

Conference Starters

Begin by asking students simple questions about the characters, setting (time and place), how they like the book so far, a problem that has occurred so far, whether or not the book is similar to anything they have read, watched, or experienced, etc. These questions will work for any books. Not sure what to say to a student to start the reading conversation? Try one of these...

Questions for any readers or if the student is a struggling reader...

- Do you like what you are reading? Why or why not?
- Describe how the main character looks and acts.
- Give an example in the book that made the main character happy, sad, or angry.
- Tell me the story in order, from the beginning to where you are in the story now.
- What do you think will happen at the end of the story based on what you have read?
- What are three words that describe the main character?
- What is happening right now?
- What is the main problem so far in the novel? How can this be resolved?
- What is your favorite part of the story? Why?
- What kinds of people would be interested in this book? People who like to be scared? People who like love stories? People who like action?
- Who is your least/favorite character so far? Why?
- Would you recommend this story to anyone else?

If the student seems to be an advanced reader...

- After reading a couple of chapters, what does the title mean to you?
- Explain the characteristics of a character that reminds you of a real person you know and how they are similar in personality and/or appearance.
- Have you made any personal connections to this book? If so, what are they? If not, why is this different than anything in your own life?
- How has the setting (time and place) changed from the first chapter. Do you think that it will be the same or different throughout the book? Why?
- What is a prediction that you can make after learning about the character.
- What lesson have you learned from the story?
- What needs to be added or taken out of the book to make it more interesting to you?
- Who are the important characters in the story? Why are they important?

Questions to ask the student who doesn't know what to read...

- What do you like to do in your free time? What are your hobbies? What games do you like to play? What sports do you like to watch or play?
- What is your favorite family event or story? What do you like to do with family? What do you like to do with friends?
- What is your favorite subject in school?
- What types of stories do you like when reading assigned reading in Language Arts? What authors have you read before and liked? What is your favorite book? Who wrote it?
- What type of movies do you like? What type of television shows do you like?

Once you have an idea of things the student likes to do, talk about, read, etc. contact the library media specialist for suggestions or sample titles the student may choose from or check the online library catalog yourself for ideas.