

Discussion-based literature instruction improves reading comprehension, critical thinking, and student engagement — and the research backs it up.

Interactive Classics operationalizes these evidence-based practices directly inside classic literary texts.

WHAT THE RESEARCH SHOWS

Discussion-Based Pedagogy

Sustained, text-focused discussion improves reading comprehension, inference, critical thinking, and academic language development. (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983; Smith, 2016)

Socratic Seminars

Student-led questioning and dialogue deepens interpretation, analysis, and self-regulation. Shown to improve literary analysis and higher-order thinking skills. (Copeland, 2005)

Literature Circles

Peer-led small groups with rotating roles increase comprehension, participation, and willingness to take risks in discussion. (Daniels, 1994; Harvey & Goudvis, 2007)

Online & Web-Based Discussion

Text-tethered online discussion extends reflection time, increases quieter students' participation, and improves engagement with literary texts. (PMC 8397609, 2021)

Conversational Agents in Reading

Dialogic interaction with AI agents promotes story comprehension at levels comparable to human partners when prompts are open-ended and narrative-relevant. (PMC 9299009, 2022)

Accountable Talk Scaffolds

Structured talk stems and academic language frames support comprehension and discourse development, especially for multilingual learners. (Michaels et al., 2008)

HOW INTERACTIVE CLASSICS IMPLEMENTS THE RESEARCH

- **In-text Socratic questioning:** Characters ask open-ended, evidence-based questions — mirroring seminar discourse shown to enhance critical thinking and textual analysis.
- **Literature circle structures:** Students can take on roles (connector, discussion director) within the digital text, increasing comprehension, participation, and desire to read.
- **Accountable talk scaffolds:** Prompts include academic stems ("I agree with ___ because...", "In paragraph 3..."), supporting academic discourse development, especially for multilingual learners.
- **Text-anchored online discussion:** In-platform prompts and responses are tied to specific chapters, extending the benefits of web-based discussion boards to novel study.
- **Knowledge-gated AI:** The AI only knows what the student has read so far — no spoilers, no shortcuts. This replicates the just-in-time scaffolding effect documented in reading comprehension research.
- **Reduced teacher prep load:** Embedded prompts, roles, and question stems let teachers implement discussion-based pedagogy without extensive additional planning — a key barrier identified in implementation research.

"Students end up doing close reading without realizing it — because they're too busy arguing with Macbeth."

Brandon Mayes, Founder — Interactive Classics

SUMMARY FOR SCHOOL LEADERS

- **Increase comprehension and critical thinking** Embeds Socratic questioning and accountable talk directly in the reading experience, delivering documented outcomes from discussion-based instruction without additional teacher prep.
- **Equitable participation for all learners** Text-anchored online discussion gives all students — including quieter learners and ELLs — structured opportunities to participate in rich academic discourse.
- **Evidence-aligned teacher support** The platform scaffolds the practices (seminars, literature circles, accountable talk) that ELA research consistently identifies as high-impact, while reducing the implementation burden on teachers.
- **No IT lift, no textbook replacement** Students read the full, unedited original text. Works on any device, any browser. No download, no setup. Chapter 1 is always free. Class licenses are \$79/year — covering all students, all titles, all year.

CURRENT LIBRARY: Romeo & Juliet | Macbeth | The Great Gatsby | Hamlet | Julius Caesar | Dr Jekyll & Mr Hyde — More in development

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Sources: Pearson & Gallagher (1983); Daniels (1994); Copeland (2005); Michaels et al. (2008); PMC8397609 (2021); PMC9299009 (2022); Harvard GSE Literature Circles (2021)

Interactive Classics is an independent EdTech platform built for secondary ELA classrooms.

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