



# Streamlined Literacy Adventure:

## Mmmm...It's a Text Tasting!

*Learning about ourselves as readers*

*Aventura de alfabetización: El sabor de un libro*

*Explorar y experimentar con nuestros gustos de lectura*

**Age Range:** K + up

**Group Size:** flexible

**Time Range:** 45-90 min



### Adventure Goals:

Our goal for every adventure is for children to have fun with books and reading!

Additional participant goals for this Literacy Adventure:

- Children will begin developing a reading identity.
- Participants will explore various genres and/or formats of text.



### Adventure Outline:

Text Tastings create opportunities for exploring reading preferences. This adventure includes:

1. [Hook: Foods We Like and Don't Like](#) Taste (or discuss) a few different kinds of foods. Discuss what you do and do not like about the taste. Connect this idea to “tasting” a book.
2. [Interactive Read Aloud: Sharing a Book You Love](#) Interactively read aloud a book you truly love.
3. [Activity: Text Tasting](#) Introduce how participants can rotate through book tasting stations.
4. [Wrap-Up](#) Participants share books they found and why they liked them, or not.
5. [Review and Take Home](#) Best take home ever...books!



## Supplies:

- Two or more different tasting foods cut into small bites. Example: strawberries/lemons
- Plates, bowls or napkins to contain the foods for a tasting
- Several bins to contain collections of reading materials (painter's tape may also be used to draw squares on the floor that would "contain" the collections).
- Collections (5-10) of various genres/topics/authors/formats such as graphic novels, books about animals, magazines, picture books, early chapter books, wordless picture books, how-to books, author collections, books in different languages, audiobooks & playaways, science experiments, kids' cookbooks, craft books, books about popular topics such as Lego, Pokemon, gaming, etc. The possibilities are endless! (Non-library providers may want to ask a local librarian for help with this. Librarians love to connect groups with great reads).
- Optional: Music to play during "tastings" or to signal that it is time to rotate between stations.
- Book tasting options for indicating participants' preferences, eg:
  - Large hearts cut out of construction papers
  - Stickers
  - [Book Tasting Form](#)
- Fun, but unnecessary book tasting options for added flair, eg:
  - Checkered placemats
  - Battery operated candles
  - Menus
  - Flowers for centerpieces



## Considerations for Planning

- Which collections might you highlight?
- What signal might you give to designate that it is time to rotate to the next station?
- If the adventure takes place in a library and you plan to take a tour with a larger group, think about creating a sign that indicates, "follow me!". Place this sign on one end of a yard stick and hold it high to signal following you respectfully as you take a tour of various sections.

### ICON KEY



KEY ELEMENT



TIP



KEY STRATEGY

# Adventure Plan

## 1. Hook: Talk About Foods We Like and Don't Like (5 min)

What foods do you like? (Spanish: ¿Qué tipo de comida te gusta?)  
What food do you not like? (¿Qué tipo de comida no te gusta?)



**TIP:** This adventure relies on children having a partner to turn and talk with throughout. If pairing up kids to talk with each other works for the group, consider pairing up participants before you begin to ensure everyone is included. You may want to ask children to share their name and one thing they like to help build their comfort level. If pairing up kids will not work, whole group discussions can work as well. Allow for think time and hand gestures as a means of participating (think thumbs up or down, finger on your ear if you have an idea) as a way to ensure all are engaged.

Share that you will be talking about foods that we like and don't like. Give an example of a food you really like and don't like. Make sure to explain with details why you do or do not like them.

**Food Tasting:** Place a few foods (two very different foods might work best such as lemons and strawberries) out on plates or bowls for display. Explain to the children that you are going to take just a small piece to taste it and see what you think. As a group, taste one food at a time.

Model using language to describe what you are tasting and if it is something you like or not.

**Say:** *Think about the food you tasted. Turn to a partner to share if you did or did not like what you tasted. Explain you thinking.*

Repeat with at least one more food item.

**Option:** If a food tasting is unavailable, you might choose to have a discussion about food. Example below:

**Partner Talk:** Ask children to think about a food they really like. Be sure to think wait time and a signal for students to use, such as thumb on your knee, to indicate when they have their idea. Model the sentence structure they might use to share their idea with their partner:

**Say:** *I like \_\_\_\_\_. The reason I like \_\_\_\_\_ is because \_\_\_\_\_.  
(Spanish: Me gusta \_\_\_\_\_. La razón que me gusta \_\_\_\_\_ es porque \_\_\_\_\_.)*

**Partner Talk:** *Follow the same pattern with a food they do not like.*

**Say:** *I do not like \_\_\_\_\_. The reason I don't like \_\_\_\_\_ is because \_\_\_\_\_. (Spanish: No me gusta \_\_\_\_\_. La razón que no me gusta \_\_\_\_\_ es porque \_\_\_\_\_.)*

**Say:** *Just like when we are tasting foods to see if we like them or not, today, we are going to spend some time exploring different kinds of books to figure out what we like, or maybe even love!*

## 2. Read-Aloud Book You Love & Explain Why (10-15 min)



**TIP:** During an Interactive Read-Aloud, stopping to discuss the cover, title and children's thought on the first few pages helps increase engagement and comprehension. It's important to find a balance of interacting just enough to keep engagement high, but not too much that the flow of the story is ruined.

### Before Reading:

Explain that today you will be reading a book you really love. You will be sharing why you love this book and connecting this to how this might help you find other books you love too.

Consider using Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS) to extend a discussion about the cover or a provocative image inside the book.

Invite discussion using these open-ended VTS questions:

1. What's going on in this picture?  
*¿Qué está pasando en esta imagen?*
2. What do you see that makes you say that?  
*¿Qué ves que te hace decir eso?*
3. What else can you find?  
*¿Qué más puedes encontrar?*

You may also choose to discuss whole group or in partners:

- The title of the book
- Predictions about the story
- Features in the text they will encounter such as dialogue, formatting, labels

### During Reading



**TIP:** Point out specific aspects of the text that you like and explain *why* you like them. Try to connect how this preference might help you find other books that you like.

- Be sure to pose a few [open-ended questions](#) to ensure students are engaging in authentic and meaningful dialogue
- Stop and ask the students about pictures, what do they notice? How are the characters feeling? How can you tell? Continue to encourage the students to use the sentence frame, "I notice that \_\_\_\_\_, because \_\_\_\_\_."

### After Reading

After reading, there are two main goals. First, eliciting the students' reactions to what was read. Second, to circle back to the idea of what we like about the book in order to lead us into the Book Tasting Activity.

## Possible Follow-up Open-Ended Questions

- *I'm really curious to know what you are thinking about this book! What are you thinking about right now?*
- *What do you think about (Insert Character or Person of Interest)?*
- *When I finish a book, I like to think about what I learned. Or, what did this book teach me. Can we think about that for a second? Use your thumb to let me know when you have an idea.*
- *Now, what do you think? Do you like this book? Yes or no? Why or why not?*

**Caregiver Literacy Message** (share if caregivers are present): Asking kids open-ended questions helps them develop critical thinking and communication skills. Open-ended questions are ones that cannot be answered with a simple “yes” or “no” so they encourage participants to use their vocabulary to respond. See: [Talking Points/ Caregiver Messages](#) for more message ideas.



**TIP:** Consider distributing the [open-ended questions handout](#) to caregivers.

(see [Variations and Extended Learning](#) for more ideas)

## Transition: Connecting food tasting to book tasting (5-10 min)

**Say:** *When we try new books, we taste them. Today, we are going to try several new books. We don't have time to read every single one, cover-to-cover. Instead, you will “taste” a book to see if you like it before reading the whole thing.*



**TIP:** The transition here is important because you are modeling for students how to investigate and explore a text in order to find out if it is a good fit. Some school-age children may have learned that a book has to be a certain “reading level” to be a good fit for them. We want to encourage children to choose books that they like or love rather than worry so much about the difficulty level of the text

The idea here is to show participants how they can look over a book to see if they might enjoy it. You will model this for the students briefly while sharing your thinking aloud. You will want to act this out a bit. And, share your thinking aloud as you go! You should model how a student a student might:

- **Look at the Cover** - Hmmm, what might this be about?
- **Read the Title** - Read and wonder - what does this tell me?
- **Flip through** - Turn the pages of the book to get a feel for the pictures and amount of text. Discuss your thinking about this aloud as you go.
- **Try it!** - Read some of the words to see if it is fun and interesting.
- **Make a choice** - If I like or love it, the answer is always a...yes! Not for me, that's ok.



**TIP:** Book browsing may seem intuitive, but children need to learn the specific skills of reviewing text to increase the likelihood that they will make a more informed choice and therefore increase the chance of finding a book they truly enjoy. (See [Research](#) for more.)

**Caregiver Message:** Choice builds engagement - When children are allowed to choose their own books, kids read more and develop lifelong reading habits and strategies.

(see [Variations and Extended Learning](#) for more ideas)

### 3. Activity: Let's taste some books! (30-40 min)

Explain to participants how they will move around the room and spend a few minutes at each station “tasting” the books. Take a moment to go around and tell a little bit about each grouping of books.

1. Go around and discuss the selections you have chosen to “taste” today. Tell the participants a little about each of the groupings. Possibly choose a representative book to discuss the features of this “type” of book.
2. Show them how there is a heart cut out at each station. If they found one or more books that they liked, they can place a sticker on the heart to show that they found something! (See the supplies section at the top)
3. Place the participants in groups. You may choose to keep them in the partnerships that you established at the beginning. Set them up with their first station.
4. Explain to them how they will know when it's time to switch between stations. (Music turns off, lights flash, ringing a bell, etc.)
5. Remind students that at the end, you will be asking them to share with the group one type of book that they liked and why.
6. Begin!



**TIP:** There are several ways that students might indicate their favorite choices. They could use stickies with their names on them, gather books they like as they travel around the room, place books in the “I like” bin as they rotate. Think about your setting and participants to guide this decision.

As participants are rotating through stations, discuss with them what they are liking and not liking and why. Encourage participants to discuss books with each other. You may choose to take some notes to share with the whole group at the end. If you choose to use the [Book Tasting Form](#), younger participants may choose to draw about what they like and why. If there is a small group, you may choose to help younger students write their ideas as well.

## 4. Wrap-up: Books We Love! (5-15 min)

If possible, bring the bins of books to the meeting place. If not, you may want to ask children to go back to a station and choose a book that they think they might like.

Call children back to the meeting place. Remind them to think about a text that they liked (or didn't like) today. If students are feeling shy, providers may choose to share quotes from some of the participants that they listened in on during the tasting.

**Optional Book Tour:** Providers may choose to take the participants on a quick tour to show them where to find the books at your site or library.

(see [Variations and Extended Learning](#) for more ideas)

## 5. Review and Take Home: Best take home ever...books!

Explain to participants that they can borrow any of the books they found (and liked) today!



**Say:** *I hope everybody had fun today learning about text tasting and found a book you want to read. Now, at the end of an adventure, I like to ask these three very important questions! I'll give you a hint: the answer to these questions is always... ¡Que sí! Or Yes!*

1. Are we happy to help you find good books to read? (Yes!)  
*¿Nos gusta ayudarte a encontrar buenos libros para leer? (¡Que sí!)*
2. Do we love to talk about books with you? (Yes!)  
*¿Nos gusta conversar sobre los libros contigo? (¡Que sí!)*
3. Is all reading good reading? (Yes!)  
*¿Toda lectura es buena lectura? (¡Que sí!)*



# Adventure Variations and Extended Learning

Please see [Mmm...It's a Text Tasting: Variations and Extended Learning](#) for a wide variety of research-supported tips for engaging participants of various ages, cultures, languages and abilities.

**Tips include:** Ways to shorten or extend the program; ways to work with pairs and with groups of different sizes, ages, and language mixes; additional activities; discussion ideas and sentence prompts; DIY stations and other passive program ideas; vocabulary extension activities; what to do if participants finish early; ideas for K-3 storytimes; and suggestions for family engagement.

For a more detailed adventure plan, please see [Mmm...It's a Text Tasting: Extended Version](#), which includes a complete script and more supporting information.

## Additional Resources:

Book Tasting Inspiration and Printables:

- [Everything You Need to Host a Book Tasting](#)
- [Inspiration for Book Tasting](#)
- [Book Tasting Variations](#)

# Supporting Research

- **Best Practices in Reading and Writing: Key Finding 5:** Access, choice and time reading and discussing engaging text increase reading achievement.
- **Best Practices in Reading and Writing: Key Finding 6:** Interactive read alouds increase reading engagement, vocabulary, and comprehension.
- **Library and Afterschool Program Models: Key Finding 18:** The Whole Book Approach (WBA) uses Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS) in storytime to support participants of all reading levels in developing verbal literacy through visual literacy.
- **Best Practices in Reading and Writing: Key Finding 18:** To acquire language, children need to be immersed in meaningful and authentic language opportunities.
- **Best Practices in Reading and Writing: Key Finding 3:** In order to foster comprehension, strategies must be taught explicitly and include discussion with engaging text.
- **Best Practices in Reading and Writing: Key Finding 4:** Gradual release of responsibility is the most effective way to foster comprehension.
- **Equity: Key Finding 12:** With a listening strategy, programming is both an opportunity to offer something and an opportunity to learn more about what an audience wants/needs.
- **Best Practices in Reading and Writing: Key Finding 7:** Ensuring children are immersed in language and reading aloud helps develop reading readiness.
- **Best Practices in Reading and Writing: Key Finding 11:** Teaching oracy is instrumental to better reading and writing.
- **Best Practices in Reading and Writing: Key Finding 18:** To acquire language, children need to be immersed in meaningful and authentic language opportunities.
- **Library Program Models: Key Finding 2:** Just-right books- libraries are experts at matching readers with the right book.
- **Library Program Models: Key Finding 3:** Centering books and reading in programming improves children’s attitudes toward reading and books.
- **Library Program Models: Key Finding 9:** Afterschool programs view libraries as important partners, but there is room for growth.

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