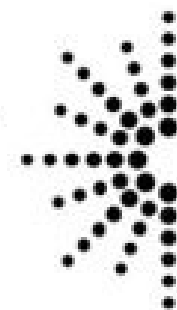


# SHORT READS

**BIG IMPACTS IN  
SMALL PACKAGES**



Kentucky Department for  
Libraries and Archives



INSTITUTE of  
**Museum and Library**  
SERVICES



# LEARNiNG OBJECTiVES

The focus of this lesson is to develop students creative writing skills in order to construct effective narratives about real or imagined experiences using effective language techniques and well-chosen details. The lesson will focus on four key skills. By the end of the lesson, students should be able to:

**01**

Understand the Role  
of Short Reads in  
Supporting Diverse  
Literacy Needs,  
Using Various Types  
of Media

**02**

Learn How to Curate  
and Promote High-  
Interest Short Reads  
in the Library

**03**

Discover  
Programming Ideas  
That Incorporate  
Short Reads

**04**

Explore Outreach  
Collaboration  
Opportunities

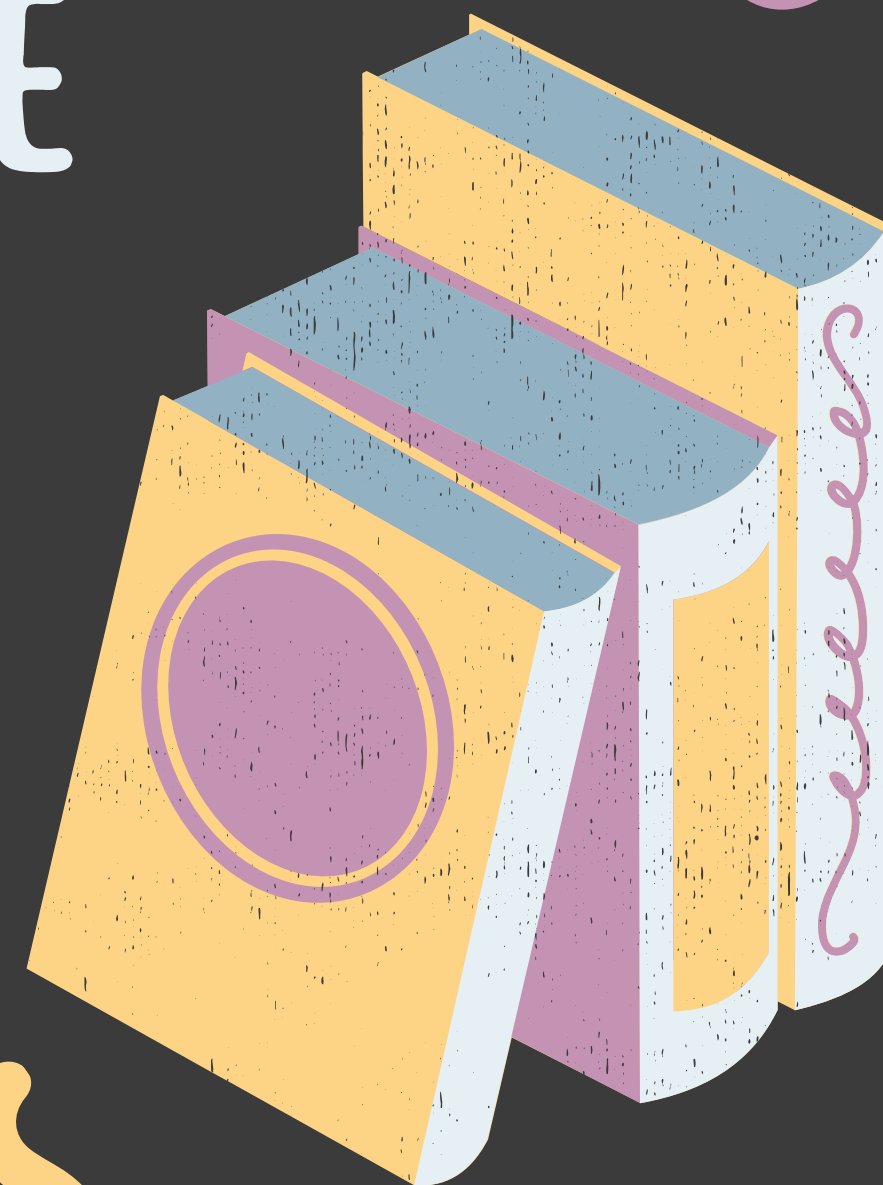
# TO BEGIN

Short reads are:

- Brief, engaging texts—usually under 1,500 words
- Can be fiction or nonfiction
- Often include articles, short stories, poems, excerpts, or infographics
- Support skill-building, confidence, and reading stamina
- Offer accessible, time-efficient content
- Provide meaningful reading experiences for people of all ages and backgrounds



# SHORT READS IN SUPPORTING DIVERSE LITERACY NEEDS





# SHORT READS FOR ADULTS



01

provide accessible content for adults with limited time, reading skills, or attention spans.

02

offer a non-intimidating alternative to full-length books

03

serve as a manageable entry point, helping build confidence, engagement, & motivation

04

support literacy development by strengthening vocabulary & comprehension

05

practical, inclusive tool to encourage lifelong reading habits

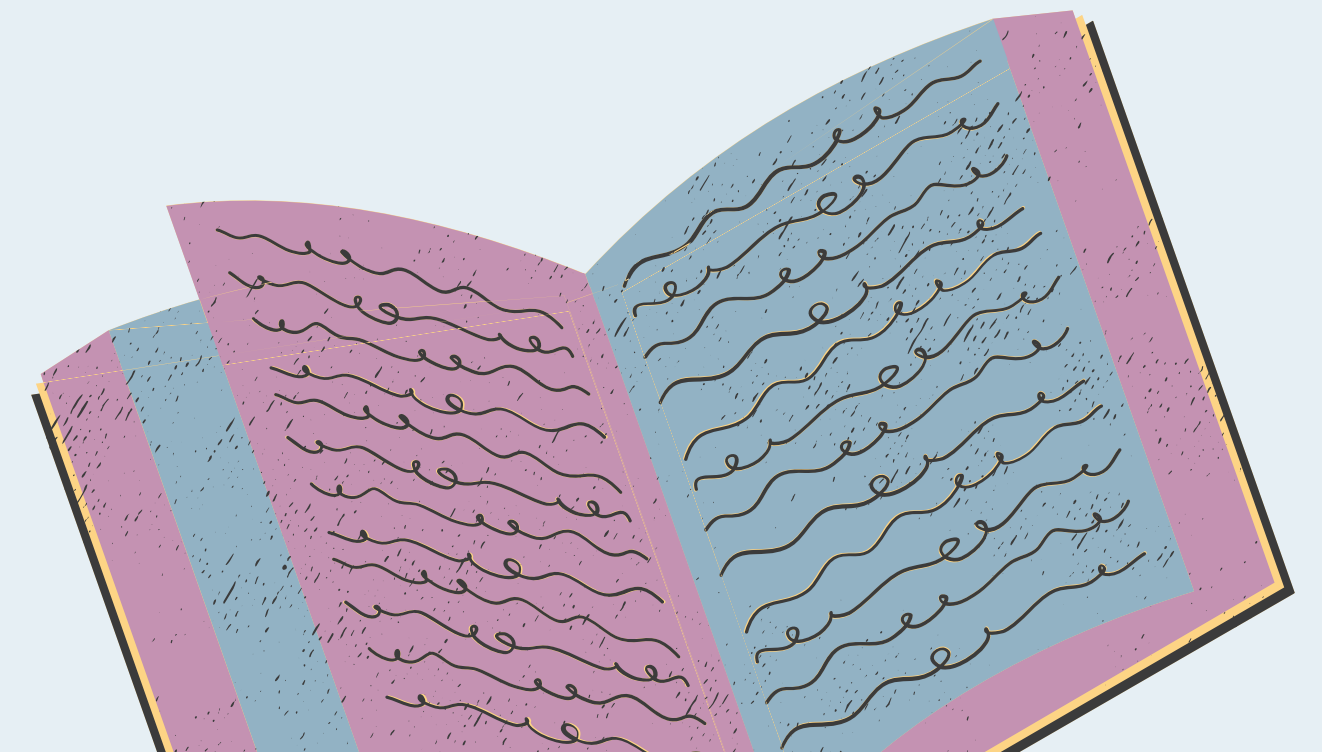
# INTEGRATING SHORT READS FOR ADULTS

The community:

- Workforce development might want articles on safety or professional development.
- People in civic engagement might want short reads that clearly explain voting processes, community resources, or local issues.
- Community-connectors might enjoy reads on cultural engagement.
- Lifelong learners might enjoy short-reads on a little bit of everything!

## Consider:

- Integrating short reads into book clubs, literacy tutoring, English language conversation groups.



# SHORT READS FOR STRUGGLING ADULTS AND NEW ADULT READERS

## Curating the Collection

- Choose the right material. Be sure to include adult appropriate themes.
- Ensure variety. Include fiction and non-fiction.
- Keep the physical design in mind to avoid looking different or childish.

## Promoting without Patronizing

- Avoid labels like “low-level,” “easy,” or “remedial.”
- Shelve within the main adult collection.
- Create themed displays that mix hi-lo books with mainstream books.
- Share staff reviews.

## Partnership and Outreach

- Work with adult education and literacy councils.
- Put mini-collections where adults are job-seeking that are career related and include short, popular fiction.

## Staff Training

- Train staff to recommend by interest first, format second.
- Encourage booktalking that emphasizes plot, voice, and mood- not easy reading.
- Ensure staff know the collection well.



# SHORT READS FOR YOUTH



01

minimizes cognitive overload and maximizes a sense of accomplishment

02

allow students to complete a full narrative arc in one sitting

03

makes them ideal for repeated readings—an effective strategy for improving fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension

04

align with how today's digital-native students consume content

05

offers manageable, engaging content

# INTEGRATING SHORT READS FOR YOUTH

At schools:

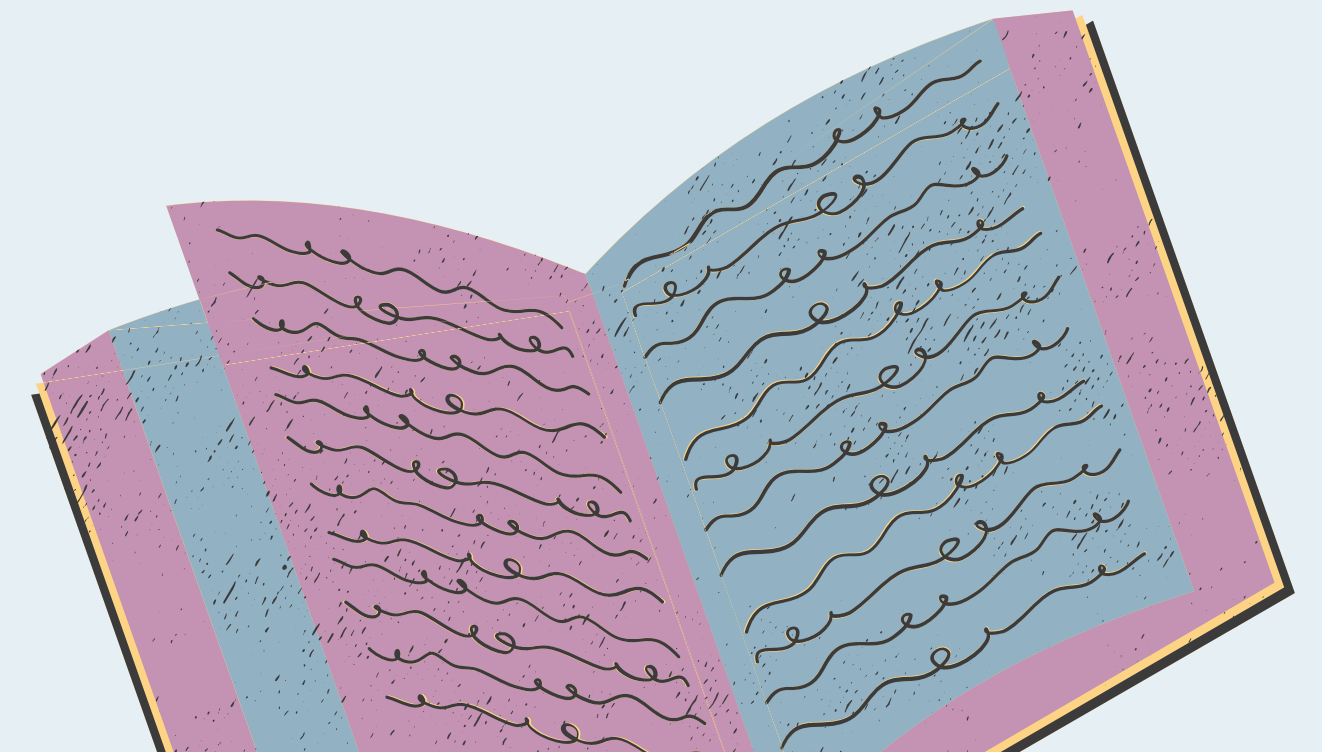
- Integrate short reads during advisory period or independent reading times.
- Collaborate with teachers, school librarians, and support staff (more on that later!)

At the library:

- Create quick-grab displays of rotating selections near circulation desks or the entrance, with titles that can be read in less than a half hour.
- Curate “just-right” collections with high interest, low level short read text.
- Pre-load digital content onto library tablets and keep them in a central location for youth to just grab and read and put back.
- Promote reading challenges with punch-card bookmarks where youth can earn small prizes.

## Consider:

- Creating a lunch-brunch book club with informal drop-ins where homeschool students can discuss a “short read of the day.”





# ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS



01

manageable texts that reduce linguistic load and support focused language development

02

concise content offers clear context

03

many platforms include leveled or bilingual versions of short reads

04

Short nonfiction texts with visuals are especially effective for vocabulary building

05

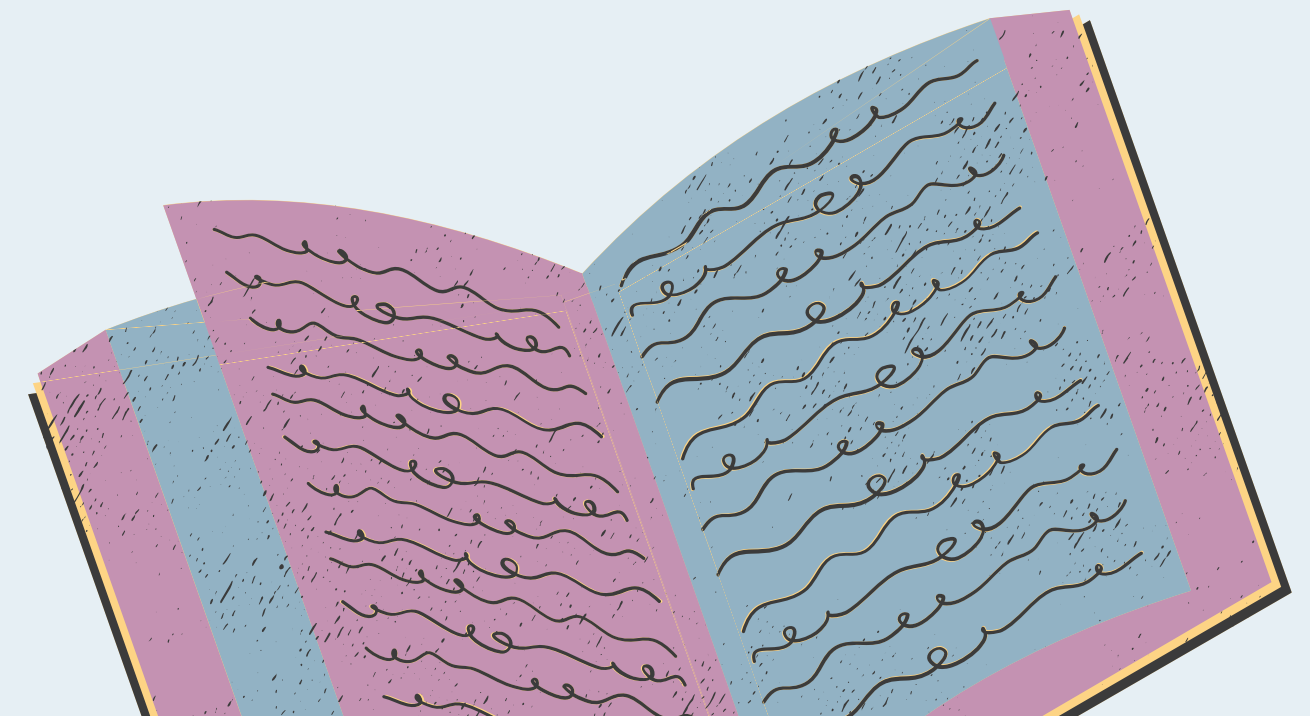
librarians can support ELLs by curating bilingual collections and offering audio-assisted reading experiences

# SHORT READS FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

- Curate physical and digital collections featuring short stories, folktales, and high-interest non-fiction in both English and the other main languages in your community (Spanish, Hindi, etc.).
- Pair short non-fiction texts with real objects (coins with a piece on currency; shells with texts on the ocean).
- Provide audio assisted content either online or as recorded audio with physical media to let ELL students listen and follow along with the text.
- Provide specialized reading groups based on a learner's native language that allows students to read short texts in their native language first and then English.

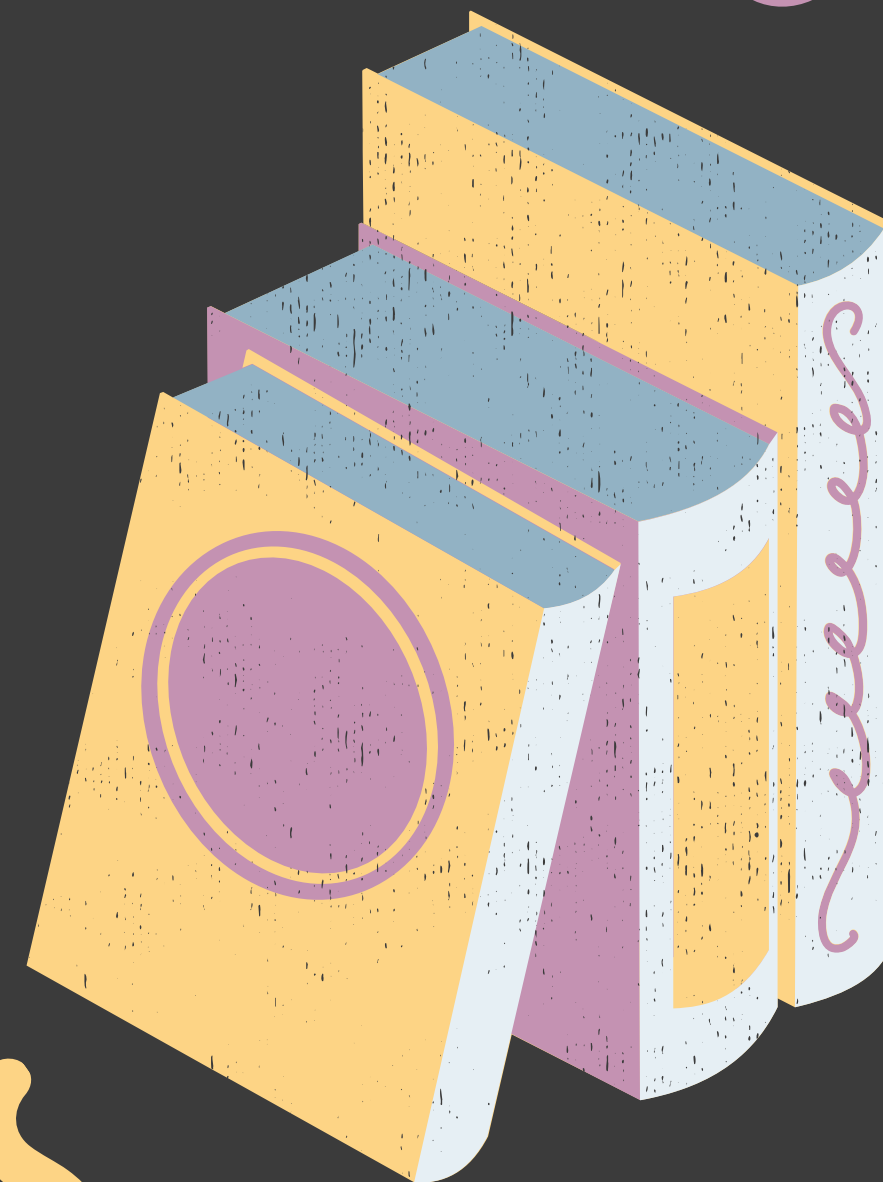
## Consider:

- Creating a dedicated ELL learning center with short reads. Create small, image-based vocabulary cards that tie into that month's featured ELL short-read selections.





# SHORT READ TYPES AND EXAMPLES



# EXAMPLES

## Anthologies

**Description:** Collections of short stories, essays, poems, or themed texts compiled into one volume.

**Use:** Great for sampling diverse voices or topics in a single book.

## Article Databases

**Description:** Curated websites offering short texts with built-in supports like leveled reading, audio, or annotation tools.

**Use:** Excellent for schools, libraries, and adult learning centers.

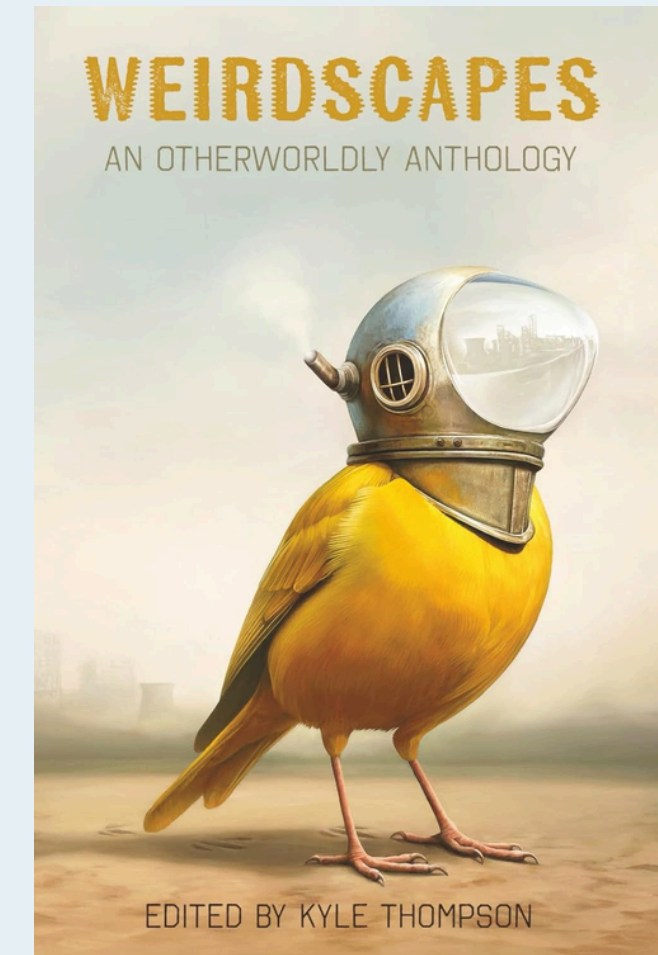
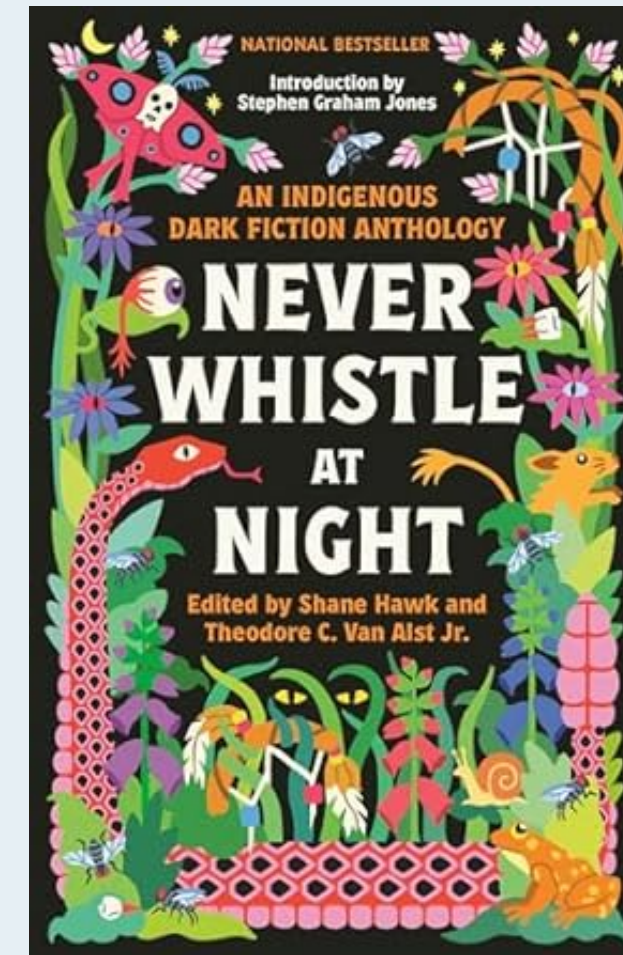
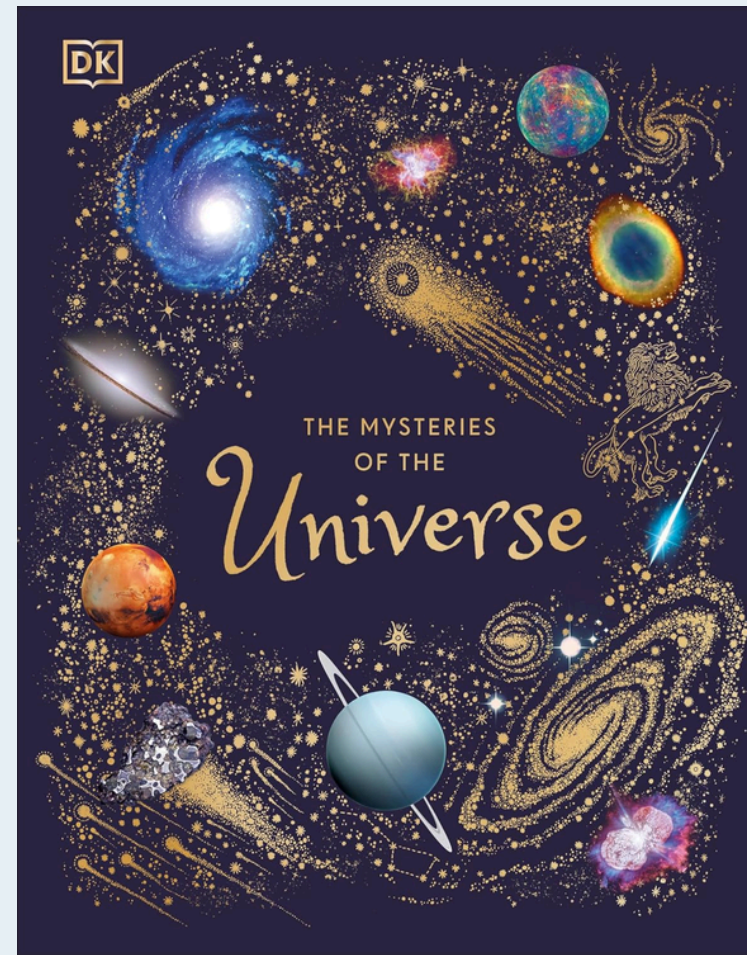
## Flash Fiction

**Description:** Very short stories—typically under 1,000 words—that still offer a complete narrative arc.

**Use:** Great for engaging both youth and adult readers quickly.

# EXAMPLES

Anthologies



Article  
Databases

- READWORKS
- THE NY TIMES “THE LEARNING NETWORK”
- NEWS IN LEVELS





## FOR SALE- BABY SHOES, NEVER WORN. - (ATTRIBUTED TO) ERNEST HEMINGWAY

- Length: 6 words
- Theme: Loss, grief, implication over explanation.
- Tone: Stark, haunting.
- Why it works as flash fiction: Relies entirely on the reader to fill in the emotional narrative.

### Flash Fiction

## "THE DINOSAUR" – AUGUSTO MONTERROSO

### CUANDO DESPERTÓ, EL DINOSAURIO TODAVÍA ESTABA ALLÍ. / WHEN THEY AWOKE, THE DINOSAUR WAS STILL THERE.

- Length: 7 words
- Theme: Surrealism, mystery, the passage of time.
- Tone: Playful yet eerie.
- Why it works as flash fiction: A single sentence opens infinite possible stories.

- "Girl" by Jamaica Kincaid. Length: ~650 words. Shows an entire cultural upbringing in under a page.
- "Sticks" by George Saunders. Length: ~400 words. Compresses decades of a family's life into a handful of vivid images.
- 100wordstory.org: Online archive of literary flash fiction stories of exactly 100 words
- <https://flashfictionmagazine.com>: Daily new flash fiction pieces under 1,000 words

# EXAMPLES

## Graphic Reads

**Description:** Visually driven formats that combine minimal text with strong imagery.

**Use:** Ideal for visual learners, reluctant readers, or ELLs.

## Hi-Lo Books

**Description:** High-interest, low-reading-level books written in short, simple language.

**Use:** Ideal for older struggling readers, ELLs, or adult learners.

## Magazines

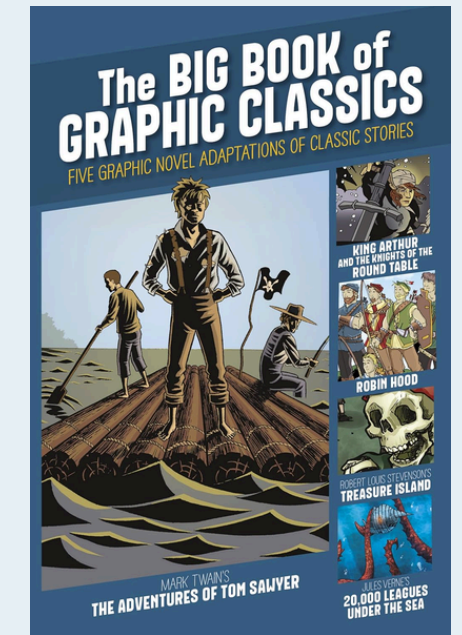
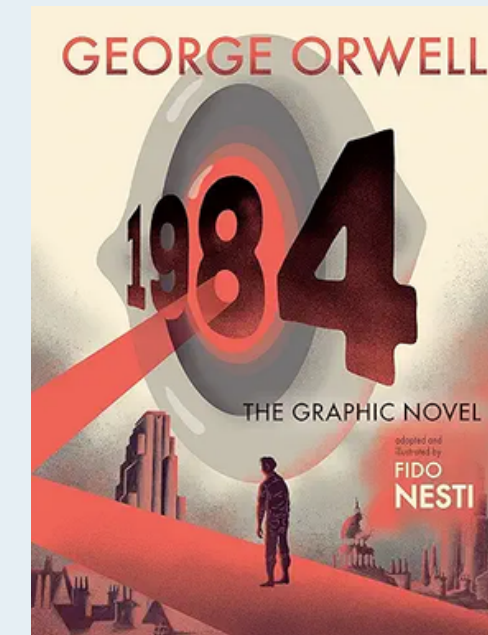
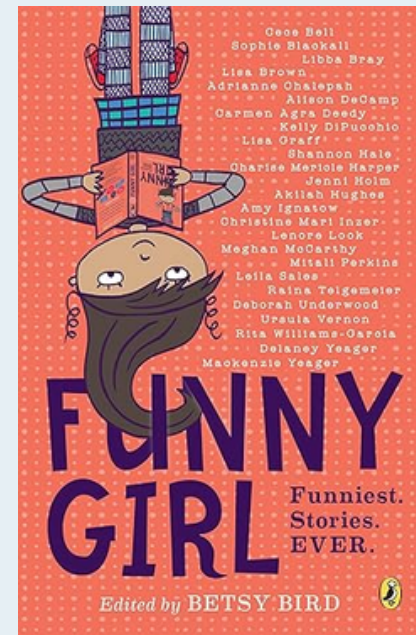
**Description:** Periodicals with a mix of articles, interviews, opinion pieces, short fiction, and visuals.

**Use:** High-interest, current, and varied in reading level.

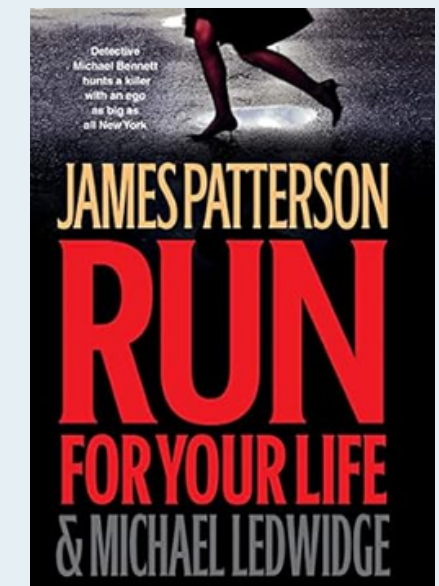
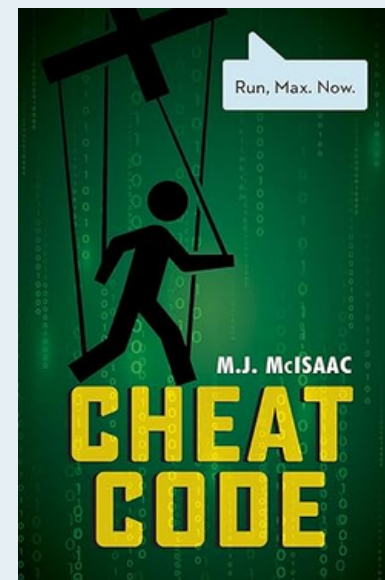


# EXAMPLES

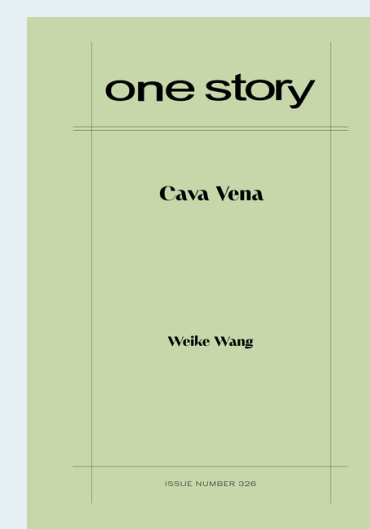
## Graphic Reads



## Hi-Lo Books



## Magazines





# EXAMPLES

## Microlearning Platforms

**Description:** Digital tools or apps that deliver short, focused content in 1–10 minute “bursts.”

**Use:** Perfect for adults, professionals, or learners with limited time.

## Podcasts with Transcripts

**Description:** Audio stories with accompanying transcripts for reading or listening practice.

**Use:** Builds literacy through listening + reading.

## Poetry

**Description:** Literary work given to the expression of feelings and ideas by the use of distinctive style and rhythm.

**Use:** Strong impact in a short amount of time.



# EXAMPLES

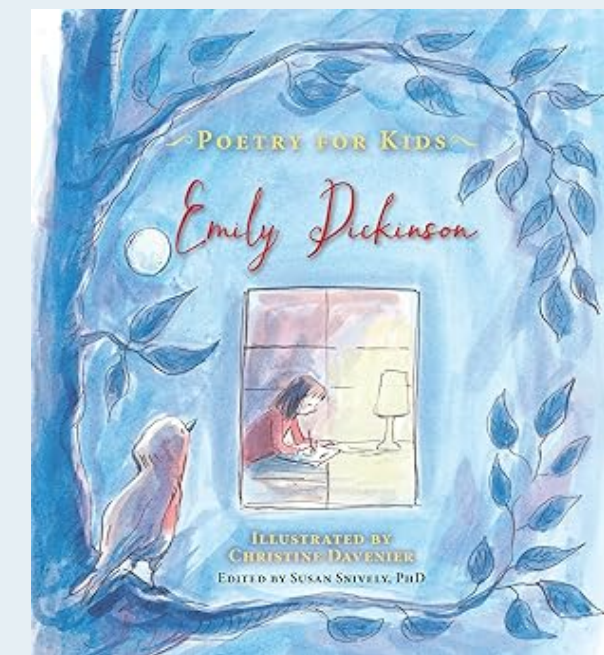
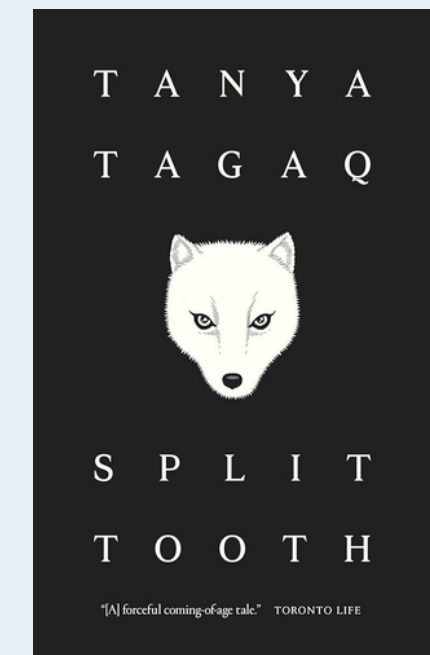
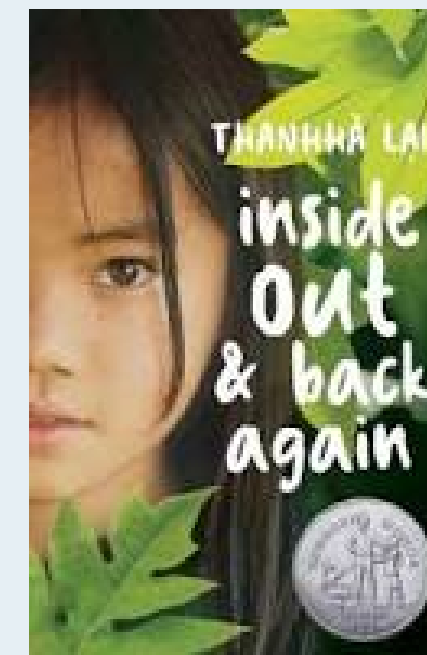
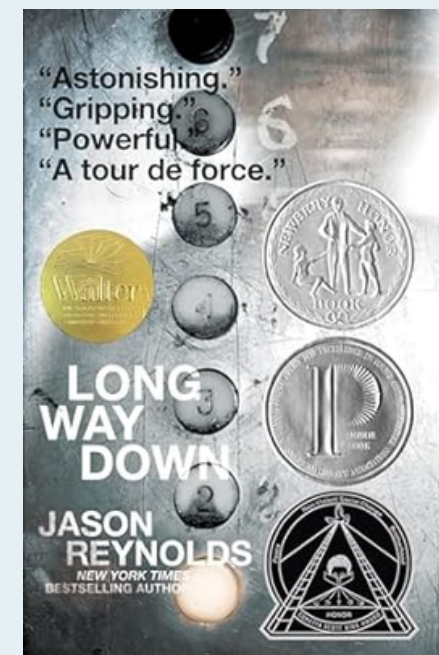
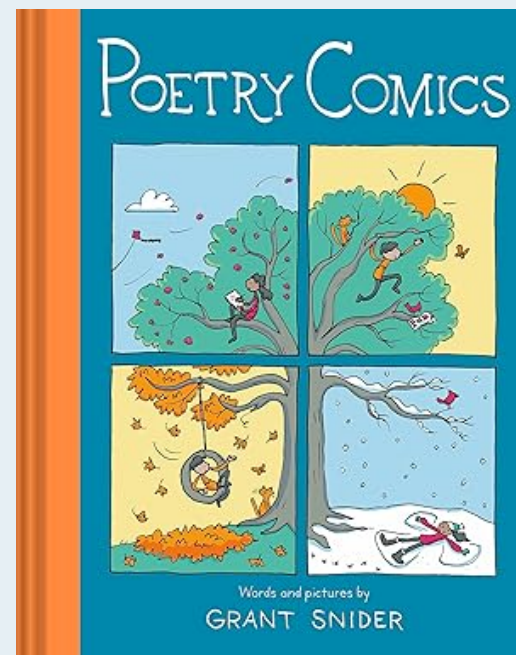
## Microlearning Platforms



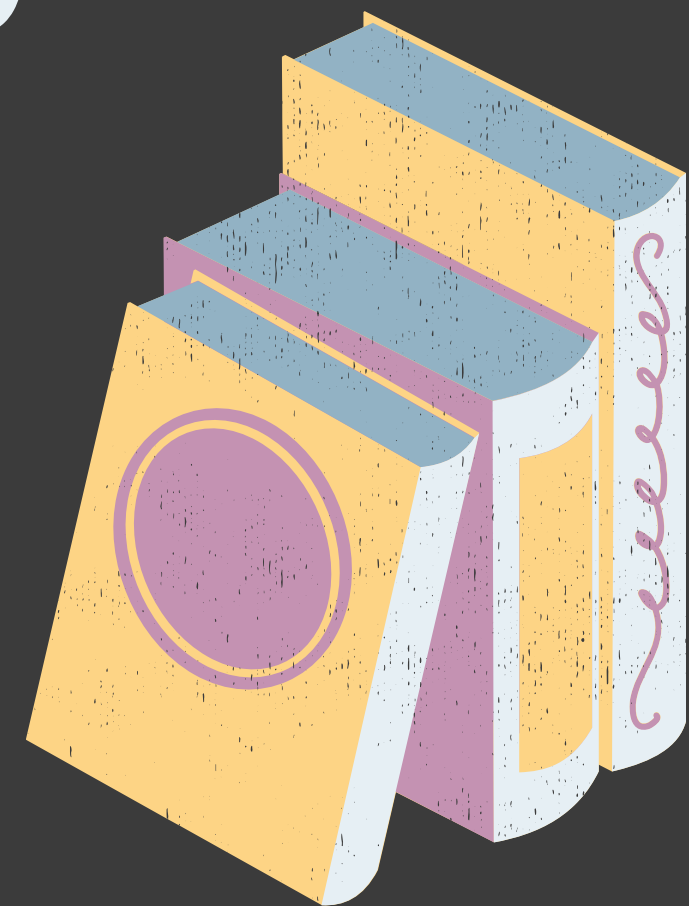
## Podcasts with Transcripts



## Poetry



# CURATING AND PROMOTING HIGH- INTEREST SHORT READS IN THE LIBRARY



# CURATING HIGH-INTEREST SHORT READS

- Know Your Audience: Use circulation data, patron requests, and local interests.
- Mix Formats & Levels: Ensure a blend of print, digital, visual, and audio options.
- Diverse Voices & Topics: Include culturally responsive materials and niche interests.
- Keep It Fresh: Rotate seasonal themes, current events, and trending topics.

**1. IDENTIFY YOUR AUDIENCE**

**2. SELECT YOUR MEDIA/FORMATS**

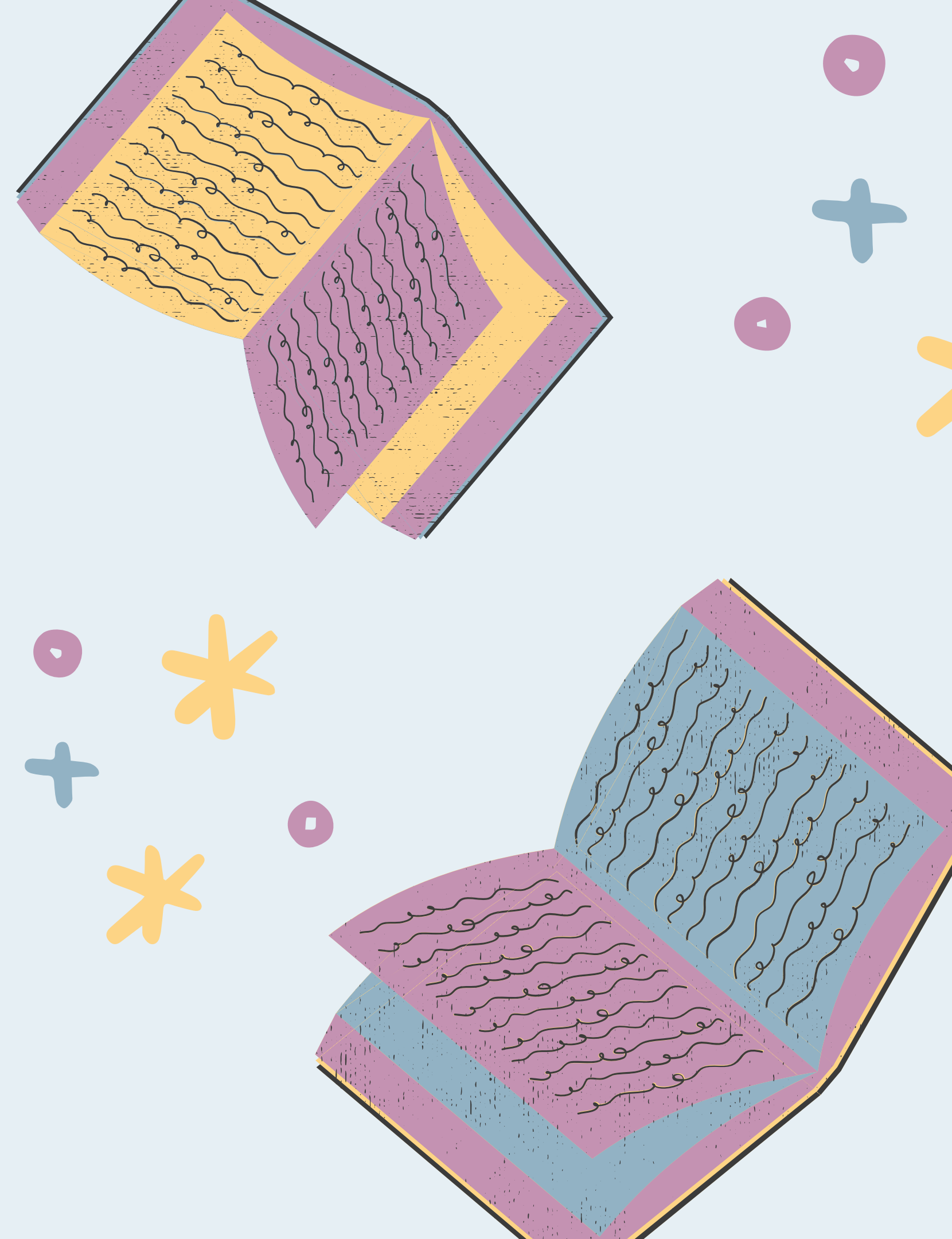
**3. CONTINUALLY UPDATE YOUR COLLECTIONS**



# EVALUATING AND SELECTING QUALITY SHORT READS

Selecting quality short reads ensures patrons stay engaged and broaden their own reading experiences.

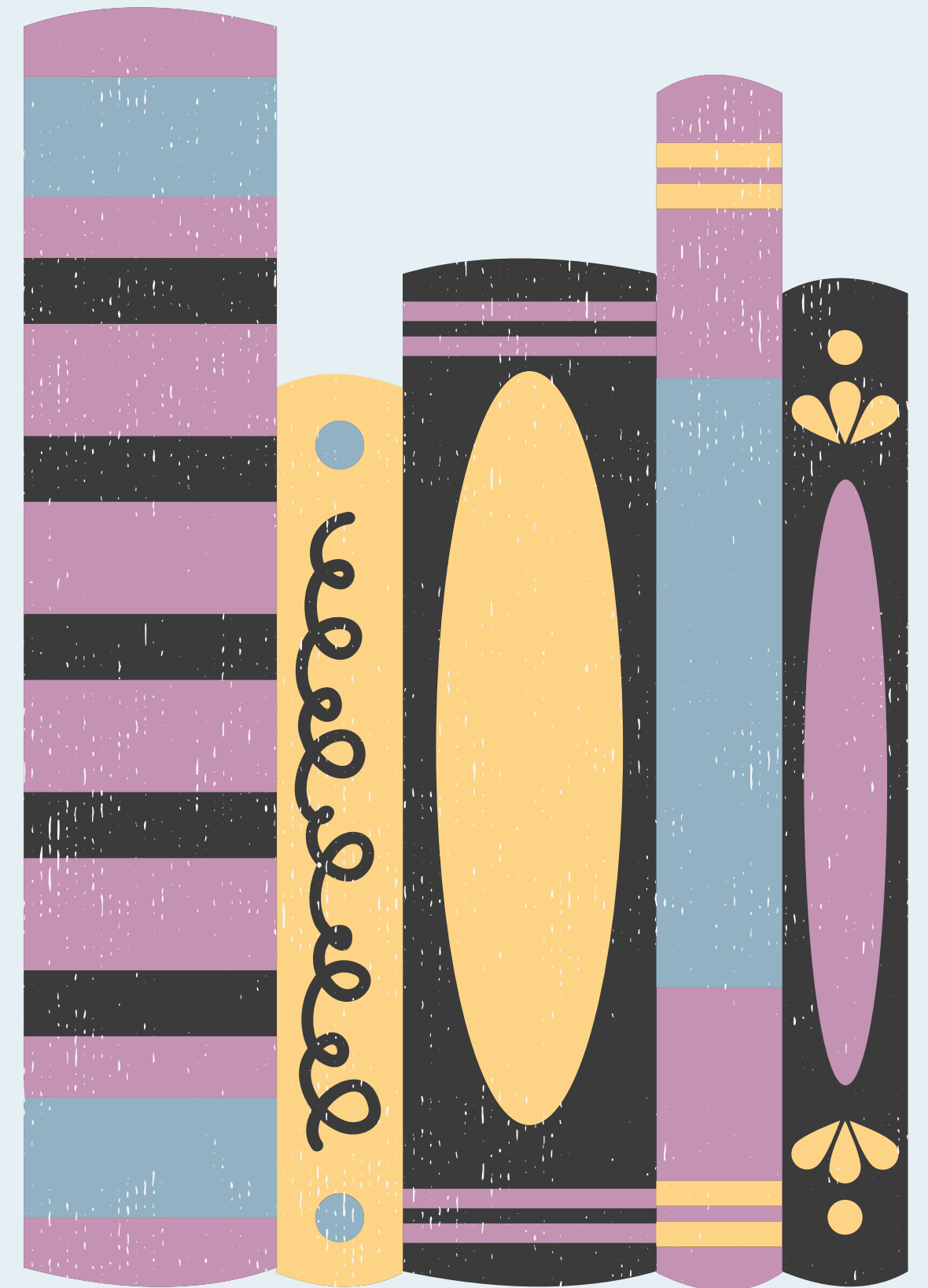
- Use your collection development plan to select diverse, quality, accessible media.
- Consider accuracy and reliability for non-fiction.
- Remember: Accessible does not mean “dumbed down.”
- Reflect the diversity of the community you serve.
- Use trusted review sources like Booklist or Library Journal.
- Consider pilot tests, especially for new media like listening station.



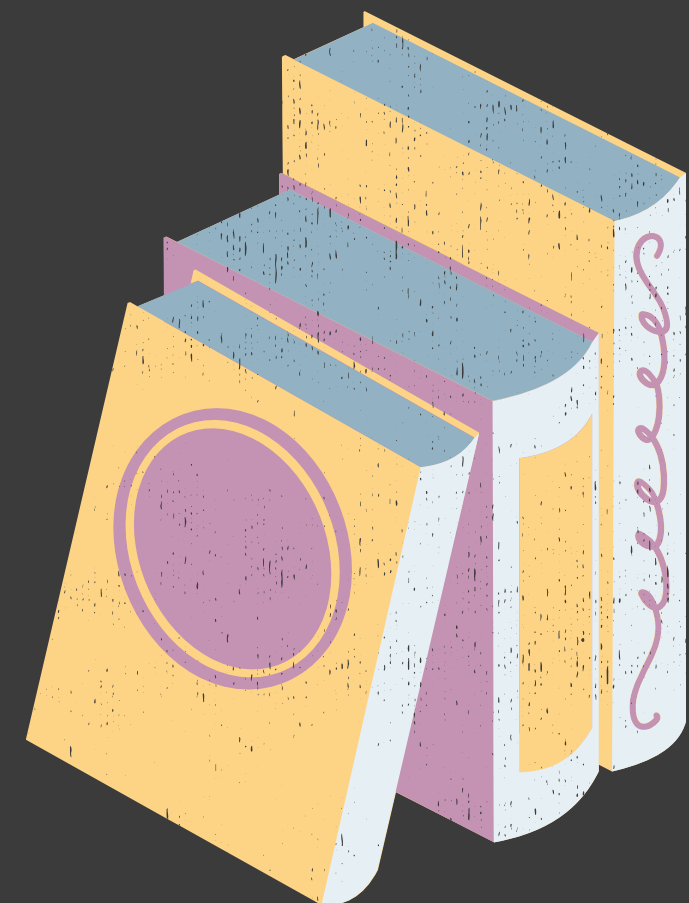
# PATRON DATA AND USAGE ANALYTICS

Get a clear picture of your community:

- Review circulation stats, including digital checkouts and program attendance.
- Consider making purchase decisions from usage analytics.
- Consider a patron needs survey- remember to offer the survey digitally and in physical form.
- Check in with your patrons.



# PROGRAMMING IDEAS THAT INCORPORATE SHORT READS



# STORY SNACKS: KIDS

Frequency: Weekly or monthly

Duration: 20 - 30 minutes

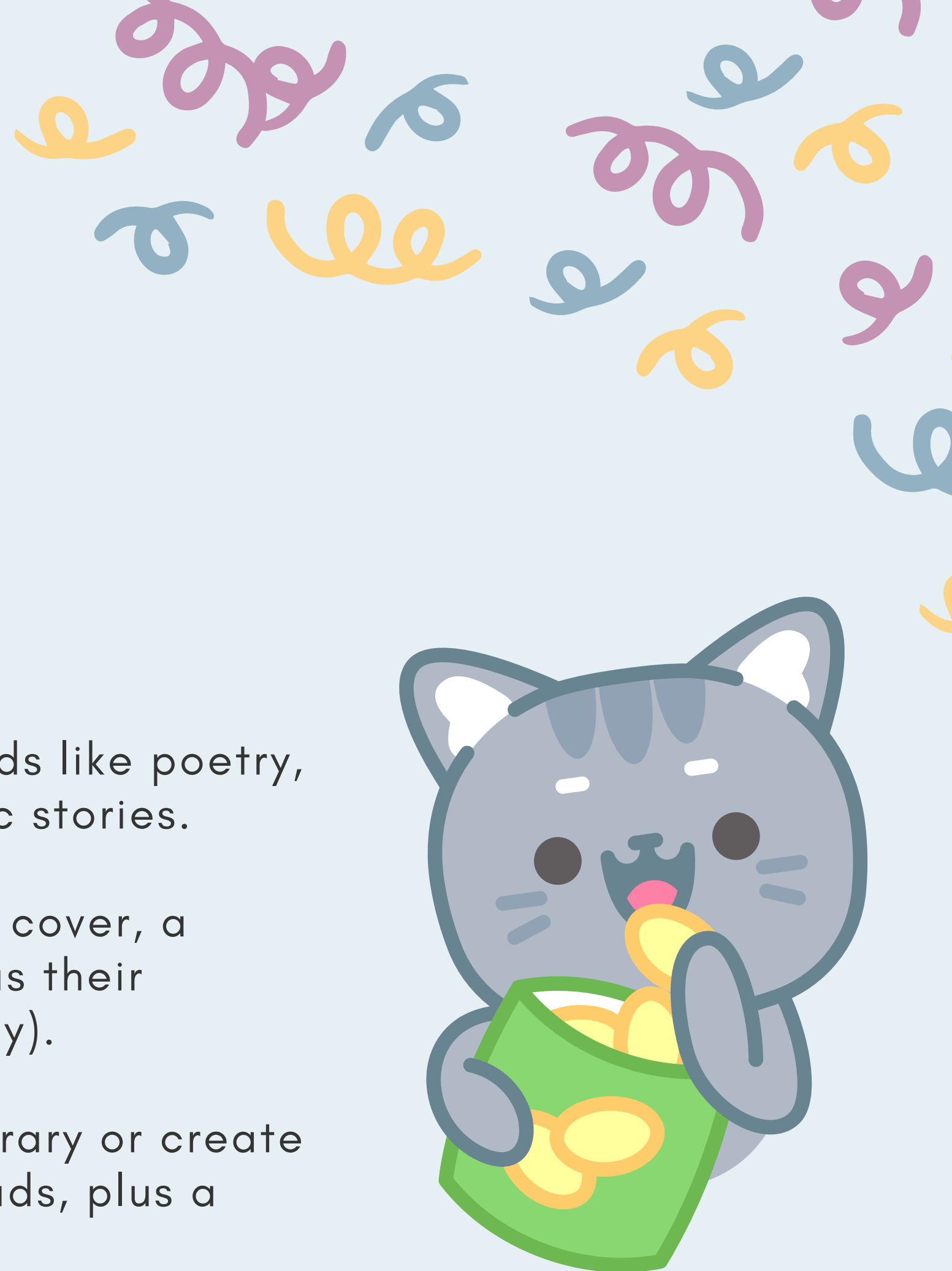
## OUTLINE:

**Introduction** (2-3 Minutes): A silly riddle, a dance, a guessing game.

**Read-Aloud** (5-10 Minutes): Focus on kid-friendly short reads like poetry, fairy tales, myths and fables, or scene excerpts from classic stories.

**Connection** (8 - 10 Minutes): Drawing or craft (a mini book cover, a paper puppet); Drama or movement (act a scene, statues as their favorite character); Story remix (imagine the plot differently).

**Snack** (8-10 Minutes): Have a story themed snack at the library or create snack bags to take home. Provide a list of related short reads, plus a "Story Snacks" bookmark.





# FLASH FICTION FRIDAYS: TEENS

Frequency: Weekly

Duration: 45 – 60 Minutes

## Consider:

- Theme Series like Mini-Mysteries, Sci-Fi Snapshots, Love & Heartbreak, Twist Endings
- Multimedia integration: Pair a flash story with a piece of music or video clip, or use a visual writing prompt.
- Publication: Create a quarterly “Flash Fiction Friday Zine” of your teens work with their permission, and distribute digitally or printed.

## OUTLINE:

**Introduction** (5–10 Minutes): Tell participants the theme of the week (twist endings, magical moments, love in 500 words, etc.). Try an ice breaker.

**Read and Discuss** (10–15 Minutes): Choose 1 – 2 published flash fiction stories that relate to the theme. Read them aloud or in a group. Discuss what worked well, what details made the biggest impact, etc.

**Writing Sprint** (15 minutes, Max): Provide a prompt based on the theme to inspire quick writing.

**Sharing & Feedback** (10 –15 Minutes): Invite participants to share aloud. Keep feedback positive. Emphasize encouragement over critique.

**Wrap-Up** (2–3 Minutes): Share theme-related reading lists of flash fiction. Give a take-home prompt for the next week to keep the energy going.

# SHORT & SWEET BOOK CLUB: ADULTS

Frequency: Weekly

Duration: 25–30 Minutes

## Engagement Ideas:

- Themed Months: Mystery March, Flash Memoir February, Sci-Fi September, etc.
- Participant Picks: Rotate who chooses the next story.
- Quote Wall: Share favorite lines from each session on a bulletin board in the library or on a digital bulletin board (like Mural).
- Read & Write: Have participants read flash fiction one week and write flash fiction for the next week.

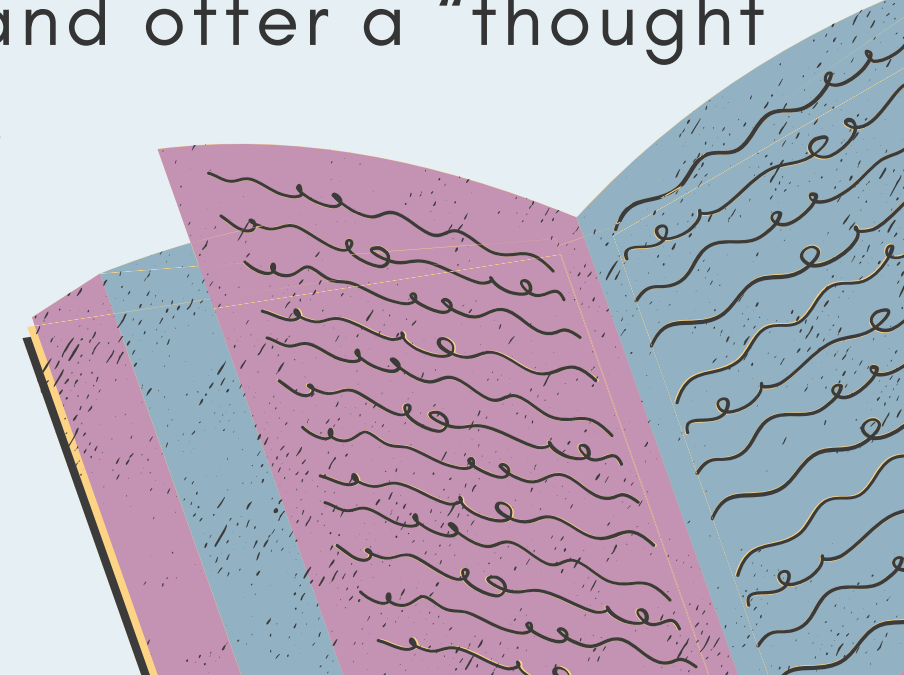
## OUTLINE:

**Introduction** (3 Minutes): Greet participants, introduce the piece, and give information on the author/setting/time period.

**Read and Discuss** (5–8 Minutes): Read shorter works together or offer recaps for longer works.

**Discussion** (8–10 Minutes): Discuss themes, favorite lines, emotional reactions or personal connections, storytelling techniques, or “what would you change?”

**Wrap-Up** (3–5 Minutes): Provide the next weeks selection, share where to find it, and offer a “thought to ponder” related to the reading.



# FLASH FICTION CONTEST: FAMILIES

Frequency: Yearly

Duration: 60-90 Minutes



1

Promotion and Registration: Advertise through library newsletters and local schools.

2

Kickoff Event: Welcome and brief introduction to short reads. Read a short read aloud. Discuss.

3

Contest Launch and Guidelines: Challenge families to write their own flash fiction story (250 words or less).

4

Support and Inspiration: Offer additional optional workshops for families.

5

Submission and Judging: Accept stories via email, online form, or drop-off. Create a judging panel.

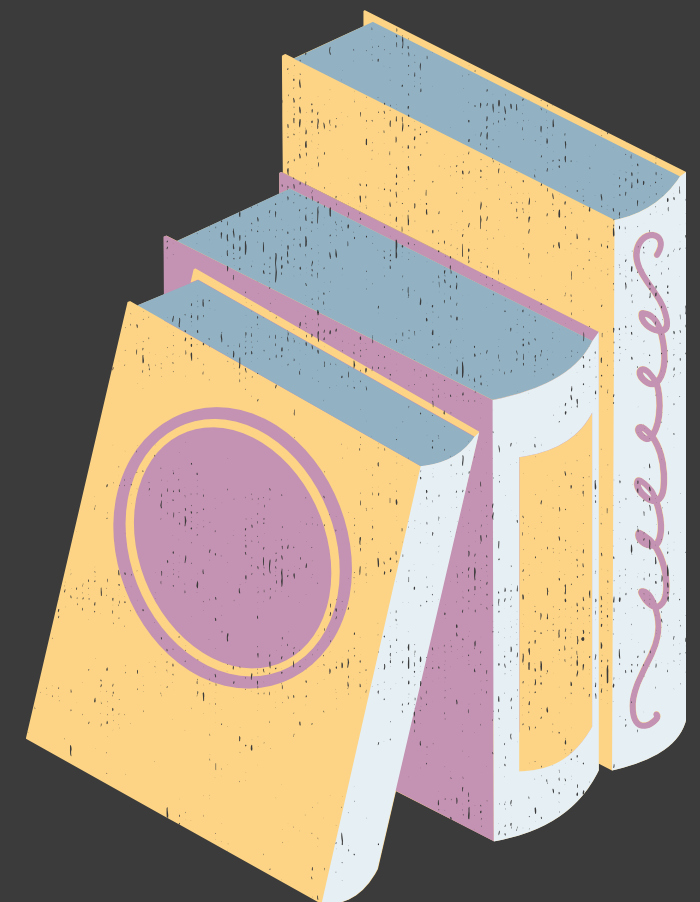
6

Awards and Celebration Event: Host an event to announce winners. Read winning stories. Prizes.

7

Follow-Up: Send thanks you notes to participants. Share highlights on social media / website.

# OUTREACH AND COLLABORATION



# BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS TO EXPAND YOUR COLLECTION

Local Educators

Teen Patrons

Working Adults

Publishers

Bloggers

Digital Platforms

"Influencers"

Newspapers and  
local magazines



# COLLABORATING TO SUPPORT CURRICULUM GOALS



01

Map short reads to curriculum standards. Review your district or state's curriculum ELA, social studies, and science goals.

02

Offer co-teaching opportunities. Run short, focused reading workshops that fit into a class period.

03

Build cross-disciplinary bridges.

04

Create themed text sets around a time period or concept.

05

Assemble reading kits for interventionists. Color code kits to make them easy to grab.

06

Provide teacher training on short reads. Offer quick PD sessions and share digital access options.

# INTEGRATING SHORT READS INTO INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT

- Short reads work really well in targeted literacy settings, like RTI or small-group instruction.
- Because they're brief and focused, these texts fit perfectly into intervention blocks where time and attention are limited.
- Librarians can collaborate with educators to co-teach or provide materials that support specific reading strategies, helping students gain confidence and improve more quickly.

01

Connect with intervention teams.

02

Curate targeted short reads to needed skills.

03

Create ready-to-use packets and materials.

04

Co-teach or model lessons.

05

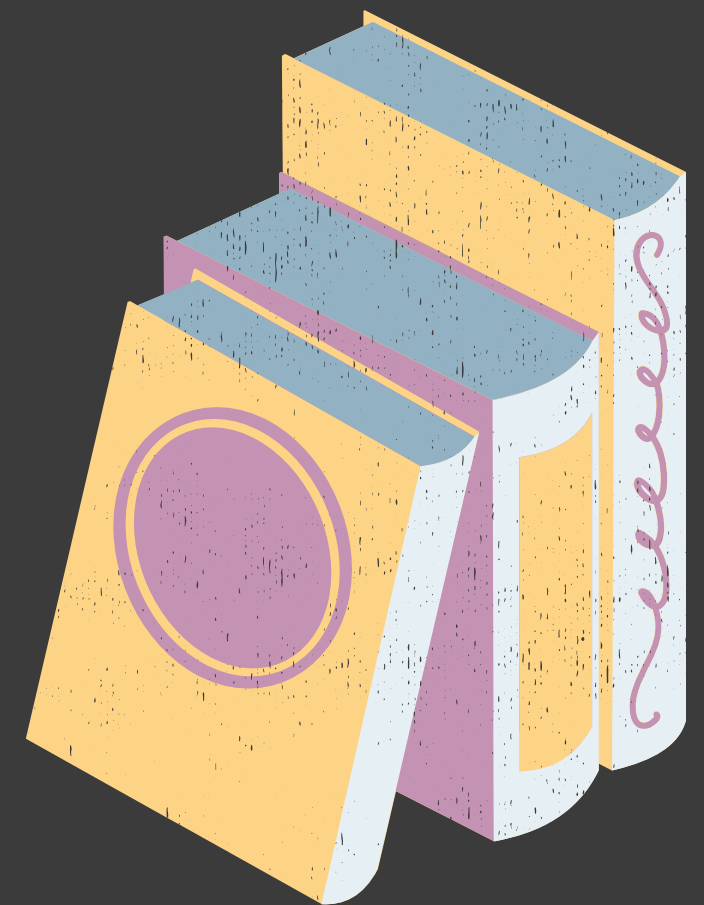
Monitor and adjust as needed to stay relevant and helpful.

06

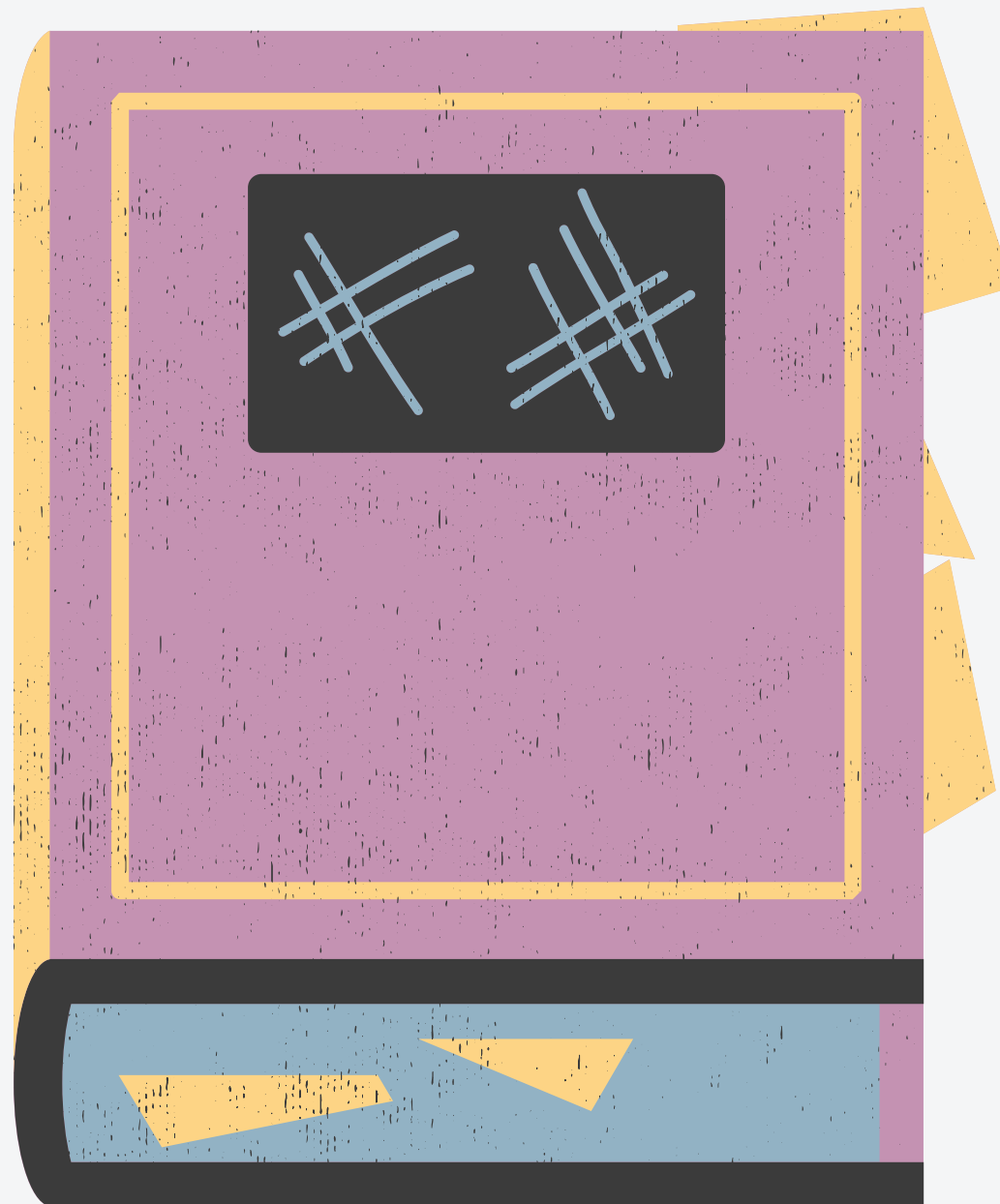
Provide brief training sessions (PD) on how to use short reads effectively in targeted instruction.



# WRAP-UP



# SUMMARY AND WRAP-UP



1. Why Short Reads Matter: Engage reluctant readers, fit busy schedules, and support diverse learning needs.

2. Formats & Tools: Flash fiction, hi-lo books, magazines, graphic texts, microlearning platforms, podcasts.

3. Curation Strategies: Align with curriculum, collaborate with educators, diversify formats, and highlight high-interest topics.

4. Promotion Ideas: Displays, themed reading challenges, community contests, and integrated programming for all ages.

5. Impact: Strengthens literacy skills, fosters collaboration, and positions the library as a key literacy leader.

# CE SHORTS: COMING TO YOUTUBE SOON!

**What:** CE Shorts will be 15 minute bursts of audio-only micro-learning for public librarians, presented by the CE section of the Library Development Branch of KDLA.

**Where:** CE Shorts will be posted on the KDLA Library Development Branch YouTube.

**When:** Two CE Shorts will be published at the end of every month.

**How:** Staff can listen anywhere, anytime that's convenient for them! Staff will need to listen to **both** CE shorts each month to get 0.5 credits of CE. Staff can earn up to six CE credits each year for recertification. Staff should list the CE Shorts on their LAR as "CE Shorts for [Month]."



# THANK YOU!



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