



How to start and run a book club

Whether you're an avid book lover, or someone looking to engage with reading for the first time, book clubs are a fun and social way to share the joys of reading. Starting and running a book club is easy! Just follow these simple steps.

1. Find your readers

Starting a book club begins with people. Decide what kind of group you want to bring together: you might be an existing group of friends, or be connected through school or community groups; you might be genre-lovers, or first-time regular readers.

The size of your book club is up to you, however **we recommend around 8-10 members** – big enough to allow for no-shows, and small enough to make sure everyone has the opportunity to share their thoughts.

2. Choose when and where to meet

Once you've got your group, you'll need to decide where you'd like to meet. Some book clubs enjoy meeting in public spaces like cafés, pubs, or libraries, while others prefer the comfort of their own home. You can also opt to run events virtually, or as hybrid in-person and online events, to allow more flexibility for book members to attend.

Next, decide on how regularly you'd like to meet. When choosing the frequency of your meetings, consider the varying paces at which different members read. You might want to opt for the traditional 'once a month' meet-up, or perhaps allow for longer gaps between meetings to allow everyone to finish reading the book.



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3. Work together to select your books

Now that you've got your group, how do you decide what to read? A few easy ways to go about it include:

- **Take turns to select a book** – Each member of the group gets the opportunity to select a book of their choice for the group to read and discuss.
- **Come to a group consensus** – Dedicate the last ten minutes of your meeting to discuss ideas for your next read and come to a decision as a group.
- **Take a lucky dip** – At the end of each meeting, everyone who has a suggestion for the next book puts the title in a hat to be drawn at random.
- **Find an existing curation or program** – There are plenty of organisations and groups that curate book club programs. Check in at your local library or bookstore, or [explore our list of national and state-based book club programs](#).

4. Manage the conversation

Now that you've got your group and book, it's time to decide how you'd like your meet-ups to run. Groups of friends might prefer a more informal dynamic, while book clubs where members are less familiar with each other might prefer a more structured approach.

Some members will come to meetings with strong ideas and opinions, while others may be more content to listen along. While healthy debate is encouraged, it's a good idea to set some ground rules about the kind of language and tone members should use (e.g. criticise the book, not the speaker!) to ensure that everyone's views and perspectives are heard and respected.

Stuck for prompts?

See our list of suggested questions below! Many publishers also provide dedicated reading group notes for their books to download free-of-charge off their websites.



Book club prompts

Keep the conversation going with our handy list of prompts and questions to be adapted for your book club's meetings.

General & Literary Fiction

Get to know the characters

- Did you relate to the main character? Why or why not?
- Which character would you most like to meet in real life?
- What motivated the central character/s in their journey throughout the book?
- What challenges did the characters face, and how did they overcome them?

Dig into the plot

- Were there any plot twists? If so, did you see them coming?
- Was there anything that was confusing or unresolved about the book?
- What did you think of the ending?
- What was your favourite scene, or a scene that stayed with you?
- If the book is set in a different time period, did you learn anything new about that time and place?

Discuss the writing

- Was the author doing anything interesting or different with language?
- Were there any lines or passages that particularly stuck with you?
- How do you think the title of the book related to the story?
- Did you get a sense of the character's voice/s through the writing?

Look at the big picture

- What were some of the main themes or ideas of the book?
- What patterns or connections did you notice?
- Did the book give you any insights into experiences outside of your own? If so, what did you learn?
- How did the book make you feel overall?
- If you could ask the author one thing, what would it be?



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Non-fiction & Genre

Non-fiction

- What was the most surprising thing you learned about the subject matter?
- How does the author explore the subject matter? Are they objective or do they involve themselves in it?
- Did you find the book accessible to read or difficult?
- Are you interested in reading more, or alternate perspectives, on the subject?

Romance

- Was the chemistry between the characters believable? Were you rooting for them?
- What obstacles did the characters face in their romance? How did they overcome them?
- How did the setting or time period influence or enhance the romance?
- Do you think the characters live happily ever after?

Crime & Thrillers

- Which plot twists surprised you the most? Which did you see coming?
- How does the author build suspense in the novel?
- Which characters did you find most compelling?
- Was there anything that felt unresolved or confusing about the plot?
- If the book is a series, did you want to read more?

Memoir

- Why do you think the author was compelled to share their story?
- Did you relate to their journey or story in any way?
- How does or doesn't the author's voice come through in the writing?
- Was there anything you wanted to know more about or you felt was missing?
- Did the book teach you anything or make you reflect on your own life differently?