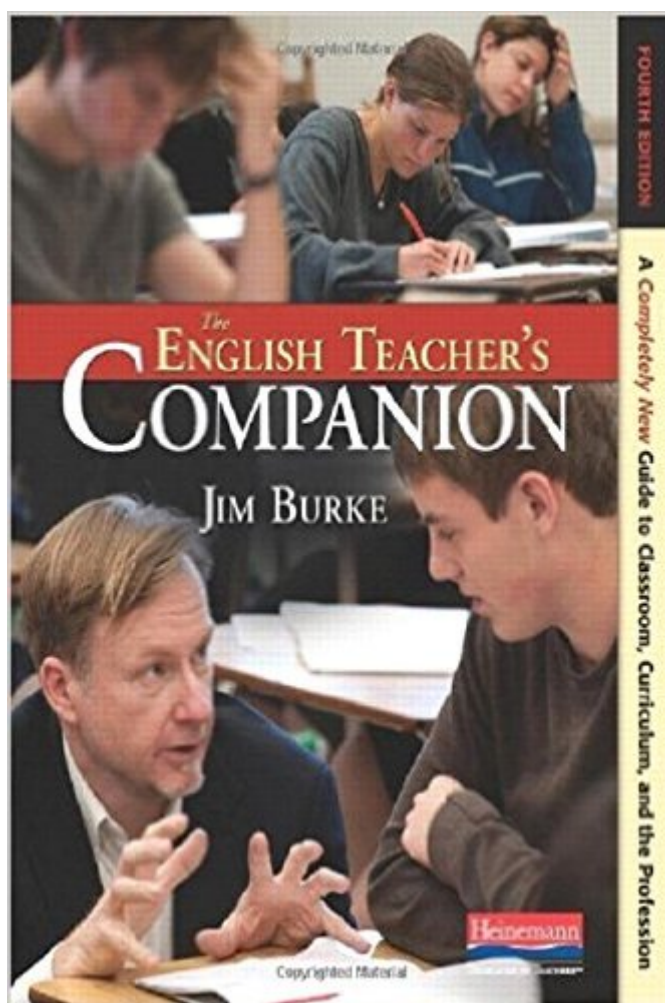


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# The English Teacher's Companion, Fourth Edition: A Completely New Guide To Classroom, Curriculum, And The Profession



## Synopsis

A new companion for every English teacher "Why have I written an entirely new English Teacher's Companion? Because to offer you anything less would suggest I had not grown, changed, or evolved these past fifteen years. I am not the same teacher I was when I wrote the first edition." Jim Burke The fourth edition of English Teacher's Companion is 100 percent new. Jim Burke has rewritten it to model methods for reaching a new generation of students-when all the ground rules for teaching are changing. A teacher's teacher and a recognized leader in English/language arts education, Jim understands the need for instructional methods that connect the why of teaching to the how. "This edition makes the research behind my practice more explicit," he writes. "It is also anchored in the Common Core State Standards, because I am still teaching every day-so these standards are my standards too." Weaving in ideas for working with ELLs, struggling readers, and technology, English Teacher's Companion, Fourth Edition: looks comprehensively at the research and reality of our profession, our students, and our content provides practical and thoughtful methods for meeting standards in reading, writing, speaking and listening, and language study makes assessment a priority, not only to find out what students know but to help practitioners improve. "I have taught English for nearly 25 years, and I love it," writes Jim Burke. Never has this love been more apparent than in the numerous lessons and teaching moves he includes as well as in the many examples of his own classroom language. Trust the fourth edition of English Teacher's Companion, and bring the passion, power, and practicality of one of America's best teachers to your classroom.

## Book Information

Paperback: 392 pages

Publisher: Heinemann; 4 edition (November 1, 2012)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0325028400

ISBN-13: 978-0325028408

Product Dimensions: 7.5 x 0.8 x 9.3 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.4 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.2 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (26 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #16,629 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #4 in [Books > Textbooks > Education > Curriculum & Instruction](#) #18 in [Books > Education & Teaching > Schools & Teaching > Curriculum & Lesson Plans > Curricula](#) #19 in [Books > Education & Teaching >](#)

## Customer Reviews

This book is not nearly as useful for new teachers and teacher education courses than is the third edition. There is a great deal of Burke telling the reader about Burke; far too much theory, which teacher education students close to student teaching want in small doses; and too many examples from AP students' work, which new teachers rarely ever see. Many of the good examples of teaching ideas have been removed, and the chart-happy text now has mostly full page, highly detailed charts that are a real turn-off. To cater to the Common Core mania, Burke has caved and plugged in ways to connect to these standards. It's also a shorter book, so you get less for your money. Too bad. The third edition has been discontinued, so those of us who have used it for some time now have to go elsewhere. Heinemann would be wise to keep the 3d available. I doubt I'm wrong in saying that the new edition will not sell nearly as well.

I have found every book Burke has written to be well worth a good read. I am, however, sad to say that this new fourth edition does not have the flare, the punch, and the passion of his green-covered third edition. The fourth edition is a nearly complete revision and, in revising, Burke added some useful information and updates to current practices, but in his extensive revision, he seems to have lost a lot of truly valuable and thought-provoking information and observations especially geared to English / Language Arts teachers in training as well as for first-year teachers. I use The English Teacher's Companion in my Techniques for Teaching English in Middle & Secondary School university course. together with books by Penny Kittle and Tom Romano. I ordered this fourth edition last year, was disappointed, and went back to the third edition for this year's class.

Again and again I need to say this: this book saved me as a first year English teacher. And now: wow. The fourth edition takes it to the next level.

While this reinforced my thoughts on education it gave little information for me to be able to apply many of the ideas in my classroom. High school teachers would likely find it more helpful, but being on the lower end of the grades, I would have to heavily modify much of the information. In addition, I feel like Burke complains that one flaw of teachers is the 'aboutitis' where we teach about something

more than actually teaching it, however I feel that is what most of this book is. It did help me visualize more conversations occurring in my classroom and how to better frame reading through discussion, which is why I went up to 4 stars. The journey was worth it, but not the most effective it could be.

This is a useful book for pre-service and new teachers. Burke knows the relevant pedagogical research and includes lots of charts and ideas. But the book has some flaws. As other reviewers have noted, it lacks the depth of earlier editions, including necessary advice for job searches. Also, though Burke mentions poetry--a source of anxiety for many teachers--and although "poetry" appears in the index, he doesn't really talk about how to teach it. The section on critical theory is also a problem as he uses Wikipedia as a source and mis-defines deconstruction as emphasizing "unity and coherence." I also find it suspect that many of the recommended resources are also published by Heinemann, though he does note some good resources, especially online ones.

Absolutely loved the latest edition of the English Companion by Jim Burke. It includes tons of valuable and succinct resources that every teacher can actively use in their classroom. He gives actual examples of things that he has done in his classroom, and I really appreciate the way he talks to me throughout the book - like I am his colleague and he is just mentoring me. This is the best resource that I have found thus far during all of my graduate classes and I highly recommend it.

Don't let Burke's first book lead you into thinking this 4th edition of the same book is one you should pass up. If you're an English teacher (I've been one for 28 years), you need his book. The first one was good, in that it offered page after page of workable ideas and so forth, but this one is completely different. First of all, he somehow seems to have become more (I need a stronger word than passionate; he's not just passionate and driven and dedicated, it's clear he's made teaching his life work.) He's a missionary. He's intense and focused, but there's a deep commitment behind what he does that makes it work. He believes in his students, every single one of them, and he teaches them extremely challenging books (his ninth graders read *The Kite Runner*; his tenth graders read *Heart of Darkness*). He seems to be truly Socratic: gentle, kind, observant, warm and caring, but ever the prodder. The depth of this book may seem a bit daunting, as the sheer amount of work he gets his kids to do might be as well, but the methodical way he builds his classes, the extremely high expectations, the devotion to detail AND the grasp of the big picture, make him stand out. Get the book. Even if you got the first one, and it's collecting dust or you gave it away, get this

one. Get it, keep it, read it, re-read it. You'll use it.

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