

Relationship

Business



Reading logs have always been about getting kids to read, and no one can say there's anything wrong with that. The real question is whether teachers are just trying to get kids to read in school, or whether they want them to continue reading when they are adults.

With reading logs, the constant taking of notes is hindering the student's understanding, intermingling the work of the log with the reading. Therefore, a reading log really is making reading itself homework. Do you do math problems with your free time? Then why, to many students, would reading be any different? I am an A-average student. Last year I was required to do reading logs, and most of them I nearly forgot to turn in or rushed after the fact, because when I was reading I wanted to read for myself. I probably had Bs for the first half of the year. Finally, I suggested to my English teacher that instead I would create a series of projects based on what I read.

After two of these, I received 105% for her class. When you are making frequent stops to be sure that you are fulfilling the exact half-hour or writing down "connections", you can't get into the flow of the book or really get the big ideas. In fact, with the regular time frames many teachers impose, students feel almost as if they have to stop when they finish their allotted reading, even if they'd like to keep going. If you aren't going to do reading logs, you need another option. What I would recommend (and what I personally tested) is for students themselves to design projects based on their skill-sets. For example, if they have been reading a long series of books they could do a timeline with medium-length summaries of each book.

Or, they could decide that because they were artistic they would illustrate a scene from each chapter of the book. The key would be the teacher's input in making sure the project was realistic: both manageable and also significant enough to prove that the student had read and understood the book. No student likes a teacher that assigns work and then just walks away. So I really can't see why a teacher would assign reading logs. They make reading into homework, they break a book apart and make big ideas invisible, they encourage students to stop within exact timeframes, and there's a much better solution anyway.

The only obstacle would be if a teacher was unwilling to go to the trouble - and that, I hope, is something no teacher would be guilty of.