



Book & Budget: FinLit Book Clubs from Prisons to Classrooms & More



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This session reflects the experiences of the presenter and in no way is meant to represent the position or opinions of the City of Houston, the Mayor, the Houston Public Library, or any other affiliated government entity or organization.



Icebreaker



GREATER HOUSTON
PARTNERSHIP



UP**SKILL**
HOUSTON





Icebreaker

Team RED or Team BLACK?

- Warm-up discussion
- self-awareness
- connection to Red & Black personalities

Materials: Foldable tent-style Red & Black bookmark, pens/pencils



Icebreaker

Team RED or Team BLACK?

Red and Black have two very different ways of thinking—
but both are valuable.

We all have a little of both!

Red

Expressive, emotional, and driven by the heart.

Black

Strategic, logical, and driven by the head.



Icebreaker

Team RED or Team BLACK?

- Pick Your TEAM – fold bookmark in half
- Flip bookmark to the side you identify with most today—Red or Black.
- On the back, write 2–3 sentences that complete this prompt:
"Today, I feel more like Red/Black because..."
- Pair with someone showing the opposite side.
- Discuss your responses and explore how you might benefit one another in a collaborative situation (co-teaching for example)
- Each pair shares an “AHA” moment with the group

Financial Literacy Rates

In the US....

- Financial literacy rates have been hovering around 50% for several years.
- Half of the population lacks the necessary skills to make informed financial decisions.

<https://www.weforum.org/stories/2024/04/financial-literacy-money-education/>

Financial Literacy Rates:

In the US....

- 28% of Americans earning less than \$25,000 per year are financially literate.
- 62% of adult males exhibiting financial literacy compared to 52% of females

<https://moneyzine.com/personal-finance/financial-literacy-statistics/>

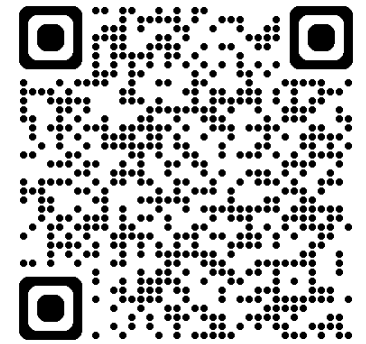
Financial Literacy Rates:

In the US....

- In 2023, lack of financial literacy estimated to cost Americans \$388 billion.
- Individuals with very low levels of financial literacy are also seven times more likely to spend 20 hours or more per week dealing with personal finance-related issues.

<https://moneyzine.com/personal-finance/financial-literacy-statistics/>

Literacy & Numeracy: PIAAC



- US literacy and numeracy rates falling
- Harris County 1:3 struggle with basic literacy skills
- Harris County: 47% struggle with numeracy beyond basic counting and math concept applications

<https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/journal-of-financial-literacy-and-wellbeing/article/importance-of-financial-literacy-and-its-impact-on-financial-wellbeing/A5DBBF9D6F0696E5FD3733241EE28E66>

Financial Literacy:

- Crucial for financial wellbeing of person and community.
- Helps individuals (1) make better financial decisions (2) understand financial risks and (3) use basic financial instruments effectively

<https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/journal-of-financial-literacy-and-wellbeing/article/importance-of-financial-literacy-and-its-impact-on-financial-wellbeing/A5DBBF9D6F0696E5FD3733241EE28E66>

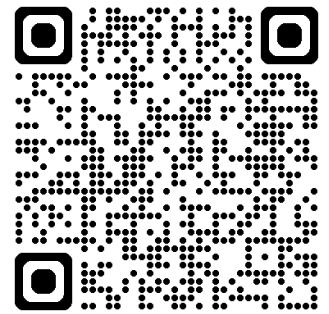
Schools & Adult Literacy Programs

According to the Texas Education Code Section 28.0021, students must receive instruction in personal financial literacy as part of their high school education.

Mathematics Instruction: Financial literacy topics are integrated into mathematics instruction from kindergarten through grade eight.

High School Courses: High school students must take at least one course that includes personal financial literacy instruction.

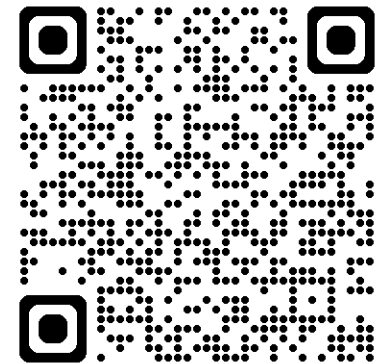
Federal Student Aid: The instruction must cover methods of paying for college and other postsecondary education, including completing the application for federal student aid.



Why Isn't A Class Enough?

*A study by Mandell & Klein found that students who took a personal finance class in high school were **no more financially literate** and did **not demonstrate better financial behavior** than those who didn't.*

Source: *The Impact of Financial Literacy Education on Subsequent Financial Behavior* - EJ859556.pdf



Why Isn't A Class Enough?



Why A FinLit Book Club?

- *A reading, language, and communication experience not a “class”*
- *Conversational not instructional (Character focused)*
- *Motivates exchange of thoughts, experiences, and applications to real life (community building)*
- *Excellent “pre-skilling” activity for more in-depth personal finance coaching / instruction*



Financial Literacy Book Clubs:

- *Starts the conversation*
- *Opens the door to partnering with reputable, qualified financial coaches and educators (ie Houston Money Week members, reputable financial experts in your community)*
- *Supports reading skills development – reading for a purpose, analytical thinking, content applications*

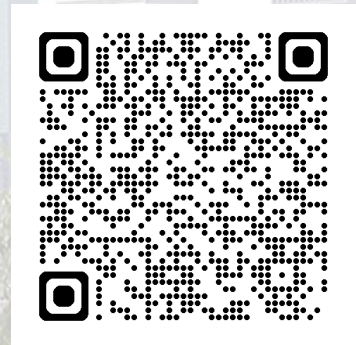
Financial Literacy Book Clubs:

- *Supports communications skills development – explaining and interpreting content, listening and discussion capabilities, presentations and public speaking (ie Neuhaus Ed Center)*
- *Supports critical thinking skills*
- *Encourages family and community engagement, working collaboratively for a common goal*

But Why A FinLit Book Club???

- *Story-based learning was found to be more engaging and memorable than traditional “how-to” guides or textbook-style instruction.*
- *Participants retained concepts like budgeting, saving, and managing financial risk more effectively when they were embedded in relatable narratives.*

“Simple storytelling boosts financial literacy, study finds”
Stanford Report



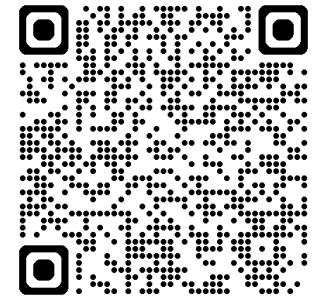
But Why A FinLit Book Club???

Emotional resonance: Stories create empathy and connection, making abstract financial concepts feel relevant.

Cognitive retention: Narrative formats enhance memory and understanding, especially for adult learners.

Behavioral impact: Learners were more likely to apply financial strategies after hearing real-life examples.

“Simple storytelling boosts financial literacy, study finds”
Stanford Report



Case Study: What Can A FinLit Book Club Do?

KNOWN...



What I Learned About Life When My Husband Was Fired!



- Dialogue format – “natural” conversation
- Relatable “real life” issues
- How a family works through conflicts together

The FinLit Book Club / Reading Circle



- 2-3 chapters week
- Brief review of previous reading and discussion
- Break out into small groups
- Groups discuss assigned chapters and share
- *Persons from each group shares with the group how they would apply what they read to their lives*



The Impact



- May have made different choices
- Think before acting
- Personal responsibility
- Teach spouse, child, family
- Make different choices once released
- See possibility for a different future



Book & Budget: Financial Book Clubs from Prisons to Classrooms & More

Would you share or recommend the book with ... ?

	YES	NO	NOT SURE
• Other offenders	40 (95%)	1 (2%)	1 (2%)
• Your children	40 (95%)	2 (5%)	-
• Brothers & sisters	41 (98%)	1 (2%)	-
• Spouse/Significant Other	40 (95%)	1 (2%)	1 (2%)
• Parents	37 (88%)	1 (2%)	4 (10%)
• Friends	40 (95%)	1 (2%)	1 (2%)

Source: Report Red & Black Personal Finance & Life 101 Stringfellow Pilot Prison Program

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ABOUT YOU AFTER COMPLETING THIS PROGRAM

	Yes	No	Not sure
• Do you feel more confident about financial matters	45 (94%)	1 (2%)	2 (4%)
• Do you feel that even if you do not understand something you have the ability to ask questions, get information, and then make smart, conscious decisions?	45 (94%)	1 (2%)	2 (4%)
• Do you understand how your values should affect your financial decisions?	46 (96%)	1 (2%)	1 (2%)
• Do you understand how your values should affect all your decisions?	43 (92%)	3 (6%)	1 (2%)
• Do you think you are now better prepared for the “real world?”	41 (85%)	1 (2%)	6 (13%)
• Do you plan/want to learn more about financial matters?	44 (92%)	2 (4%)	2 (4%)
• Do you plan/want to learn more about other “Life 101” topics?	45 (94%)	-	3 (6%)

Source: Report Red&Black Personal Finance & Life 101 Program Pilot Prison Program—Plane State Jail

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. I'm going to teach my grandchildren about tomorrow, not just about today, worry about tomorrow also. There is a tomorrow. Money wise. Think about it. Don't be like me. I don't want you to be stuck like me, like what I went through. I thought I was doing the right thing, being real cool, being somebody. I was a nobody. I want them to know there's a life out there to live. Don't want them to live my life. I don't want them to know this place. – *Daniel C.*

Source: Report – Red & Black Personal Finance & Life 101 Program, Stringfellow Pilot Prison Program

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CHAPLAIN WATKINS BOOK REVIEW

After reading the book, Chaplain Watkins wrote the following review:

“What I Learned About Life is a phenomenal book. The book is written with humor and deals with real life issues. It is written on a level that anyone will be able to read and understand. It addresses a variety of life issues and gives the reader a chance to do self-examination of their past and present decisions and how these decisions have affected them and everyone around them. It will also help the readers to reflect on their family history and how their past has influenced their life decisions.

It is my opinion this book will have a great impact on the lives of incarcerated men and women as well as their families. This book will give those who are incarcerated an opportunity to have control over areas of their life that no one else can control. They will be able to take ownership of their life and their future by applying the principles learned in this book. They will be able to communicate the information gleaned from this book with their family with the intent to stress the importance of being on one accord in specific areas of their lives once he/she is released from prison. Though they are not with their families physically this will enable them to instill positive principles in their family’s lives via telephone, visitation or letter correspondence. This can change their entire family system and those who are in their sphere of influence.

Source: Report Red & Black Personal Finance & Life 101 Program Stringfellow Pilot Prison Program



The Full Stringfellow Story



Red & Black: The Stringfellow Story

Illiteracy is one of the factors that contribute to the risk of children entering the prison pipeline – Children's Defense Fund

Case Study: What Can A FinLit Book Club Do?

KNOWN...



FinLit & Life.... What did they say?

- Take a minute to reflect on the short video
- What were the common themes?
- What were the challenges?
- What are / were possible solutions?
- How can you use this short video in your finlit book club experience?

FinLit Book Club Partners

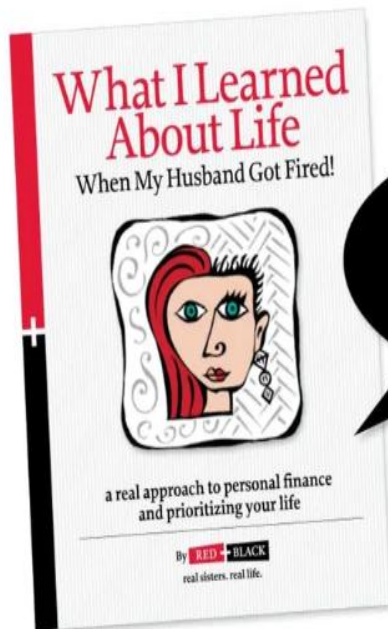


Book Bites

FinLit Fun: Role Play & Book Bites

Stressed Out By Life?

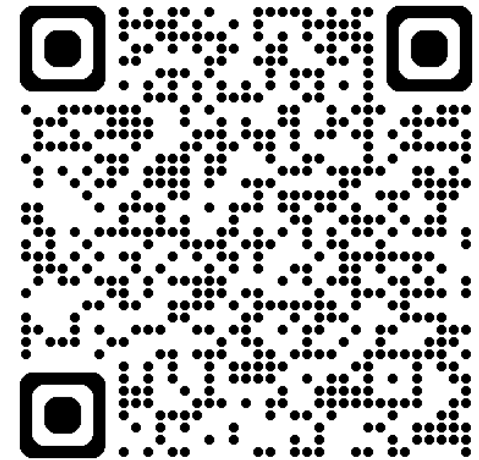
 RED+BLACK | October 20, 2020



**Read An
Excerpt!**

[Stressed Out By Life? - Red and Black](https://www.redandblackbanter.com/stressed-out-by-life-2646141112.html)

<https://www.redandblackbanter.com/stressed-out-by-life-2646141112.html>



Chapter 12: Desserts Spelled Backwards Is Stressed. And Vice Versa.


FIRED Book Bites:

Emotions & Triggers

Objective: Develop self-awareness and soft skills

Activity: Learners reflect on emotional triggers in life

- Identify Red's stressor(s)
- What does Black advise?
- Who are you most like when it comes to emotions and triggers?
- What will you do about it?



We need to tell people that we're real sisters with real stories about real life.

A perfect disclaimer that we are not experts on anything.

“Stressed is Desserts Spelled Backwards”

🔥 Stress Thermometer (for Emotional Awareness – Chapter 4)

Instructions: Circle your level. What's one thing you can do to move down the thermometer?

Level Feeling Example

- 🔴 5 Overwhelmed / Meltdown “I can't think straight!”
- 🟠 4 Anxious / Worried “There's too much to do.”
- 🟡 3 Frustrated / Tense “I can't focus.”
- 🟢 2 Calm / In control “I've got this.”
- 🔵 1 Peaceful / Focused “I feel ready.”

The Adult Educator's Challenge: Subject Matter Integration

- **Business English:** vocabulary and contextualized language of personal finance and daily financial decisions
- **Workforce tie-in:** discuss workplace stress and financial wellness / paycheck management (salary vs hourly)
- **Digital literacy:** explore and create a review of financial apps or tools (Information Literacy / Fact Checking)

The Adult Educator's Challenge: Subject Matter Integration

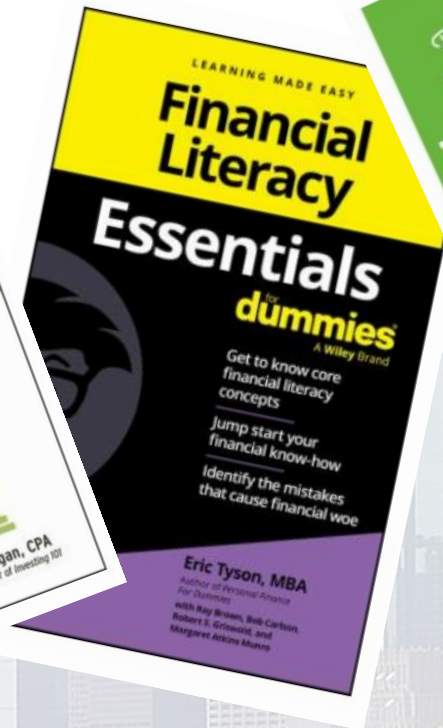
- **Health Literacy:** managing stress and mental wellness during financial challenges, finding solutions
- **GED:** create word problems that include financial percentages and data, explore the history of US economy or the science of health and its financial impact (personally and nationally)

The Adult Educator's Challenge: Subject Matter Integration (Your Turn)

- Integration Prompts
- Integration Worksheet



Books for Your FinLit Book Club: Libraries Are Your Friend



Books for Your FinLit Book Club: Libraries Are Your Friend

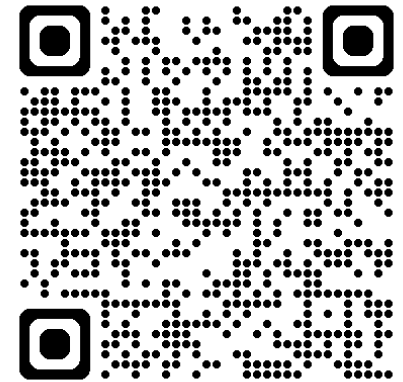
Narrative-Based Personal Finance Book List (Updated)

Title	Author(s)	Narrative Style	Why It Works for FinLit Book Clubs
Rich Dad Poor Dad	Robert T. Kiyosaki	Memoir-style contrast between two father figures	Challenges conventional financial beliefs through personal anecdotes
The Wealthy Barber	David Chilton	Fictional narrative with financial lessons	Uses a small-town setting and relatable characters to teach financial basics
Your Money Narrative	Amy R. Cook, CFP®	Reflective storytelling and financial psychology	Helps readers rewrite their money story through introspection
I Survived Capitalism and All I Got Was This Lousy T-Shirt	Madeline Pendleton	Autobiographical, humorous, anti-capitalist lens	Offers raw, real-life financial lessons with cultural critique
Keeping Finance Personal	Ellyce Fulmore	Identity-centered storytelling	Integrates social justice, emotional wellness, and financial literacy
The Psychology of Money	Morgan Housel	Anecdotal essays and behavioral insights	Explores how emotions and biases shape financial decisions
The Simple Path to Wealth	JL Collins	Letters to his daughter	Combines personal anecdotes with investing advice in a conversational tone
Money Magic	Laurence Kotlikoff	Narrative-driven economic insights	Blends storytelling with economic theory to make financial planning intuitive
What I Learned About Life When My Husband Got Fired	Red & Black	Sisterly banter meets financial awakening	Uses a real-life crisis to explore values, priorities, and financial empowerment with humor and heart source 1

Houston Money Week FinLit “FIRED” Book Club



stellar **BANK**™



10 copies of FIRED (1 lead / 9 members)

1 Book Club Approach Guide

Target: 15 Book Clubs / 150 readers

- **Neuhaus Education Center & Stellar Bank**

Special HMW Partners Offer:

**Texas-wide book club kits available with partnership agreement
(limited availability)**



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