

The Contract for Permission to Read Ahead

This strategy can be used at all grade levels K-12.

Many gifted students are also voracious readers. This can be a problem for gifted readers when teachers limit how much reading can be done. An example is when the teacher assigns only one chapter to be read, thus limiting how far students can read. Teachers do this for a variety of reasons: pacing the class, desire to preserve a surprise ending (for the rest of the class), and problems with what to do with the “read ahead” student.

For gifted readers, this “read only the assigned pages” technique is stifling and can be perceived as a punishment for being good readers. This is NOT the message we want to convey. Most teachers feel that it is important for their students to become lifelong readers, and enjoyment of reading plays a large part in this process.

The “Contract for Permission to Read Ahead” solves some of these problems. It tells students that it’s okay to read ahead, but they need to understand how important it is to honor the terms of the contract. They must not “spoil” the selection for their classmates, and they must use class time for learning.

To provide these readers with a meaningful alternative to slowing down their reading, some teachers have other books available in the same genre. These books should be at varying levels of difficulty. Another idea is to have several books by the same author available (for author study). Having some informal assessments and alternate activities or projects available for these readers will eliminate the “what to do with students who read ahead” problem.

Here is an example of the contract:

Contract for Permission to Read Ahead

Check each statement to show that you agree with it. Then sign the contract.

_____ I will not tell anyone anything about the story until everyone in the group has finished reading it.

_____ I will not participate in prediction activities.

_____ I will participate in the alternate assessments/activities.

Student’s Signature _____

Most gifted readers are delighted to sign and honor the contract – as it gives them the green light to continue reading.

Adapted from Susan Winebrenner’s Teaching Gifted Kids in the Regular Classroom. Free Spirit Publishing, c. 2001.