

# USSR (Uninterrupted, Sustained, Silent Reading)

In this popular free reading strategy, students are given a period of time in each class to read material of their choosing. The teacher spends some time setting up the parameters and helping students select material they want to read. Generally, it is thought that the mere opportunity and time to read is beneficial. It is also expected that the teacher reads along with the students (and does not cop out to mark or plan!).

It may, however, be a good idea to introduce into the experience some sense that in reading each day students are also increasing their awareness of, and practicing some key skills and strategies.

## Use a Reading Log

One might use a reading log, which can be collected at the end of the USSR experience to get a sense of whether the reader has been able to record reading activity that is strategic towards making sense of texts.

The teacher (in any subject classroom) might ask ONE of the questions below to spark some “preparation” for reading. After very brief discussion, students might enter a personalized answer in the log. At the end of the reading period, a brief discussion and log entry could prompt good discussion of reading practices.

## Before you Start

Some sort of survey or questionnaire needed to help you direct students towards reasonable choice of reading material. E.g. if a student is not accustomed to reading at all, then short articles on areas of high interest are important. Or brief stories or novels. Or non-fiction.

Do an “oral review” of some of the short pieces you have on file for reading. Make them high interest pieces on sports or entertainment or other things so that students can take them as an option even if

Time in the library, or a full period of reading to start off might help teacher contact everyone to see

## USSR Agreements

Students and teachers agree that:

- No other work should be done (especially by teachers) during the reading period.
- The reading period should last a set.....minutes.
- Self-selected material should be used.
- It can be material just long enough to fill that reading time (e.g. a newspaper), or longer material (Books) that will be read over the duration of the USSR project.
- It should be primarily text; not pictures or graphics
- A Reading Log should be kept for each text read.

## Reading Materials

Teachers could provide a bank of brief, interesting articles in folders (sports, entertainment, travel, etc.) to select from for students who have forgotten or who are reluctant to bring their own reading material.

## Before Reading

### 1. Set Purpose

Read half a page in the text you have for today: What do you want to find out in the rest of the reading?  
What is your text about? What is one question you expect to get answered?  
What's your reason for reading?

### 2. Activate Prediction / Prior Knowledge

of text structure  
of themes / issues  
of other texts

- What kind of book are you reading?
- What can you expect to find in such a book?
- What do you expect to find out about in today's reading?
- Does this stuff you're reading relate to anything in your life?
- Have you read other material like this?
- Does it remind you of something you've seen or read?

## After reading

- Re-tell briefly what you've read
- Ask some questions prompted by what you've read.
- Reflect on purpose, prediction, or prior knowledge
- Consider relevance to other reading, experience, or knowledge
- Consider some vocabulary found (and solved from context or structure)