

Incorporating Choice into the Secondary ELA Classroom

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Why include choice?

- ✓ Engagement
- ✓ Preparation for life in a democratic society
- ✓ Being a real reader and writer

Choice in reading

Independent Reading, or Silent Sustained Reading

Students can have complete choice and read whatever they want, or they can have choice from a certain genre or subject.

Literature Circles

Students can have choice from a menu of books that they read with group members. The menu can have a very wide variety of choices, but the menu can also surround a certain genre or subject.

Choice in writing

Content

From complete control over the topic to choosing from two alternatives.

Form

When you can't control the content, students can decide to write in a form appropriate to their message or topic.

Style

The final frontier ... any suggestions?

Structures for choice

Tic Tac Toe

Assignment #1	Assignment #2	Assignment #3
Assignment #4	Assignment #5	Assignment #6
Assignment #7	Assignment #8	Assignment #9

For more information see

Differentiated Instruction in the English Classroom: Content, Process, Product, and Assessment
by Alyce Hunter and Barbara King-Shaver

Double Sided Activities

Students have the choice between two activities, each printed on either side of a piece of paper. Good for students and teachers who are not 100% ready for or comfortable with giving choice in assignments.

Free Work Periods

Students are given a menu of choices for what work they can do. For example:

Today's Options:

1. Read your literature circle book
2. Free-writing
3. Work on Mission Statement
4. Conference with me about your reading or writing
5. Catch up on homework you owe me
6. Work with a partner to study words from your spelling log and give each other a mini-quiz

Other ideas I haven't tried yet but want to ...

Learning Centers

Independent Study Projects

Notes:

All men and women are born, live suffer and die; what distinguishes us one from another is our dreams, whether they be dreams about worldly or unworldly things, and what we do to make them come about... We do not choose to be born. We do not choose our parents. We do not choose our historical epoch, the country of our birth, or the immediate circumstances of our upbringing. We do not, most of us, choose to die; nor do we choose the time and conditions of our death. But within this realm of choicelessness, we do choose how we live.

– Joseph Epstein