ability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -teacher gives book talks -students give preferences/teacher forms groups based on ability and interest 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - teacher and/or students give book talks - students choose group - groups may be mixed ability
Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - teacher facilitates discussion or participates as a member - students use role sheets to guide them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -teacher can facilitate group or act as a member or observer -students generate discussion following guidelines of the role sheets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - groups run themselves - teacher roams and observes - group can modify role sheet to fit particular book or not use them at all
Written Responses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - respond to each chapter of the book using response journals or questions - use role sheets to prepare for circle 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -set number of responses expected per week (either journal responses or questions) -may modify role sheets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - variety of response forms are acceptable (written, art, etc.) - may modify role sheets or not use them at all
Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What Assessment? - or anecdotal notes re: circles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -some student self/peer assessment -choose 1 or 2 responses to be graded at the end of the book 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - extensive student self/peer assessment - greater focus is put on discussion

Adapted from Literature Circles and Response (2001) by Bonnie Campbell Hill, Katherine L. Schlick Noe, and Nancy J. Johnson. Christopher-Gordon Publishers, Inc.

There are 4 roles, which are consistently used: See the attached role sheets for more details about the responsibilities for each role. Students' roles rotate each time the group meets.

Discussion Director

Summarizer

Illustrator

Literary Luminary

When doing historical fiction, the roles of **Fact Finder** or **Time Liner** are most appropriate .

For more information, check one of these resources.

Daniels, Harvey. *Literature Circles – Voice and Choice in the Student Centred Classroom*. Markham: Pembroke Publishers, 1994.

Hill, Bonnie Campbell, Katherine L. Schlick Noe and Nancy J. Johnson. *Literature Circles and Response*. Norwood, MA: Christopher-Gordon Publishers, 1995.

Hill, Bonnie Campbell, Katherine L. Schlick Noe and Nancy J. Johnson. *Literature Circles Resource Guide: Teaching Suggestions, Forms, Sample Book Lists, and Database of books for Literature Circles*. Norwood, MA: Christopher-Gordon Publishers, 2001.

Moen, Christine Boardman. *25 Reproducible Literature Circle Role Sheets for Fiction and Nonfiction Books*. Carthage IL: Teaching & Learning Company, 1998.

Noe, Katherine L. Schlick and Nancy J. Johnson. *Getting Started With Literature Circles*. Norwood, MA: Christopher-Gordon Publishers, 1999.

Web Sites:

http://edselect.com/literature_circles.htm

Compilation of links to resources on the Internet.

www.literaturecircles.com (based on Harvey Daniels' book)

<http://fac-staff.seattleu.edu/kschlnoe/LitCircles/index.html>

Literature Circle Schedule

Record the names of the members of your group.

1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

4. _____ 5. _____ 6. _____

Title of the book you are reading? _____

Our group will meet on these dates and have read the pages (chapters)

Date: _____ Pages: _____

Date: _____ Pages: _____

Date: _____ Pages: _____

Date: _____ Pages: _____

Date: _____ Pages: _____

Date: _____ Pages: _____

Date: _____ Pages: _____

Date: _____ Pages: _____

Date: _____ Pages: _____

Date: _____ Pages: _____

Date: _____ Pages: _____

Book Title: _____

Our roles will change as follows:

Date: _____

Name _____ Role _____

2. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

Date: _____

Name _____ Role _____

2. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

Date: _____

Name _____ Role _____

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

Date: _____

Name _____ Role _____

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

Date: _____

Name _____ Role _____

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

Date: _____

Name _____ Role _____

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

DISCUSSION DIRECTOR



Your job is to make a list of questions that your group might want to discuss about the part of the book/reading that you just did. Don't worry about the small details. The best questions are usually the ones you had yourself as you read. Record your questions on this sheet, or try some of the suggested questions.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Book Title: _____

Reading Assignment: page _____ to page _____

Possible discussion questions:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Sample Questions :

What were you thinking about while you read this section?

How did this section make you feel?

What questions did you have when you finished this part?

What do you think might happen next?

How do you think you did today?

I read the required pages _____ Yes _____ No

I prepared good discussion questions _____ Yes _____ No

I kept the other members on task _____ Yes _____ No

I kept the discussion going _____ Yes _____ No

I participated in the discussion _____ Yes _____ No



LITERARY LUMINARY

Your job is to find a few special passages in the section you read that your group would like to hear read aloud. You want to help your group recall certain sections of the book. The passages may be interesting, funny, and important or demonstrate a literary device such as simile or alliteration. You can read the sections yourself, or ask another group member to do so.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Book Title: _____

Reading Assignment: page _____ to page _____

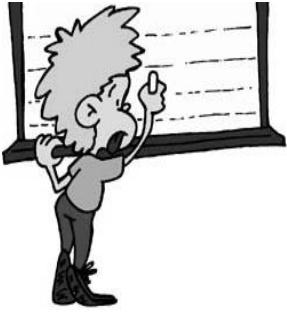
Passage Location:	Reason for selecting	Who will read
Page _____ Paragraph _____	_____	_____
Page _____ Paragraph _____	_____	_____
Page _____ Paragraph _____	_____	_____
Page _____ Paragraph _____	_____	_____

Possible reasons for picking a passage to share:

Important Informative Descriptive
Surprising Funny Well Written
Literary Device (simile, alliteration, metaphor, symbolism etc.)

How do you think you did today?

I read the required pages	_____	Yes	_____	No
I located several passages	_____	Yes	_____	No
I shared and explained my choices	_____	Yes	_____	No
I participated in the discussion	_____	Yes	_____	No



SUMMARIZER

Your job is to briefly tell what happened in the part that you just read. Just give a quick statement to retell the **main** events. The other members of your group are counting on you to help them keep the important parts straight. If there are several main ideas, number them in order of importance.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Book Title: _____

Reading Assignment: page _____ to page _____

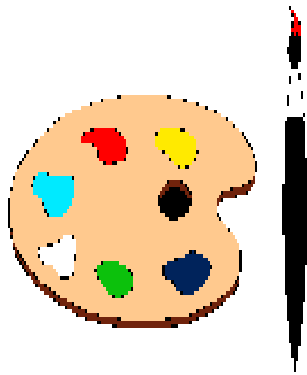
Key Points:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Summary:

How do you think you did today?

I read the required pages	_____	Yes	_____	No
I recorded the key points	_____	Yes	_____	No
I kept my summary brief	_____	Yes	_____	No
I participated in the discussion	_____	Yes	_____	No



ILLUSTRATOR

Your job is to draw some kind of picture, or piece of art about the part of the book/reading that you just did. It can be a sketch, cartoon, diagram, story map, storyboard, painting etc. Take time to do it carefully and include details. It should be on a full sheet of paper and usually will be in colour.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Book Title: _____

Reading Assignment: page _____ to page _____

Ideas for Pictures:

- 🔗 a character
- 🔗 the setting
- 🔗 an important part of the plot

Presenting your illustration: When the Discussion Director asks you to take your turn, show your illustration and ask the other members to comment on what they think it represents and how it relates to the reading assignment. When they are finished share your own thoughts about how you came up with the idea and what it means.

How do you think you did today?

I read the required pages	_____	Yes	_____	No
I carefully prepared my illustration	_____	Yes	_____	No
I asked the other members to comment	_____	Yes	_____	No
I explained my illustration	_____	Yes	_____	No
I participated in the discussion	_____	Yes	_____	No



WORD WIZARD

Your job is to find 2 or 3 meaningful words from the reading selection. The words could be interesting, descriptive, challenging, or unusual. If it is a word that you did not know the meaning of, be sure to look it up in the dictionary and share the definition with the others. Tell the group the page and paragraph where they will find the word. Tell what part of speech it is and try to write your own sentence using the word.

Name: _____
Date: _____
Book Title: _____
Reading Assignment: page _____ to page _____

Word 1: _____ Page # _____ Paragraph _____
Part of Speech _____
Definition as it is used in this passage _____

Your own sentence using the word _____

Word 2: _____ Page # _____ Paragraph _____
Word 1: _____ Page # _____ Paragraph _____
Part of Speech _____
Definition as it is used in this passage _____

Your own sentence using the word _____

Word 3: _____ Page # _____ Paragraph _____
Word 1: _____ Page # _____ Paragraph _____
Part of Speech _____
Definition as it is used in this passage _____

Your own sentence using the word _____

How do you think you did today?

I read the required pages	_____	Yes	_____	No
I found at least 3 interesting words	_____	Yes	_____	No
I know the definition and part of speech	_____	Yes	_____	No
I wrote my own sentence for the word	_____	Yes	_____	No
I participated in the discussion	_____	Yes	_____	No

FACT FINDER



Your job is to find any reference in your reading passage that relates to an event or fact from history. (E.g., if one of your characters is a knight—you would confirm that knights did indeed exist during the middle ages and give a fact or two about them.)

Name: _____

Date: _____

Book Title: _____

Reading Assignment: page _____ to page _____

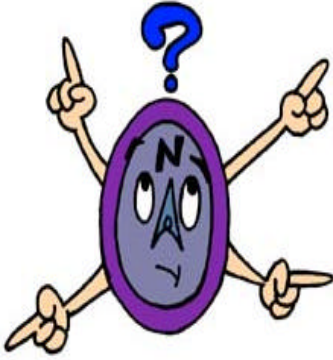
Historical fiction is based on actual historical events. Historical accuracy is important in this kind of writing. The conversations and general plot may be fictitious, but the references to fact are still there.

As you read, record possible subjects, events, people to research and comment on.

Reference	Fact
1. _____ _____	_____
2. _____ _____	_____
3. _____ _____	_____

How do you think you did today?

I read the required pages	_____	Yes	_____	No
I prepared good discussion questions	_____	Yes	_____	No
I kept the other members on task	_____	Yes	_____	No
I kept the discussion going	_____	Yes	_____	No
I participated in the discussion	_____	Yes	_____	No



TRAVEL TRACER

Your job is to keep track of where the action takes place. This is particularly important in a story where the characters move around a lot. Describe each setting in detail either in words or with a map or drawing. All members of your group should be able to image exactly what the places look like.

Created by Dale Mays 02/01

Name: _____

Date: _____

Book Title: _____

Reading Assignment: page _____ to page _____

Scene 1:

Scene 2:

You may need to add more scenes on the back of this sheet.

How do you think you did today?

I read the required pages	_____	Yes	_____	No
I described the scenes	_____	Yes	_____	No
I discussed the settings	_____	Yes	_____	No
I participated in the discussion	_____	Yes	_____	No

Created by Dale Mays 02/01

CONNECTOR



Your job is to find connections between the section you read and the world outside. This means you must relate the book or passage to your own life, to other books/movies/shows etc., or to other people of whom the book reminds you. There are no right or wrong answers. The reading will make different people think different things.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Book Title: _____

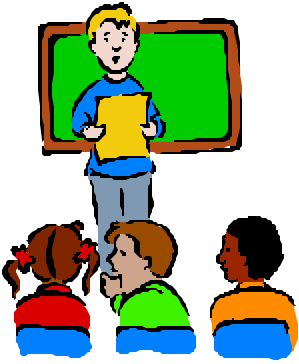
Reading Assignment: page _____ to page _____

Some connections I found between this reading assignment and other people, places, events, or books, movies, shows etc.....

1. _____
 2. _____
 3. _____
 4. _____
 5. _____
-

How do you think you did today?

I read the required pages	_____	Yes	_____	No
I made several connections	_____	Yes	_____	No
I shared and explained my choices	_____	Yes	_____	No
I participated in the discussion	_____	Yes	_____	No



DISCUSSION DIRECTOR

Name: _____

Group: _____

Book: _____

Assignment: p. _____ to p. _____

Your Job:

- Develop a list of questions that your group might want to discuss about this part of the book
- Invite other members to introduce their role topics
- Don't worry about the details
- Help people talk over the big ideas in the reading
- Use questions from your own ideas and insights in the readings or the questions below

Possible discussion questions or topics for today:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Sample Questions:

- What was going through your mind while you read the book?
 - How did you feel while reading the part of the book?
 - What questions did you have when you finished this section?
 - Did anything in this section of the book surprise you?
 - What are the one or two most important ideas?
 - Predict some things that you think will happen next in the book.
-

Rate your participation:

I read the required pages.	1	2	3	4	5	6
My questions led the discussion.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I kept the other members on task.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I allowed group members time to speak.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I participated in the discussion.	1	2	3	4	5	6

ILLUSTRATOR



Name: _____

Group: _____

Book: _____

Assignment: p. _____ to p. _____

Your Job:

On the back of this paper or a separate sheet:

- Draw some kind of picture related to the reading
- It can be a sketch, cartoon, diagram, flow chart, or stick figure scene
- It can be a picture of something discussed specifically in the book or something that the reading reminded you of, or a picture that conveys any idea or feeling you got from the reading
- Your drawing can be labeled

Presentation Plan:

When the *Discussion Director* invites your participation

You may:

- Show your picture without comment to others in the group
- One at a time they can speculate what your picture means
- After everyone has had a say, you get the last word-
Tell them what your picture means, where it came from, or what it represents to you

Rate your participation:

I read the required pages.	1	2	3	4	5	6
My illustrations stimulated discussion.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I asked the other members to comment.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I participated in the discussion.	1	2	3	4	5	6



LITERARY LUMINARY

Name: _____

Group: _____

Book: _____

Assignment: p. _____ to p. _____

Your Job:

- Locate a few special sections of the text that your group would like to hear read aloud
- Samples should be interesting, powerful, funny, puzzling, or important sections of the text
- Decide which passages or paragraphs are worth hearing, and then jot plans for how they should be shared
- Read the passages aloud to the group, ask someone else to read them, or have each member read the passages silently and then discuss.

Location	Reason for choosing	Plan for reading
1. Page ____ Paragraph ____	_____	_____
2. Page ____ Paragraph ____	_____	_____
3. Page ____ Paragraph ____	_____	_____
4. Page ____ Paragraph ____	_____	_____
5. Page ____ Paragraph ____	_____	_____
6. Page ____ Paragraph ____	_____	_____

Possible reasons for picking a passage to be shared:

Important
Surprising
Funny
Confusing

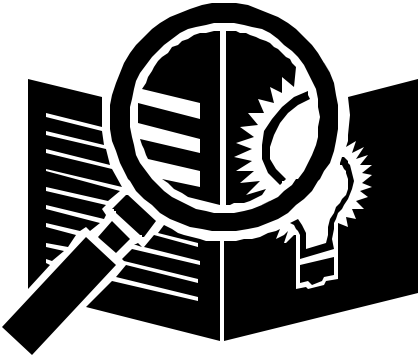
Informative
Controversial
Well written
Thought-provoking

Other: _____

Rate your participation:

I read the required pages.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I located several passages.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I shared and explained my choices.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I participated in the discussion.	1	2	3	4	5	6

SUMMARIZER



Name: _____

Group: _____

Book: _____

Assignment: p. _____ to p. _____

Your Job:

- Prepare a brief summary of today's reading
- The other members of your group will be counting on you to give a quick (one- or two-minute) statement that conveys the gist, the key points, the highlights of today's reading.

Summary:

Key points

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Rate your participation:

I read the required pages.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I kept my summary brief.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I recorded the key points.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I participated in the discussion.	1	2	3	4	5	6

TRAVEL TRACER



Name: _____

Group: _____

Book: _____

Assignment: p. _____ to p. _____

If you are reading a book where characters move around a lot and the scene changes frequently, it is important for everyone in your group to know where things are happening and how the setting may have changed.

Your job:

- Track carefully where the action takes place during today's reading
- Describe each setting in detail, either in words or with an action map or diagram
- Give page locations where the scene is described

Describe or sketch the setting (you may also use the back of this sheet or another sheet):

Where the action begins in this reading:

Page where it is described: _____

Where key events happen in this reading:

Page where it is described: _____

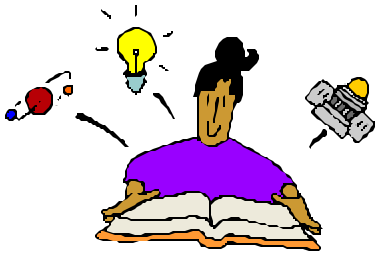
Where events end in today's reading:

Page where it is described: _____

Rate your participation:

I read the required pages.	1	2	3	4	5	6
My selections traced the travel well.	1	2	3	4	5	6
My descriptions were accurate.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I participated in the discussion.	1	2	3	4	5	6

VOCABULARY ENRCHER



Name: _____

Group: _____

Book: _____

Assignment: p. _____ to p. _____

Your job:

- Find especially important words in today's reading that are puzzling or unfamiliar
- Mark the words while your are reading with post-it notes
- Later jot down their definitions, either from a dictionary or some other source
- Familiar words may be chosen because they are repeated a lot, used in an unusual way, or key to the meaning of the text
- Help members of the group find and discuss these words

**Page # &
Paragraph**

Word

Definition

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Rate your participation:

I read the required pages.	1	2	3	4	5	6
My words were important to the reading.	1	2	3	4	5	6
My definitions were clear.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I participated in the discussion.	1	2	3	4	5	6



CONNECTOR

Name: _____

Group: _____

Book: _____

Assignment: p. _____ to p. _____

Your job:

- Find connections between the book your group is reading and the world outside
- Connect this reading to the reading to your own life, to happenings at school or in the community, to similar events at other times and places, to other people or problems that you are reminded of
- Connections may be between the book and other writings on the same topic, or by the same author

Some connections I found between this reading and other people, places, events, authors...

1. _____

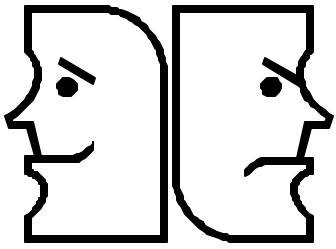
2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

Rate your participation:

I read the required pages.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I made several connections.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I shared and explained my choices.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I participated in the discussion.	1	2	3	4	5	6



CONFLICT CONNECTOR

Name: _____

Group: _____

Book: _____

Assignment: p. _____ to p. _____

Your job:

- Find the conflict(s) in this reading passage
 - Character vs Character
 - Character vs Nature
 - Character vs Himself or Herself
 - Character vs Law or Customs of Society
- Help your group understand the conflict(s)
- Discuss the various ways the character(s) works through the conflict(s) in attempt to resolve it

Character vs _____ Pages: _____

Summary and conflict connection of the passage:

Character vs _____ Pages: _____

Summary and conflict connection of the passage:

Character vs _____ Pages: _____

Summary and conflict connection of the passage:

Rate your participation:

I read the required pages.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I made several connections.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I shared and explained my choices.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I participated in the discussion.	1	2	3	4	5	6

Observation-Feedback Chart

Date: _____ Book: _____ Pages: _____

This is the group's _____ literature circle meeting for this book.

Group members:

1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____
 4. _____ 5. _____ 6. _____

Oral and Visual Communication Expectations: (review curriculum to specifically align grade expectations)

	Student 1	Student 2	Student 3	Student 4	Student 5	Student 6
Presents information to their peers in a focused and organized form						
Respected other people's opinions by asking for clarification for more information						
Encouraged others to speak and did not dominate the discussion						
Used appropriate strategies to organize and carry out group projects						
Contributed ideas to help solve problems, listened and responded constructively to the ideas of others						
Followed-up on others' ideas and recognized the validity of different points of view in group discussions						

Learning Skills (NI, S, G, E)	Student 1	Student 2	Student 3	Student 4	Student 5	Student 6
Independent Work-Responsibility Accepts responsibility for completing tasks						
Accepts responsibility for own behavior						
Independence Works well without supervision and follows routines and instructions independently						
Demonstrates self-direction in learning						
Use of Information Demonstrates creativity in assessing information and ideas and in drawing relevant conclusions						
Responsibility with Others Assumes responsibilities in groups						
Attitude Willingly works with others						
Co-operation Listens to, acknowledges and considers differing opinions						
Class Participation Leadership Accepts various roles within the class and group						
Team Attitude Shows respect for the ideas of others in the class or group						
Supports ideas and thoughts of others						
Responsibility Takes share of own work to be done						
Communication Communicates well with group						
Contributes information and ideas to the group						