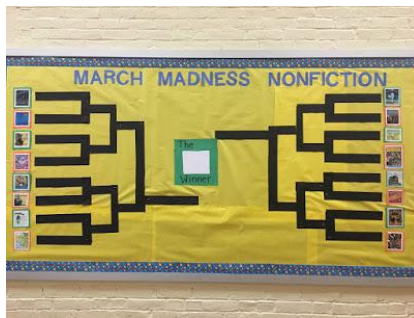


Whole-school Activities

The following activities can foster a school community that honors and celebrates nonfiction reading.

March Madness Nonfiction

In this month-long, school-wide activity inspired by the annual March Madness basketball tournament, students read to nonfiction picture books (some narrative, some expository literature) and select their favorite. Here's how it works.



Week 1: Half the classes read the eight books on the right-hand side of the board, and the other half read the eight on the left. Classes discuss the content and structure of the books as well as their favorite features. Then students vote on pairs of books to determine which titles will move on to The Elite Eight.

Week 2: Each class reads the four winning books on the opposite side of the board. Then students participate in rich classroom discussions and vote to select The Final Four.

Week 3: Classes spend time reviewing the four finalists and then vote for the March Madness Nonfiction Champion.

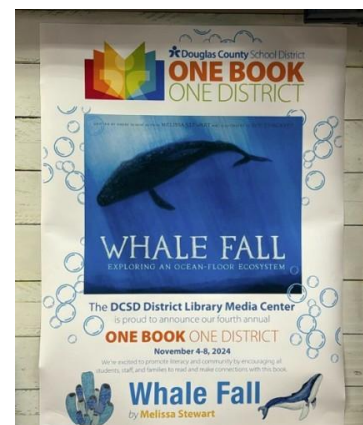
Week 4: Students gather for a whole-school assembly. Following a parade of books that includes one child from each classroom, the winning book is announced. And the crowd goes wild!

“The goal of this event is to inspire curiosity, build background knowledge, and put outstanding nonfiction books in the hands of our students,” says Shelly Moody, principal of Atwood School in Oakland, Maine. “It’s hard to capture in words the energy and excitement about books that March Madness has created in our school community.”

Nonfiction-focused One School, One Book

One School, One Book programs are a terrific way to bring a school community together. Educators typically choose fiction for this activity because it can be challenging to find a nonfiction book that works well across the grade levels.

[This article](#) describes how Douglas County School District in Colorado used my book *Whale Fall: Exploring an Ocean-floor Ecosystem* as a K-12 read for their entire district. It also provides a series of questions that can assist you in selecting the perfect

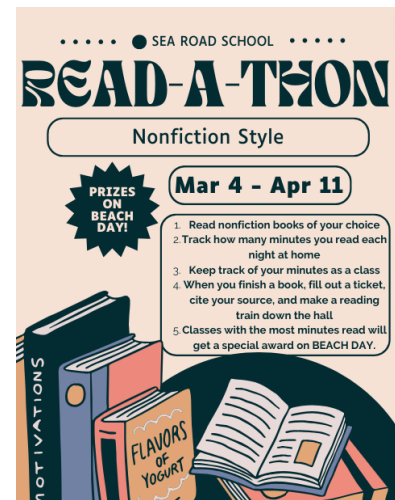


nonfiction book for your school community.

Nonfiction Read-a-thon

When teachers at Sea Road School in Kennebunk, Maine, wanted to boost student awareness of and exposure to informational text, they designed a year-long initiative to focus on nonfiction with a Nonfiction Read-a-thon as a central event. Find out more about the [fun school-wide learning experience](#) to cultivate a love of nonfiction.

“Many students discovered new and exciting creatures, people, fun facts, and parts of our world, says instructional specialist Katie Sweeney. “Our 297 students, spanning grades 3-5, read nearly 100,000 minutes as a school!” Katie also noted that the library’s nonfiction circulation increased dramatically and parents said they appreciated that the school was giving students an opportunity to explore books they wouldn’t typically gravitate toward.



Heritage Timeline

When school librarian Paula Januzzi-Godfrey noticed that her students at Glenn Elementary School in Durham, North Carolina, had trouble putting people, places, and events in historical context, she worked with teachers to develop [an amazing school-wide project](#) that addresses this problem and celebrates the heritage of the school’s students.



“I began to notice teachers and students stopping to read items on the timeline,” says Paula, “and I received feedback about how much students enjoyed watching the display grow. Most importantly to me, I heard and saw that students and teachers were seeing themselves reflected in the photos on the timeline.”