



**Shelly Lutes**

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I have loved reading since I was very little. I was lucky enough to grow up in a household where my mom, who was a stay-at-home-mom, would lose herself in her books. I can remember that my brother and I would try to get her attention, but when she was reading, she tuned us out. The first series I remember loving was the *Little House on the Prairie* series by Laura Ingalls Wilder. It only made sense that I would combine the two things I loved (reading and talking) into a career.

I have been teaching since 2018 and started teaching at my current K-12 school in 2003. I teach high school language arts (as well as other subjects) to grades 10, 11, and 12. Our school library was cut several years ago, and the books were so outdated that many of them were disposed of. As a result, I have made it a priority to create a classroom library that provides students with a variety of books so that they can find what it is that they love to read.

The community my school is located in is French. There are no bookstores at all. The only place for my English students to purchase books for themselves is either at Walmart or at a local pharmacy (the English selection is VERY limited). There is a local library, but again, the English selection is not large and certainly not up to date. Many of our students are bused from over an hour away, so they do not live in close proximity to the local library. Many of the families do not have the means or the inkling to provide their children with books purchased online. My classroom library is the only place for my students to find variety. Even then, some of the selections in my library are over 15 years old.

I love to read. I can normally find a good fit book for most of my students because I teach them for three to four years and normally for more than one hour per day (sometimes up to three hours per day – different classes). The Book Love grant is going to allow me to provide even more variety for my kiddos.



**Shelly Lutes** is entering her twenty-fifth year of teaching English and social studies in New Brunswick, Canada. She has been teaching at Saint Mary's Academy in Edmundston, New Brunswick since 2003. She is an avid reader and works hard at instilling the love of reading in her students. She is very proud of her classroom library as it offers a variety of genres and multitudes of authors. Shelly's classes emphasize independent reading and allowing students to choose what they want to read. It is important to her that the students can see themselves reflected in the books in her classroom and that there are also options for them to lose themselves in worlds/places they could never visit any other way. One of her favourite things to witness as a teacher is when a student is so wrapped up in a book that the reactions are evident for all to see, at least if they are looking. Diversity is also important to Shelly and the Book Love Foundation grant will allow her to provide her students with more relevant choices, graphic novels and books from BIPOC and LGBTQ+ authors.