

# HOW TO RUN A BOOK DISCUSSION GROUP



## SETTING UP A BOOK GROUP

Libraries are well-suited to host book discussion groups, with access to both books and readers.

You can promote the group in the library and the local paper, but they often grow through word of mouth. Book groups can turn into friend groups who discuss books.

Create a safe place for discussion and differing opinions by ensuring members respect and listen to others.

Many groups choose to read the same book, but in some groups the members choose their own books to read and discuss.

Does your library have room for a book discussion group? Can you meet outside of the library? Wine and food are always fun.

People often say they enjoy book group because it requires them to read books they wouldn't ordinarily choose.



## WHO IS YOUR AUDIENCE?

- Retirement home residents
- Working- aged people
- Men
- Teens- tweens- kids
- Families

Different groups will want to read different types of books and will be able to meet at different times of the day.

Consider setting up an online meeting space for people to attend remotely.

## WHAT DO THEY WANT TO READ?

*Stick to a theme or keep it fluid?*

Your book group can focus on one genre or discuss a variety of books. You could also choose a theme and spend a year reading books about a particular geographic area or authors from one state.

Popular book group genres include:

- Literature
- True- Crime
- Nonfiction
- Mysteries
- Classics

Some groups make a point to read the One Book One Nebraska book, or a teen selection or a food book each year.

# THE DISCUSSION

- Have questions and background information prepared
- Find a kind way to move the discussion along if one person is taking it over
- Give everyone a chance to speak
- Try to stay on topic
- If nobody has much to say about the book, ask what other books people have been reading

# MIX IT UP

Keep book group interesting

- Zoom with an author
- Arrange for a self-defense class after reading true crime
- Bring food based on the book theme
- Take a road trip to a book's setting
- Meet at a local venue
- Find a guest who will be able to enrich your discussion or answer questions people may have
- Watch a movie based on a book

# TIPS

- Start with a strong book. Find a relatively recent book- something people are talking about
- Meet at a regular time
- Have the members recommend books
- Compile a list with brief descriptions of the books and let the members choose which books to read
- Good books aren't always good discussion books
- Send reminders before the meeting
- Remember Amazon owns Goodreads, and they promote their authors and books - over other publishers
- Look for diversity in authors, characters, and subject matter
- Read the book yourself
- New releases (up to 12 months) are often difficult to obtain through interlibrary loan

# ? QUESTIONS



- Open ended questions foster discussion
- Don't ask who liked the book- it sets up teams and arguments
- Publishers often provide bland questions- but lots of author and context information
- Search online for questions related to your book- libraries, other book groups- or write your own
- Search for general book discussion questions online



# USEFUL SOURCES

- Goodreads.com
- Celebrity book groups and lists- Oprah, Jenna, Barak Obama
- Readinggroupchoices.com (free books)
- Bookriot.com
- Readinggroupguides.com (questions)
- BookTube (YouTube channel about books)
- BookTok (TikTok about books)



# WHERE TO GET BOOKS

- Book discussion kits from other libraries- you can find them at <http://nlc.nebraska.gov/ref/bookclub/>
- Nebraska Library Commission also has book group kits
- Interlibrary loan through NLC if your library doesn't belong
- Libby