

Tips for discussion hosts

- Start by introducing new members, if necessary.
- Discussion host can start by sharing biographical information about the author and other relevant info.
- Have discussion questions ready, but leave room for organic discussion as well.
- If the conversation gets too far off topic or someone is monopolizing the conversation, re-center the group by asking another discussion question.
- Don't be afraid of awkward silences! This sometimes gives people a chance to choose their words or think of what they want to say.
- Make sure everyone gets a chance to speak, and make sure all thoughts about the book are shared before the discussion ends.

Example discussion questions

Many books come with discussion guides, or discussion questions can be found online. Try to avoid “yes/ no” questions. These are basic questions can apply to any book!

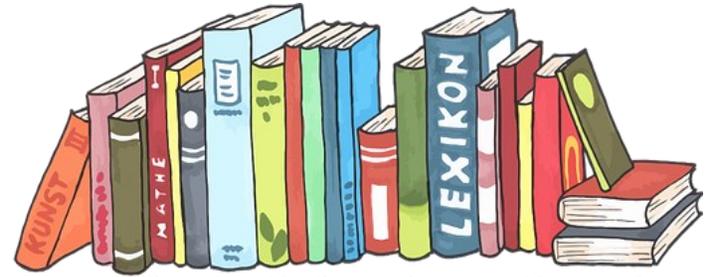
1. What was your favorite or least favorite part of the book?
2. Was there a character that you related to?
3. Were you satisfied with the ending, or were you hoping for more?
4. Did the characters seem realistic?
5. Did this book remind you of other books?
6. If you could ask the author a question, what would it be?
7. What do you think the title means?
8. Did your opinion of this book change as you read it?
9. Did you like the writing style and structure of the book?
10. Would you recommend this book to a friend? Why or why not?

Need help?

We would be happy to help answer any questions as you begin your book club journey! Visit batavialibrary.org/read for book club resources, suggested titles and more!

Contact: Community and Adult Services Librarian Samantha Basile at sbasile@nioga.org or 343-9550 x8

Richmond Memorial Library



Book Club Guide

Tips, tricks and suggestions for starting your book club

*“Books may well be
the only true magic”*

Alice Hoffman

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Starting Your Book Club

There's no right or wrong way to run a book club! However, even if you're just meeting with friends, it is helpful for everyone to be on the same page to help your meetings go smoothly.

Before you begin, your book club should agree on the answers to the following questions:

- **Who is the leader of your club?** Will someone be responsible for sending meeting notices and information?
- **What is the tone/ intent of your book club?** Are you serious readers or meeting to have fun? Is it more of a wine club with books thrown in? Will you require everyone to read the book in order to attend?
- **Where and when will you meet?** Make sure people have enough time to obtain and read the book.
- **What will you read?** Some book clubs only read mysteries, others just non-fiction, etc. Decide up front what your selection criteria is!
- **How will you pick your books?** The host might pick the book, or you might select items for a few months in advance. Other factors to consider:
 - Length of the book - is everyone up for a 500 pager or do you want to read shorter books?
 - Availability - are people purchasing or borrowing the book? Is it affordable? Are copies available at the library?
 - Topic - book clubs are great for discussing sensitive topics, but keep in mind the preferences of your group when making selections. Some people may not prefer gratuitous violence, profanity, etc.
- **Who is in your book club?** Is anyone welcome to come or is there a set number? Keep your meeting location in mind when determining club size.

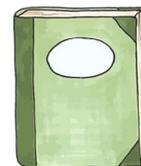
The answers to these questions may change as your club evolves, but always make sure to come to a consensus before making big changes!

Book Club Etiquette

Establishing basic etiquette together will help your group bond and result in a better shared experience. One suggestion is to have your group determine their "rules" or etiquette together as a sort of social contract.

Suggestions:

1. Designate a discussion host/ leader for each meeting—this person can prepare discussion questions, facilitate the discussion and keep the conversation on track.
2. Everyone gets a chance to talk.
3. Only one person talks at a time— be a good listener!
4. Limit side conversations— this is hard, especially in a more social setting. However, giving your focus to the person talking creates an atmosphere of respect for the conversation.
5. Read the book! If you didn't read the book and still choose to attend the discussion, don't be disappointed by any spoilers.
6. Have an open mind— book club should be a safe space to share opinions and feelings about what you're reading.
7. Be honest about your opinion— it's ok if you didn't like the book! It's also ok if you loved it and someone else hated it. Everyone will experience the same book in a different way.
8. Honor everyone's time— if you have decided on a set time limit for your discussion, start on time and end on time.
9. ***Don't forget to actually discuss the book!***



“Never trust anyone who has not brought a book with them.” - Lemony Snicket