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KEEP 'EM READING

BOOK-SAVVY TECH READERS

Both books and technology devices are valuable resources for students as they journey through their education. Using these resources responsibly and purposefully requires questioning and introspection. Students need opportunities to analyze the multitude of technology devices and the ways they present data and to compare that to information found in books. By exploring technology through books, students can begin to recognize the value in each and use various media forms responsibly.

The lessons in this article will give children a chance to examine the technology in their lives through fiction and nonfiction texts. Books can help students investigate historical forms of technology, such as steam engines, and explore how these early inventions evolved into the technology of today. Books can also instigate discussions to direct student thinking about personal uses of technology and the effects on their lives. Finally, books can prompt students to explore the countless ways that technology might be used in the future.

Picture Books and Technology

Grades K-5

Picture books exploring the way children interact with technology can be used with multiple grade levels. Choose a variety of picture books dealing with different technology issues to share with the class.

- *Press Here* by Hervé Tullet engages readers with interactive yet low-tech page turns.
- *It's a Book* by Lane Smith helps students see the differences between a book and a video game. (Be sure to preview before reading aloud.)
- *Bedtime Is Canceled* by Cece Meng tells about how, owing to the use of media, false information can spread throughout the world.
- *Dot* by Randi Zuckerberg stars a girl who discovers that communication doesn't always necessitate the use of technology.
- *Tea with Grandpa* by Barney Saltzberg shows how technology can connect families and generations.

See www.librarysparks.com for a list of additional picture-book titles.

ONLINE

GRADES
K-6

Read the books aloud to younger classes. For older students, supply a selection of these books for paired reading. Then give them the opportunity to read as many books as time permits and to respond to the theme or topic of the book either orally or in writing.

Engage students in discussions with the following questions:

- *What is good about technology?*
- *What problems does technology cause for the characters? For you?*
- *Why do you like to use technology? When don't you like to use technology?*

Nonfiction and Technology

Tech-Savvy Talk

Grades 2-5

Technology words are widely used in everyday language and classroom instruction. But do students really understand the meanings? Ask the

whole class to generate a list of technology words they have heard. Have small groups write the words on individual cards and sort them into categories, using their own criteria. Discuss the chosen category titles and the reasons each word was placed in each category. Through the conversation encourage students to identify newly learned words.

Did You Know?

Grades 2–3

Display your nonfiction technology books and identify where they are shelved in the library. Have students work in pairs for this activity. Distribute one book to each pair of students. Use this opportunity to review standard nonfiction text elements by asking the pairs to find the table of contents, a picture, a caption, a sidebar, bold words, titles, the index, and so on. Then give students time to browse through the books, stopping to read when they find something interesting. Have student pairs record these interesting tidbits by writing one or more “Did you know ...?” statements on a sentence strip. Post the statements in the hallway so other classes can read them.

Place students into groups to search for nonfiction information on the Internet.

Use the following sites, or choose your own that better coincide with curriculum.

National Geographic Kids: Explore: <http://kids.nationalgeographic.com/explore/>

NASA: www.nasa.gov

After allowing some time for the students to explore the websites, have them write another “Did you know ...?” statement. Encourage students to apply their nonfiction book-reading skills to reading web pages. Conclude by asking groups to make a Venn diagram of the reading skills they need for books and for websites.

Know the Facts: Nonfiction Reading about Technology

Grades 4–5

In collaboration with the classroom teacher, model note-taking skills for students, showing how to identify and gather important information and how to write facts into phrases rather than sentences. Keep this lesson simple, knowing that these skills can be practiced again in subsequent research projects, leading to eventual mastery.

Internet Inventors by Nel Yomtov chronicles the development of the Internet, from its inception in the 1950s, and highlights important people and inventions along the way. If you can get multiple copies of this book, use it for group research by dividing the chapters among groups. Assign each group to research a person important to the

development of the Internet and the part the person played in building the information superhighway. Create a class time line that shows the developments.

If only one copy of the book is available, use it for teacher background information. Display a time line like the one at the end of the book. Assign topics or allow students to choose their own topics from the time line to research online or in other books. Students can report the information they find to the class in the form of a short oral presentation with at least one digital picture.

Follow up either activity by examining which technologies became obsolete over time and why. Students may find it interesting to explore their parents’ or grandparents’ use of technological devices.

The Information Explorer series from Cherry Lake Publishing offers titles on how to create wikis and podcasts. Using these books, have students present their final research projects as wikis or podcasts. There are also teacher materials available on the publisher’s website (www.cherrylakepublishing.com).

If you don’t have access to the Information Explorer series, students can use other books about wikis and podcasts from your shelves or from the bibliography for this article (available at www.librarysparks.com).

ONLINE

Conclude this section by asking “Why have books not become obsolete?”

Fiction

Divide and Conquer

Grades 3–5

Integrate reading, writing, group collaboration, and computer skills to create an abridged version of a book.

Possible Vocabulary Words

Address bar

Blog

Computer chip

E-mail

Home page

Hyperlink

Hypertext

Keyword

Program

Search engine

URL

USB

Virus

Web browser

Web page

Website

Wiki

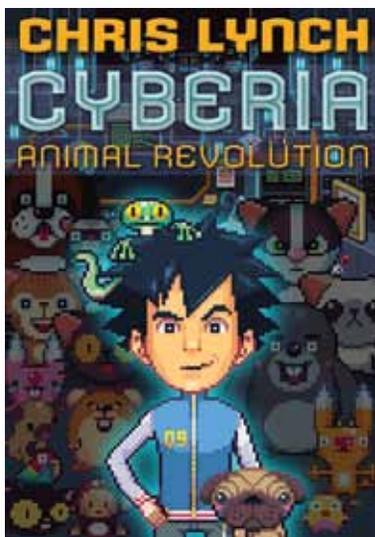
World Wide Web

Select a book with a character living in the nineteenth or early twentieth century (e.g., *Little House in the Big Woods* by Laura Ingalls Wilder, *Soup* by Robert Newton Peck). Episodic books work best. Provide one copy of the book to each group, or separate a paperback copy into chapters and distribute the chapters among the groups. Assign one chapter to each group of students. The students should read the chapter together, write a summary of the chapter, and create illustrations for their summary. Teach a mini-lesson on summary writing if needed.

Note: Consider selecting a book that comes in different versions for varying reading levels to accommodate all learners.

Choose a format for the end product (e.g., PowerPoint presentation, pen and paper) that fits the needs of your group, the time available, and/or the technology skill set of your students.

When all the chapter summaries are completed, compile them into a book. Read the summaries aloud to the class. Discuss the characters and their daily activities. Reconvene the small groups to talk about how the characters' actions would be different if the story took place today. Students



can draw new illustrations depicting the differences or use a graphic map, and then share their insights with the whole class.

Science Fiction and Technology

Grades 3–6

Science fiction is an imagined story that uses scientific or technological advances that might one day be possible. As with all good literature, science fiction novels invite the reader to empathize with characters and to delve into universal themes to find meaning in the real world.

Provide a selection of science fiction titles from your collection. Some possible titles include the following:

- Alien Clones from Outer Space series by Hillary Homzie. 2–3. The silly events in this chapter-book series will reel in even the most reluctant reader. The word play, including use of idioms and words with multiple meanings, offers a great opportunity for fun lessons and fun reading.
- The Cyberia series by Chris Lynch. 3–4. Zane's world is full of technology that knows what he wants and needs before he does. When he receives a device that allows him to talk to animals, his whole perspective changes, and he's forced into a real experience with Nature.
- *Trackers* by Patrick Carman. 4–5. Adam, a whiz kid with computers, works with friends to track a dangerous hacker. The author uses a variety of writing styles (interview, video script, website) to convey the story.

Allow students to select books, or assign books to groups for directed instruction.

After students have read the texts, have them write responses to questions about technology or other literary topics. The bookmarks created by the ReadWriteThink group (<http://tinyurl.com/p2wj2zc>) provide places to write notes as students read.

Some possible questions include the following:

1. *What technological devices were used in the book?*
2. *Did the author make the technology appear believable? How?*
3. *Was any technology mentioned that has been talked about as possible in the present (e.g., flying to Mars, cloning humans)?*
4. *If any of the characters were aliens, how did they use technology differently from the humans?*



Judith Snyder is a seasoned teacher/librarian in Colorado, as well as a professional storyteller and freelance writer. Judith is the author of the *Jump-start Your Library* series, three books featuring hands-on library lessons from *UpstartBooks* (2008), and a picture book, *What Do You See?* (2009), from *Odyssey Books*.