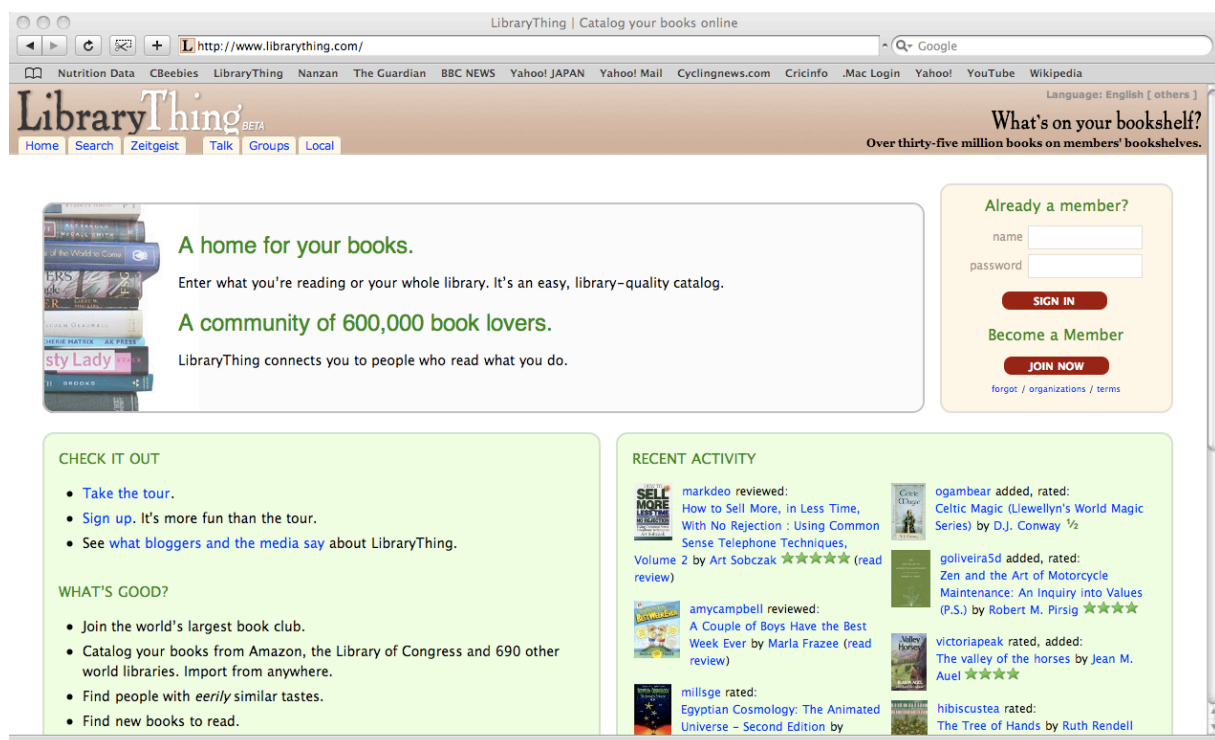# Using Librarything.com to Encourage Extensive Reading: A Guide for Teachers
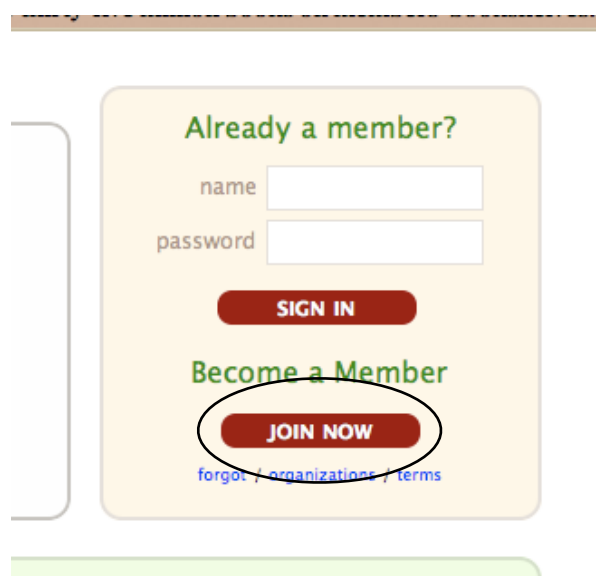

Dale Brown
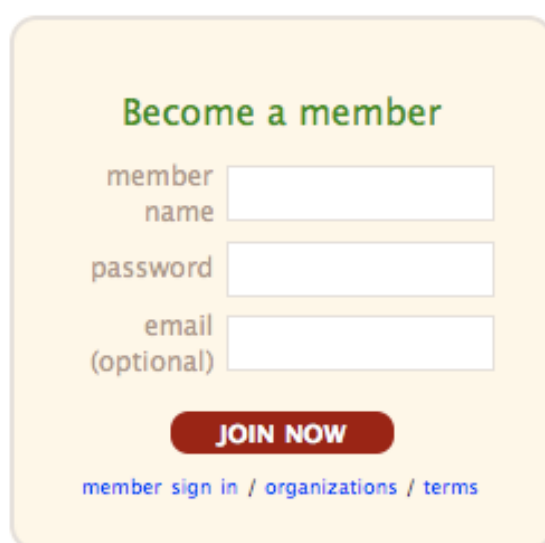**Nanzan University**

April 2009

Introduction

Librarything.com is a website that allows you to catalogue your books. Users create their own page within the site (rather like social networking sites such as Facebook or MySpace) and record their books through this page. Librarything is not designed for language learners, and is a vast site with a vast array of features. This guide shows how I use Librarything with my students, and so introduces only a limited portion of the website.

Creating your page

Creating your own page on Librarything is very simple. From the homepage simply click on Join now in the box on the right-hand side (above). The box will then change to a Become a member box (below). Enter a member name and password, then click Join now.

Things to note

Your member name cannot contain a space. I am not aware of any other password rules.

The member name appears on the page and can be viewed by other users of the site, so I tell my students to not use their real names as their member name.

In the Become a member box you have the option of entering an email address. I tell my students to not do so. This makes joining wonderfully simple, but also means that if they lose or forget their member name or password, there is no way to retrieve it. I get them to write down their member name and password in at least two different places, and explain that if they lose or forget either, the only thing they can do is start all over again.

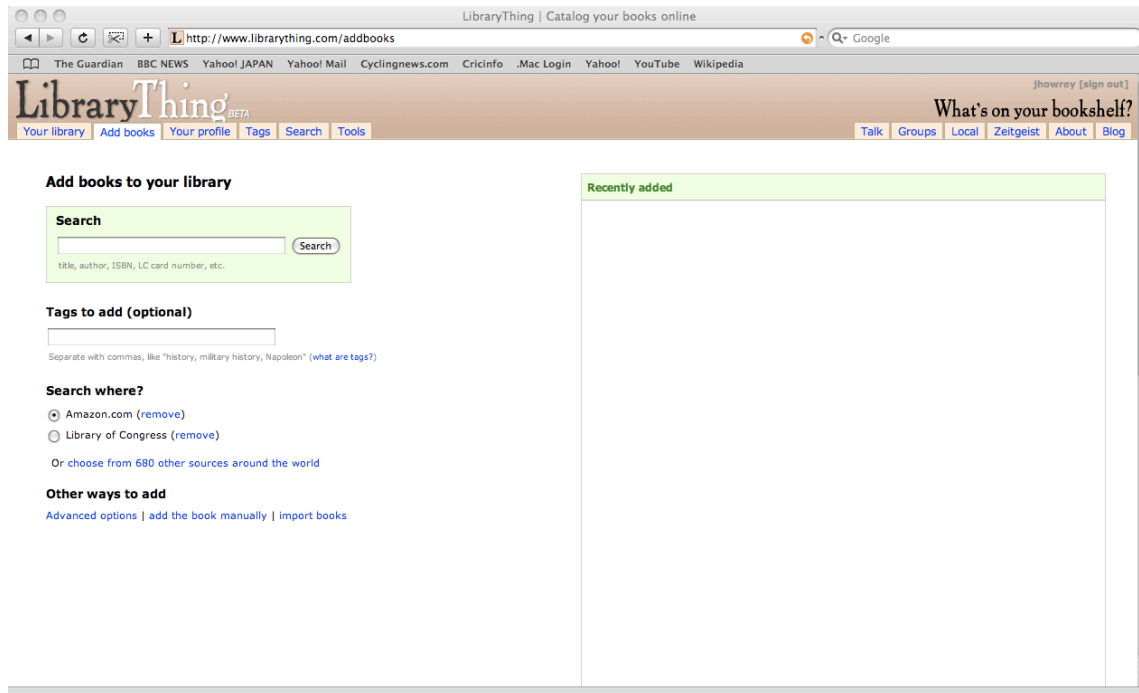# Adding books to your library

Having joined, you will first be presented with a welcome page.
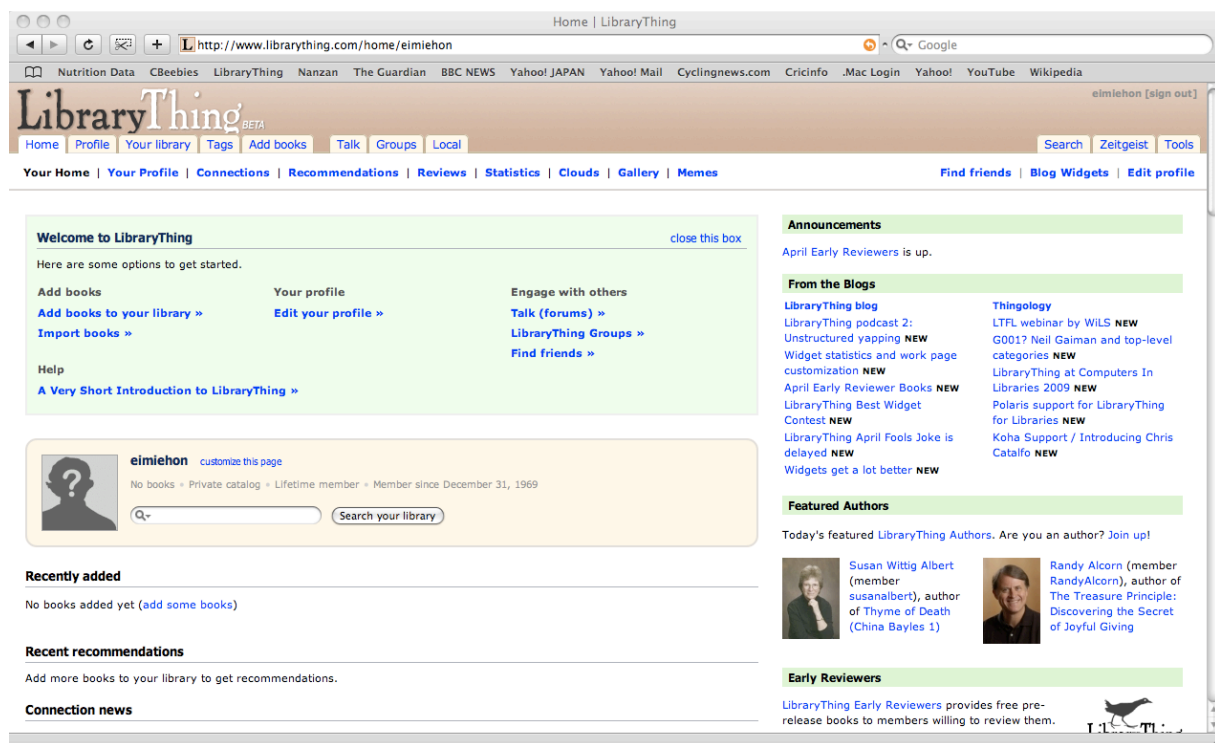
At the top of this page the navigation bar will have changed, as shown here.

Click on <u>Add books</u> and you will see this page.

Click in the search box and type the title of the book you wish to add. For graded readers enter both the title and series name so as to avoid getting too many hits.
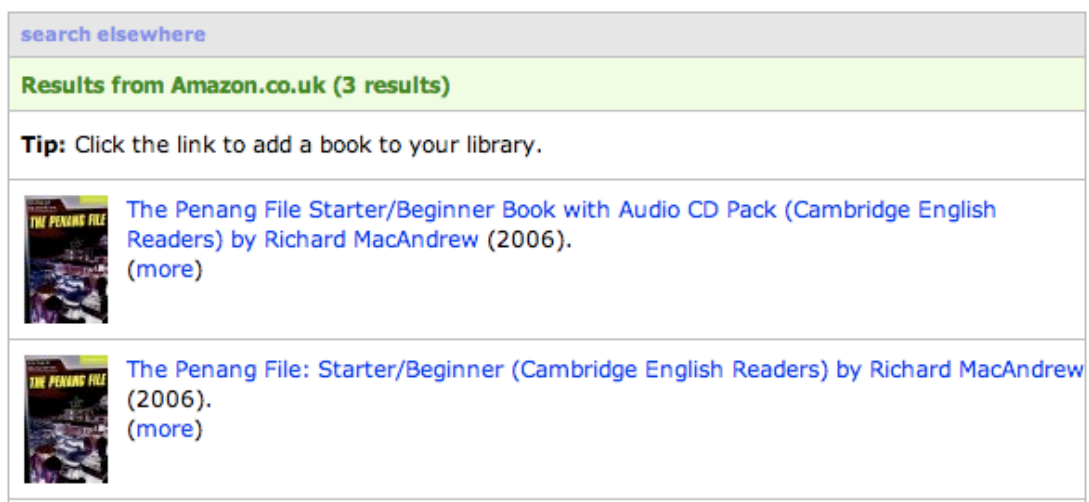

Click on <u>Search</u> and on the right side of the page your search results will appear.

Click on the book you want. The Results box will now become a Recently added box. Click on Show quick edit and you will be able to enter further information about the book. I require my students to rate each book and to write a brief review of it.

Rating books

To rate the book simply click on one of the grey stars and the same number will turn green. Clicking a second time allows you to give half stars.

Reviewing books

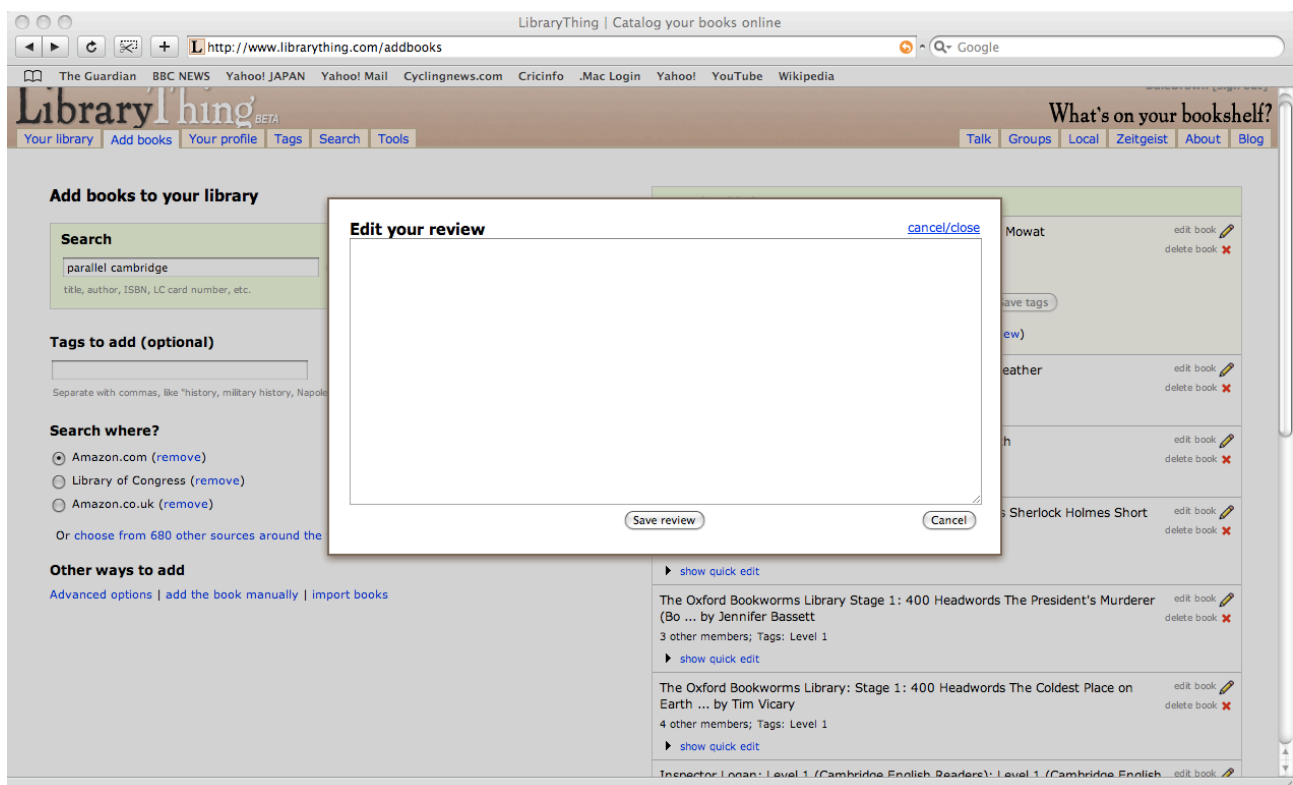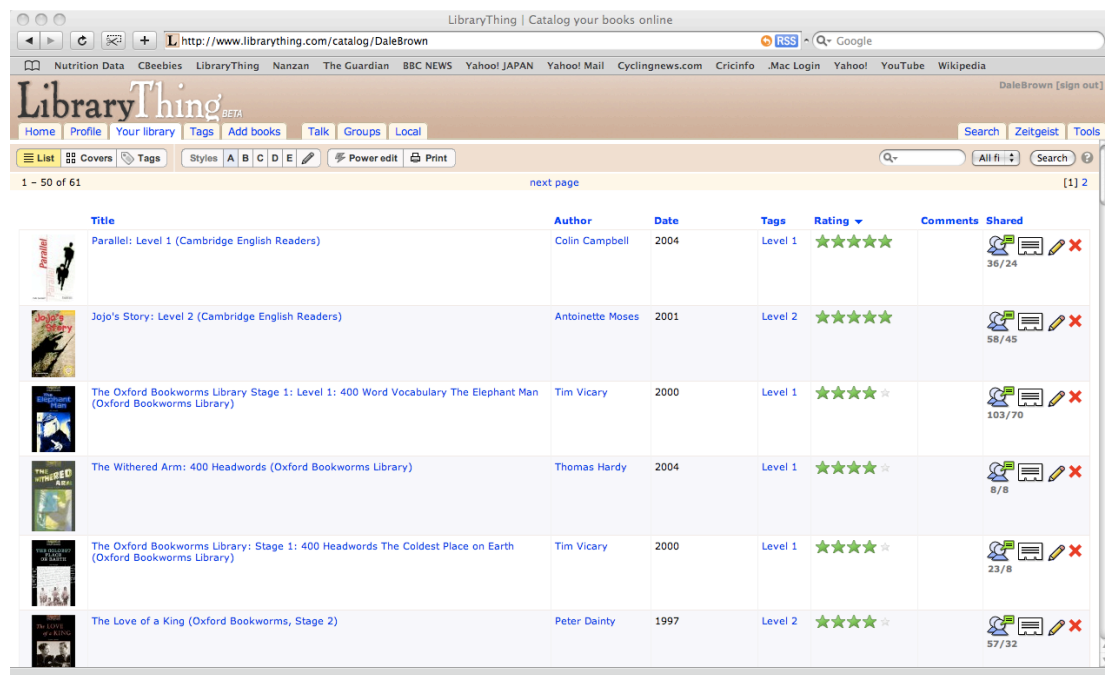Click on click to review and a new window will appear. Just type your review and click Save review.

Viewing your library

In the top navigation bar click on <u>Your library</u>. This page displays the books you have entered. It can be formatted in a number of ways, but I just show students the standard format, List, as above, and also the Covers format below. As students read more and more books they get to really like the Covers format as it gives them a sense of how much they have read.
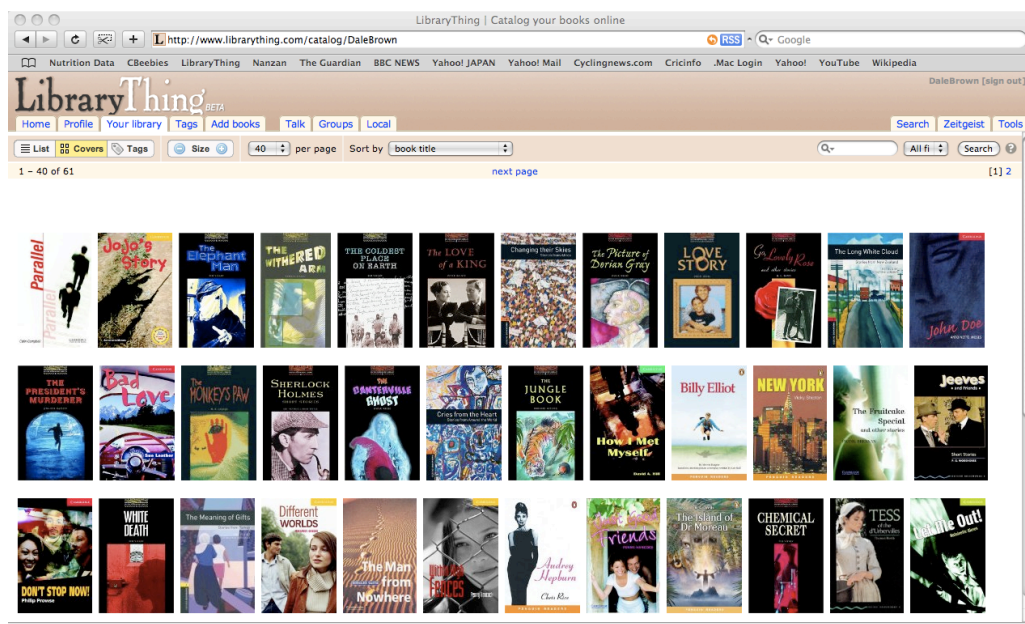
Getting recommendations

As well as recording what they have read, Librarything is also a great way for students to find other books that might interest them. I show students two ways to do this.

Members with your books

In the top navigation bar click on <u>Profile</u>. On the right side you will find Members with your books. This lists Librarything members with the most similar libraries to your own.


Click on a member's name to go to that member's profile page. Since you and this member have several books in common, you presumably have similar tastes, so looking at what else is in their library might reveal something that interests you. Click on <u>X books cataloged</u> to view their library or <u>see reviews</u> to view their reviews.

In your library and reviewed by others

From your Profile page click on <u>see reviews</u>. Your reviews page shows all the reviews you have written on the left, and in your library and reviewed by others on the right. As the name suggests, this shows other member's reviews of books in your library. Read the other members' reviews and if you find one that you agree with, click on their name to go to their profile page.
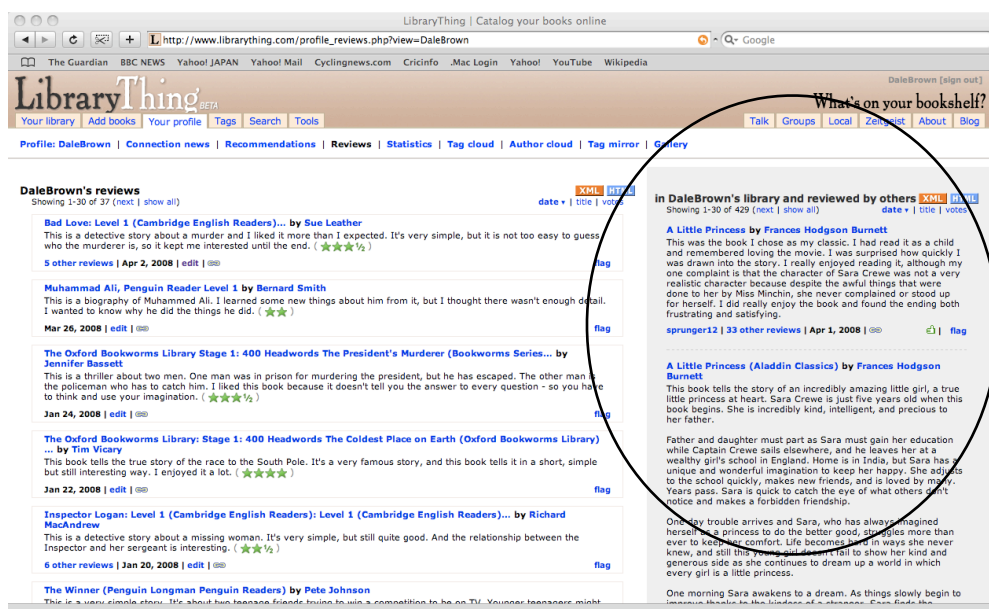
Signing out

Click on <u>Sign out</u> in the top right-hand corner of any page.

Concluding remarks

I have found Librarything very helpful and have had positive feedback from students so far. It helps me, by allowing me to easily monitor their reading and by making the students clearly accountable for their reading. It helps my students by encouraging them to read more. Some seem to enjoy the collecting aspect of it, others enjoy looking around each other's libraries and reviews, while some get competitive and try to read more than their classmates. Whichever aspect appeals to them, the end result seems to be that they read more, which is what I am most interested in.

If you have any questions or comments, feel free to contact me.

Please note . . .

I have no relationship with or interest in Libarything.com other than as a user.

Librarything is a constantly evolving website and has undergone several substantial revisions in the two years that I have been using it. It therefore may not work exactly as presented in this guide.