

Knowledge Is Power

A classroom resource for understanding the importance of literacy and for everyone to have access to great books. This resource is part of the WE Read Together campaign.

Grades 1 to 3
American Edition

AN INITIATIVE OF



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Dear Educator,

Welcome to the WE Movement. We are so glad you've joined us on our mission to inspire, educate and empower students to find their place in the world. Throughout the last two decades, educators have stood by us. With over 16,000 schools and groups thriving in WE Schools, we are delivering impressive results in academic engagement, life skills and civic engagement. Through the WE Schools process of experiential service-learning, students will become engaged in local and global issues through collaboration and independent reflection.

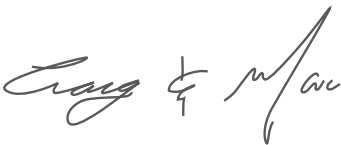
Our exciting partnership with KPMG strengthens this commitment to making the world a better place. KPMG is a professional services firm dedicated to helping develop the next generation of leaders through lifelong learning. Together with KPMG's Family for Literacy program, we want to provide a better understanding of the barriers to literacy and the possible solutions.

Through this classroom resource, your students will be engaged in understanding the importance of literacy and the barriers to literacy that may exist in their local communities. Students will learn how a lack of access to books is a barrier to literacy development and raise awareness about this issue. This resource is also designed to prepare your students to participate in the WE Schools WE Read Together campaign.

This is an exciting time to be an educator. Together, we have the power to reignite the fundamental purpose of education: moving students to want to learn, and preparing them with the life skills to better the world and forge their own paths to success.

Thank you for having the heart and passion to bring WE into your classroom. We are honored and encouraged to work with such a dedicated and enthusiastic group.

We are stronger together,



Craig and Marc Kielburger
Co-Founders, WE



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Essential Question: What is experiential service-learning and how can I incorporate it into my classroom instruction with WE Schools curriculum resources?

WE Schools

WE Schools is a unique, step-by-step program that challenges young people to identify the local and global issues that spark their passion and empowers them with the tools to take action. Educators and students work together to learn about the world and to take action to create meaningful change. Delivered in 16,000 schools and groups across North America and the UK, the program provides educators and students with curriculum, educational resources and a full calendar of campaign ideas.

What Is Experiential Learning?

Experiential service-learning is based on a structured academic foundation that goes beyond volunteering and community service. It's a practice that engages teachers and students with their communities in a structured way and allows students to meet their learning objectives while addressing their community's needs.

The Four Steps of WE Schools

1.

Investigate and Learn

Students explore topics related to a real-world challenge or opportunity.

2.

Action Plan

Students develop a plan to implement their service-learning project, including one **local** and one **global** action.

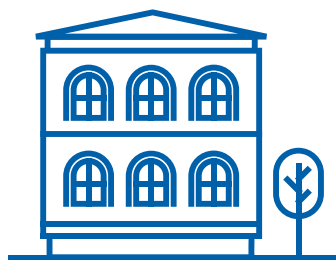
3.

Take Action

Students implement their action plan.

Local

Global



4.

Report and Celebrate

Students present the results of their service-learning initiatives.

Setting Students Up For Success: In School, the Workplace and Life.

WE Schools Introduction: [WE.org/we-at-school/we-schools/](https://www.we.org/we-at-school/we-schools/)

Living WE is about improving our lives and our world by reaching out to others. It involves focusing less on “me” and more on “we”—our communities, our country and our world.

Social Emotional Learning: The WE Learning Framework is grounded in social emotional learning principles, helping students develop the skills to manage their emotions, resolve conflicts and make responsible decisions.

Global Mindset: The ability to operate comfortably across borders, cultures and languages is invaluable. WE Schools programming promotes global mindedness and cultural competency amongst student populations during their formative years.

Active Citizenship: Students act on their growing knowledge by connecting with others in their communities, thereby generating interest, further research and engagement in local and national causes.

Reflection is a key component of our experiential service-learning model. Our reflection activities direct students' attention to new interpretations of events and provide a lens through which service can be studied and interpreted.

Our Learning Skills Legend



Argument
formation



Information
literacy



Leadership
skills



Organization



Action
planning



Research and
writing



Critical
thinking



Reflection

Knowledge Is Power Overview

Knowledge Is Power is a classroom resource that will engage learners in understanding why reading is an essential lifelong skill and the contribution reading and great books make in our lives.

Students will learn about social justice issues through fiction texts. They will understand and communicate the message within the text and reflect on the value of great books for learning.

This classroom resource includes engaging activities, strategies for assessment, differentiation and blackline masters. The activities inform, engage and empower students to understand that books are great tools for learning about social justice issues in their local and global communities.

The resource is designed as an alternative to the regular literacy lesson in the classroom. It engages students in both reading and writing components to ensure they are developing skills and understanding the content.

Rationale

KPMG is a professional services firm that is passionate about combating childhood illiteracy and increasing access to quality books for all young people. KPMG's Family for Literacy program is focused on providing new books to children from low-income families to begin the process of increasing a child's literacy outcomes. KPMG has partnered with WE to raise awareness about the importance of developing strong reading and literacy skills, and to ensure that students have the opportunity to become reflective, critical and independent learners and responsible citizens.

Assessing the Learning

You know your students best—their learning styles and preferences, skill levels and knowledge. You are also in the best position to anticipate the habits of mind that will make this classroom resource successful. We are mindful that students may be at different reading levels, including English Language Learners (ELL), and may have learning differences. In response, the Educator Notes throughout the resource make suggestions for differentiation along with extension and enrichment ideas that can be used.

Teaching strategies include literacy circles, storytelling, think-pair-share, questioning and reflective discussion.

Assessment strategies include observations, entry and exit slips, written, verbal or recorded reflection, discussions, presentations, and the creation of a picture book.

This classroom resource includes suggestions for a variety of books, videos and other resources designed to engage student interest and deepen understanding. Before beginning, visit your Teacher-Librarian, local library or school district resource center to get access to the resources listed in the Appendices.

► Explore our resources and current campaign offerings at [WE.org](https://www.we.org)

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Subject(s): Language, Social Studies

Recommended Grade Level:

Grades 1 to 3

WE Learning Framework Skills:



Essential Questions:

- ▶ Why do we read?
- ▶ Why should everyone have access to books?

Educator's Note: The Knowledge Is Power classroom resource includes a variety of picture books for students to engage with. If your school does not have access to the physical copies of these books, they can be sourced in an online version. Connect with your Teacher-Librarian to source these texts.

Word Bank
Access —the right or opportunity to use or benefit from something
Issue —an important topic or problem for debate or discussion
Literature —written works, especially those considered of superior or lasting artistic merit
Quality —the standard of something as measured against other things of a similar kind; the degree of excellence of something

Source: Oxford Dictionary. en.oxforddictionaries.com

Materials And Resources

- *The Wednesday Surprise*, written by Eve Bunting, illustrated by Donald Carrick (HMH Books for Young Readers, Boston, 1989)
- *The Librarian of Basra: A True Story from Iraq*, written by Jeanette Winter (HMH Books for Young Readers, Boston, 2004)
- Chart paper and markers
- Computers
- Appendix 1: Classroom Observation Forms
- Appendix 2: Social Justice Booklist - Grades 1 to 6
- Blackline Master 1: Why I Chose This Text
- Blackline Master 2: Pleasure vs. Information
- Blackline Master 3: Action Plan and S.M.A.R.T. Goals



Lesson 1:

Why Do I Read?

Suggested Time:

40 minutes

Learning Goals:

Students will:



- Identify why they read and understand the importance of reading in their lives

Investigate and Learn

Educator's Note: Students will be reading the text *The Wednesday Surprise* written by Eve Bunting (1989). In this book, Anna and Grandma are planning a surprise for Dad's birthday. Dad thinks he has received all his presents when Grandma stands up and gives him the best one of all; she reads aloud the stories that Anna has taught her (source: Goodreads). Ensure that you have access to your favorite book to share with students during the lesson.

- 1. Recommended Assessment For Learning:** Show students the video "Read Every Day. Lead a Better Life." www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vf9V6AD8bII (1:12). In pairs, ask students to discuss the following questions:
 - a. Why was the boy sad?
 - b. What made him happy?
 - c. Why did the boy want to read?
 - d. Do you agree that reading every day will lead to a better life, like the title says?
 - e. Does reading make your life better? How?
- 2.** Ask students to individually think about a book they read that made them happy. Why did this book make them happy? Have them share this book and the reason it made them happy with the person sitting next to them.
- 3.** Introduce students to the picture book *The Wednesday Surprise*. Ask students to look at the cover page of the book. From the images and title, what predictions can we make about the story? Why are the two characters reading? How might reading make their lives better? Why do books make our lives better? What do they contribute?

- 4.** Using sticky notes and think-pair-share, have students infer and respond to the following questions:
 - a. What is the Wednesday surprise?
 - b. How does it affect the two characters from the cover?
- 5.** As a class, read the picture book *The Wednesday Surprise*. If possible, display the text on the front board to model reading strategies with students.

- 6. Recommended Assessment As Learning:** In small groups, ask students to discuss the following questions. Allocate each group two questions to reflect on. Ask groups to share their answers with the class.
 - a. Why do we read books?
 - b. How did reading benefit the grandmother in the story?
 - c. How did having the ability to read change her life?
 - d. Why is having the ability to read an important skill to have?
 - e. What types of books were read in the story?
 - f. Why is it important to read different types of texts?
 - g. Is reading limited to books? Are there other materials to read?

- 7. Recommended Assessment Of Learning:** In groups of three to four, ask students to create a poster, speech or play that expresses why reading is enjoyable, the different types of reading texts students enjoy and why learning to read is important. Share these presentations with the class.

Lesson 2:

Barriers To Literacy–Access To Books



Suggested Time:

40 minutes

Learning Goals:

Students will:

- Learn about the social justice issue of access to books through a fiction text
- Understand that fiction texts provide opportunities for learning

Educator's Note: This lesson is a study of the text *The Librarian of Basra* written by Jeanette Winter (2004). The book addresses currently occurring issues, such as war and violence, however the purpose of this book study is to reflect on the importance of preserving the knowledge we gain from books. If you feel like this book is not appropriate for your students, the booklist in **Appendix 3: Social Justice Booklist** provides alternative options, such as *Richard Wright and the Library Card* written by William Miller (1997).

In this lesson, students will be engaging with the book *The Librarian from Basra: A True Story from Iraq*. Alia Muhammad Baker is a librarian in Basra, Iraq. For fourteen years her library has been a meeting place for those who love books. Now war has come and Alia fears that the library, along with the 30,000 books within it will be destroyed forever. This is the true story of her struggle to save her community's priceless collection of books. (Sourced: www.goodreads.com/book/show/111000.The_Librarian_of_Basra?from_search=true)

1.

Recommended Assessment For Learning: Distribute sticky notes to students. Individually, ask students to write or draw their thoughts about the following scenario: If you had to leave your home or school quickly, what are three items you would save? Why would you save these items? In small groups, share your ideas. Discuss: Why are these items important for you to save? Are any of your items like anyone else's? What would make you want to save an item?

2. Show students the picture book *The Librarian from Basra: A True Story from Iraq*. While looking at the cover page and title, discuss: Why is the librarian surrounded by books? What is she doing with the books?

3. Read the text *The Librarian from Basra: A True Story from Iraq*.

4.

Recommended Assessment As Learning: After reading the story, discuss the following questions:

- a. What is the story about?
- b. Why does the librarian want to save the books? Why are books worth saving?
- c. Why are books important for everyone?

5.

Recommended Assessment Of Learning: Exit ticket: On a sticky note, ask students to respond to the question: What would happen if I did not have any books to read?

Lesson 3:

Literacy Circles



Suggested Time:

100 minutes (five 20-minute rotations)

Learning Goals:

Students will:

- Understand the purpose of a library in their school and community
- Engage with a variety of fiction and non-fiction books about social justice issues
- Reflect on the importance and purpose of reading for pleasure as well as information

Educator's Note: The following four activities will be conducted as literacy circles with 15 to 20 minute rotations. They can be completed in one sitting or over a few days. The activities will engage students in reading, writing and reflective activities that can be completed independently or collaboratively. Ensure that prior to beginning student engagement in the activity, you have modelled and explained the activities to students. These activities can also be taught as mini-lessons if students are not ready to work independently.

Literacy Circle Activities

Rotation 1: Teacher-Guided Discussion and Activity

1. **Recommended Assessment As Learning:** Ask students to reflect back on their exit ticket from the previous lesson. Have students write or draw their reflections: What would happen if they did not have any books to read? What are the potential consequences?
2. Using their understanding of the book, *The Librarian of Basra: A True Story from Iraq*, written by Jeanette Winter (2004), discuss: What is the role of the library in your community? What does a library provide?
3. Imagine if there was a possibility of a heavy rain storm that could flood their school library. In groups of three to four, create an action plan to save the school library. Students should think about how they can rescue all the books from the library quickly and efficiently. How would they rescue the books? What materials would they need? Where would they find these materials? How many people would be needed? Encourage students to map out the floor plan and where specific books are located. Present the plan to the class.

Rotation 2: Creating Questions

Educator's Note: In Lesson 4 as students are raising awareness for the WE Read Together campaign, the teacher-student dialogue can be an opportunity to create a deeper understanding about the importance of libraries and reading great books with the school and local community. The Teacher-Librarian will be coming to the classroom to discuss their role as the school or community's librarian and what the library means to them personally. The librarian will also bring their favorite book to share with students.

1. Ask students to create a list of questions they would like to ask the Teacher-Librarian. For example, questions about their role in the library, why they believe a library is an important space in the community, the purpose of a library and the benefits of having a library. Also, consider asking the librarian what books they read, what they enjoy reading and why they read.

Rotation 3: Independent Reading

Educator's Note: This activity will work best with independent readers, however, if you have struggling readers this activity can also be done in pairs.

Prior to the activity, create a reading display corner with a range of fiction and non-fiction texts. Reading materials should focus on the issue of access to books and the importance of reading. A suggested reading list is provided in the appendix. If you cannot access a range of age appropriate non-fiction books, use articles from sites like Dogo News www.dogonews.com as an alternative.

1. **Recommended Assessment Of Learning:** Have students select a fiction or non-fiction text, and ask them to complete the first part of **Blackline Master 1: Why I Chose This Text** before they start reading. Students should reflect on why they selected that specific text by answering the questions on the worksheet.
2. Ask students to read the whole text and then complete the second part of **Blackline Master 1: Why I Chose This Text** and share it with a partner.

Rotation 4: Persuasive Presentation

- 1. Recommended Assessment Of Learning:** In pairs, using **Blackline Master 2: Pleasure vs. Information**, ask students to complete the venn diagram that reflects the purpose of reading. Consider: Why do we read? What books do we read for pleasure? What texts do we read to gain information?
- 2.** As a group, ask students to design a poster to explain to other members of the class that reading texts such a books, articles, fiction and non-fiction is an important experience, as it is both pleasurable and informative. Use examples of books or articles you have read in class to help students design their poster.

Rotation 5: Reflective Writing

- 1. Recommended Assessment Of Learning:** Ask students to write or draw a short reflection about the role of reading in their life. Use the following questions as prompts:
 - a. Why do you read? What is the purpose of reading?
 - b. How would your day be different if you could not read or didn't have books to read?
 - c. Where can you find books?

Lesson 4:

WE Read Together



Suggested Time:

120 minutes

Learning Goals:

Students will:

- Explore ways to take action and raise awareness about access to books

Educator's Note: This lesson is designed as the summative task and students can reflect on their actions. Students have had the opportunity to understand fiction and non-fiction texts and understand the importance of books and libraries. This lesson gives students the opportunity to action plan with members of their school and local community and raise awareness about the importance of access to quality literature.

Action Plan

1. In groups of three to four, ask students to discuss the following questions: What would happen if you did not have access to books? How would you feel? Why is it important to have access to great books?
2. Ask students to keep in mind all they have learned throughout the course of the lessons about the importance of having access to books. Distribute chart paper and create small groups.

Ask them the following questions:

- What are the goals of the WE Read Together campaign? www.we.org/we-schools/program/campaigns/we-read-together If students are not aware of the campaign, introduce the campaign and goals.
 - How can your participation in the WE Read Together campaign have an impact on your school and local community?
3. As a class, ask students to think about how they can contribute to the WE Read Together campaign in their school and local community, and raise awareness about the importance of access to books. As a class, create a list of actions.

Example Actions:

- Organize a book drive in your school community. Students in your school or local community may not have access to quality reading materials. Collect your favorite stories and books, and share these with people in your school or local community.
- Create a collection of videos of individuals reading their favorite books. Share these videos in your local community or over the internet to give access to individuals who could not physically participate in the book drive.

- Ask your teacher to share their favorite picture book from their childhood. Film the teacher reading the book and answering the following questions:

What is the book about?

Why is reading important?

Why is this your favorite book?

- Invite an author or your local librarian to the school and ask them to talk about their passion for reading and books.
- Raise awareness about equal access to books and educational opportunities through Fundly and First Book's campaign support.firstbook.org/campaign/national-kpmgs-family-for-literacy/c128802. This campaign provides books to low-income neighborhoods to promote lifelong learning.

4. Once the action has been selected by the class, ask students to think about the goal for the action. How will this action raise awareness about the importance of reading and having access to quality books? As a class, using **Blackline Master 3: Action Plan and S.M.A.R.T. Goals**, set goals for the action and discuss how each goal will be measured. How will you know that people are aware of the issue in your school or local community?

Educator's Note: The teacher will create an actionable timeline with roles and responsibilities allocated for each student. Review the timeline and roles, and provide guidance for students to ensure that their set goals are achievable. Get parents and members from the school and local community involved in the action.

Take Action

5. Before interacting on social media, review the classroom and school guidelines on using social media. Ensure that all actions are moderated.
6. Before interacting with members of the wider school and local community, review classroom guidelines on etiquette and respect.
7. Through the assistance of a teacher, parents or helper, ensure that students are actively participating and collecting data throughout the Take Action phase.

Report and Celebrate

8. Have students share their learning process and the actions they took with their peers. Challenge students to think about how they can continue to raise awareness about the importance of reading and having access to books by the actions they take everyday.
9. With teacher assistance, create a poster or collage using photographs, anecdotes and statistics to show your school and local community the impact of the WE Read Together campaign in raising awareness about access to quality literature and the importance of reading. Post the presentation on Twitter or Facebook with the hashtag **#WEreadTogether**.
10. Ask students to discuss how their action raised awareness in their school and local community about the importance of books and libraries, and ensuring that each member of their community has access to quality reading materials.
11. Distribute sticky notes to students. Ask each student to write or draw one way they personally raised awareness about the issue. Stick the note on the front board.

Appendix 1: Classroom Observation Forms

Classroom Observation Form 1

Lesson/Activity:

Appendix 1: Classroom Observation Forms

Classroom Observation Form 2

Lesson/Activity:

Student Names	Learning Outcomes			

Appendix 1: Classroom Observation Forms

Classroom Observation Form 3

Lesson/Activity:

Observations	Questions/Concerns	Next Steps

Appendix 2: Social Justice Booklist - Grades 1 to 6

1. *The Wednesday Surprise*, written by Eve Bunting, illustrated by Donald Carrick, HMH Books for Young Readers, Boston, 1989
2. *Richard Wright and the Library Card*, written by William Miller, illustrated by Gregory Christie, Lee & Low Books Inc., New York, 1997
3. *Fly Away Home* written by Eve Bunting, illustrated by Ronald Himler, HMH Books for Young Readers, Boston, Reissue Edition, 2003
4. *The Librarian of Basra: A True Story from Iraq*, written by Jeanette Winter, HMH Books for Young Readers, Boston, 2004
5. *The Carpet Boy's Gift* written by Pegi Deitz Shea, illustrated by Leane Morin, Tilbury House, Maine, USA, 2003
6. *Beatrice's Goat* written by Page McBrier, illustrated by Lori Lohstoeter, Aladdin, Toronto, Canada, 2004
7. *The Name Jar* written and illustrated by Yangsook Choi, Dragon Fly Books, Canada, 2003
8. *Fly Away Home* written by Eve Bunting, illustrated by Ronald Himler, HMH Books for Young Readers, Boston, Reissue Edition, 2003
9. *Brothers in Hope: The Story of the Lost Boys of Sudan*, by Mary Williams, Lee and Low Books, 2005
10. *For Every Child: The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in Words and Pictures*, by Unicef and Caroline Castle, Random House UK, 2000
11. *Four Feet, Two Sandals*, by Karen Lynn Williams and Khadra Mohammed, Eerdmans Books for Young Readers, 2007
12. *I Have the Right to be a Child*, by Alain Serresor, Groundwood Books, 2012
13. *Josias, Hold the Book*, by Jennifer Elvgren, Boyds Mills Press, 2011
14. *Lila and the Secret of Rain*, by David Conway, Frances Lincoln Children's Books, 2011
15. *Nasreen's Secret School: A True Story from Afghanistan*, Beach Lane Books, 2009
16. *Our Rights: How Kids Are Changing the World*, by Janet Wilson, Second Story Press, 2013
17. *Secret of the Dance*, by Andrea Spalding, Orca Book Publishers, 2009
18. *Shin-Chi's Canoe*, by Nicola Campbell and Kim Lafave, Groundwood Books, 2008
19. *Stepping Stones: A Refugee Family's Journey*, by Margriet Ruurs, Orca Book Publishers, 2016
20. *The Water Princess*, by Susan Verde and Georgie Badiel, G.P. Putnam's Sons Books for Young Readers, 2016

Appendix 2: Social Justice Booklist - Grades 1 to 6

21. *When I Was Eight*, by Christy Jordan-Fenton and Margaret Pokiak-Fenton, Annick Press, 2013
22. *Yasmin's Hammer*, by Ann Malaspina, illustrated by Doug Chayka, Lee & Low Books, 2010
23. *Muktar and the Camels*, by Janet Graber, illustrated by Scott Mack, Henry Holt and Co., 2009
24. *The Good Garden: How One Family Went from Hunger to Having Enough*, by Katie Smith Milway, illustrated by Sylvie Daigneault, Kids Can Press, 2010
25. *A Shelter in Our Car*, by Monica Gunning, Children's Book Press, 2004
26. *One Hen: How One Small Loan Made A Big Difference*, by Katie Smith Milway, illustrated by Eugenie Fernandes, Kids Can Press, 2008
27. *The Can Man*, by Laura E. Williams, illustrated by Craig Orback, Lee & Low Books, 2010
28. *One Green Apple*, by Eve Bunting, illustrated by Ted Lewin, Clarion Books, 2006
29. *My Name is Yoon*, By Helen Recorvits, illustrated by Gabi Swiatkowska, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2003
30. *My Name is Sangoel*, by Karen Lynn Williams and Khadra Mohammad, illustrated by Catherine Stock, Eerdmans Books for Young Readers, 2009
31. *Shannen and the Dream for a School*, by Janet Wilson, Second Story Press, 2011
32. *Sadoko and the Thousand Paper Cranes*, by Eleanor Coerr, illustrated by Ronald Himler, Puffin, 1999
33. *Parvana's Journey*, by Deborah Ellis, Groundwood Books, 2002

Blackline Master 1:

Why I Chose This Text

Pre-Reading Questions

1. What drew me to this text?

2. Is it fiction or non-fiction?

3. Can I guess the story or message of the text before reading it?

Post-Reading Questions

1. What was the story or message in the text? Provide examples from the text.

2. What was the issue addressed in the text?

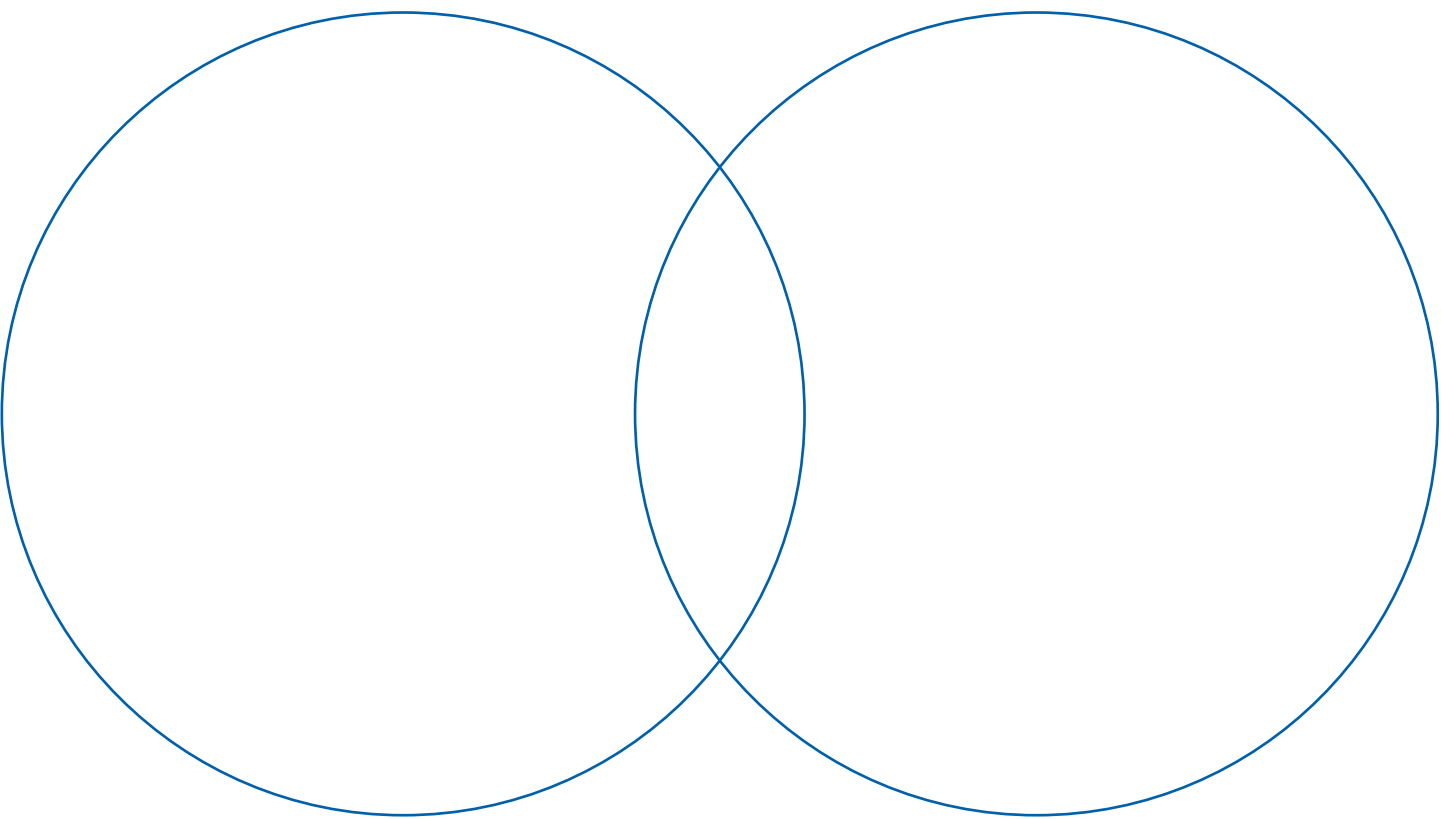
3. Why is this issue important?

Blackline Master 2:

Pleasure vs. Information

Why do we read?

List books that you have read for either pleasure, information or both.



Why can you read books for both pleasure and information?

Blackline Master 3:

Action Plan and S.M.A.R.T. Goals

What am I raising awareness about?

What is my action?

Specific

Measurable

Agreed Upon

Realistic

Time Specific
