



## Reading Reasons: *Motivational Mini-Lessons for Middle and High School* by Kelly Gallagher

### The Reading Minute

At the beginning of each class period, a piece of interesting reading is shared with the class. This sharing usually takes a minute or less, and there are no follow-up assignments. The shared reading can come from a range of sources, from poetry to nonfiction. The selections may be culled from newspapers, magazines, novels, textbooks—anywhere we, as readers, come across interesting text. All the Reading Minutes share one goal: to demonstrate to our students that there is a world of reading richness out there.

1. For the first month of school, I conduct the Reading Minute. I pick an interesting passage or article to read to the students. Often I pick something from the current book I am reading, or I cut something out of the morning newspaper or current magazine to share (there is always at least one high-interest article in the daily newspaper—if we read the paper from a student’s point of view).
2. After I read my selection, students open their notebooks to the “Reading Minute” section. On a sheet of notebook paper, I have them write the day’s date and a one-sentence summary or thesis statement to remember today’s Reading Minute. (This also helps to make sure they all pay attention during the Reading Minute.) I am strict about one sentence only—this also helps develop their summary skills.
3. In October, students begin leading the Reading Minute. For sign-ups, I print a calendar for the remainder of the school year. Each student in each period must sign up for five days between October and June. On the days they sign up, they are responsible for the Reading Minute. I encourage them to spread out their sign-up days to give them the opportunity to read a range of materials. Thus, each student will conduct five different Reading Minutes between October and June. If any open days remain, I conduct the Reading Minute those days.
4. When a student finishes sharing, the class is required to say, “Thank you.”
5. At the end of the school year, students should have 150-180 summary sentences of all the interesting reading that was shared. This reinforces that reading in itself is a rich and rewarding pursuit. As an end-of-the-year reflective assignment, students can write about the Reading Minutes. Possible topics:
  - Which Reading Minute was your favorite?
  - Which Reading Minute taught you something?
  - Is there value in the Reading Minute assignment?
  - Should I require next year’s students to continue the Reading Minute?

## **Ideas for Sharing During the Reading Minute**

### **What kinds of passages should you share?**

Passages you find beautiful  
Passages you find interesting  
Passages that exhibit great writing  
Passages that anger you  
Passages that trouble you  
Passages that perplex you  
Passages that raise your curiosity  
Passages you find humorous  
Passages that challenge you to think differently

### **Where should you find passages?**

Books (fiction and nonfiction)  
Poetry  
Newspapers  
Magazines  
Speeches  
Essays  
Internet materials  
Maps  
Graphs  
Charts  
Manuals