

4 Ways to Build Emotional Intelligence Through Literacy in Grades 6–12



Includes examples using *The House on Mango Street*, *Of Mice and Men*, and *Front Desk*



- ✓ Links to empathy, responsible decision-making, and self-expression
- ✓ Builds oral fluency, deeper comprehension, and peer connection.

1. Use Character Response Journals for Self-Awareness

Why it works: Helps students build metacognition and connect text to their emotional lives.

Example Text Connection: *The House on Mango Street* – vignette 'My Name'

Sentence stems:

- When Esperanza says ___, I felt ___ because ___.
- I've also felt this kind of frustration when ___.
- Her experience reminds me that sometimes names carry ___.

2. Integrate Sentence Stems in Literary Analysis that Emphasize Emotional Intelligence

Why it works: Adds emotional nuance to textual evidence and supports higher-order thinking.

Example Text Connection: *Of Mice and Men* – Lennie and George's relationship

Sentence stems:

- George's choice shows both ___ and ___. This tension helps me understand ___.
- Lennie's actions made me think about how we treat people who ___.
- This moment felt complicated because ___.

3. Use Classroom Circles for Text-Based Dialogue

Why it works: Builds classroom culture, student voice, and perspective-taking.

Example prompt:

- After reading 'Four Skinny Trees,' what does Esperanza's relationship with the trees say about resilience? How do we each find our own version of strength?

4. Use First-Person Narration to Explore Identity and Belonging

Why it works: Encourages students to examine voice, perspective, and the emotional layers of lived experience.

Example Text Connection: *Front Desk* by Kelly Yang – opening chapters and motel scenes

Sentence stems:

- Mia's voice feels honest when she ___. I noticed that because ___.
- This part made me think about how people hide parts of themselves to fit in.
- Mia's courage shows up when ___. I've had to be brave like that when ___.