

# A GUIDE TO STARTING A BOOK CLUB

I am sure we have all had the feeling of reading something and needing to discuss it more. Whether it was so amazing that you simply must tell someone, the writing so beautiful it should be shared aloud, or it was so frustratingly confusing you need someone to explain it or sympathise in mutual confoundment. Then you come to the realization that you are bereft of like-minded people who enjoy discussing books. If only there were a book club, you could join!

Why not take that thought a step further and start your own book club. Here is a quick guide for getting started:

## Define the club

Be honest, what kind of book club would you like to be a part of? Would you like to spend an hour examining authorial intention and sentence construction or would you like to sip on wine and have a laugh with fellow members. Whatever you're looking for your book club will work best if you can find members who enjoy the same format.

## Who to invite?

The number of people in the book club can impact which books you read and how often you can meet - juggling twenty people's schedules is a mammoth task! Smaller groups let you get to know other members while bigger groups offer a wider range of viewpoints and opinions. Let the type of club you want to be a part of guide your decision on the number of members.

You may already have some friends lined up – if you would like to expand your circle encourage your friends to bring another friend along, reach out through the library, community notice boards and social media channels.



## The logistics

Decide where and how often you will meet – consider people's schedules and travel distances. You might like to meet once a month at someone's house, you could use Singleton Library, or you could go to a café or park. Don't forget online options. Keep in mind any accessibility needs and dietary requirements your members may have.

How will you communicate with members? Whether it is e-mail, group chat or telephone calls, make sure you all know how to contact your group. That way any changes or emergencies won't turn into disasters.

## Choosing Books

You will need a method for selecting books, you could go with a majority vote, electing a member to pick for each session or a lucky dip. Whatever method you pick ensure you give people time to locate titles or make suggestions.

Remember, it can be daunting choosing books, after all no one wants to be responsible for a book that everyone hates. You can also use celebrity book clubs like Oprah and Reese Witherspoon for inspiration or find recommendations on Good Reads.

Use the Singleton Library Book Club Kit list ([link](#)) to get more information on available titles.

## Facilitating Your Meeting

It is normal for groups to have a mix of quieter and talkative members so make sure you are giving everyone the opportunity to speak.

Use the reading guides from our book kits or general genre questions ([link](#)) to promote discussion. You never know what will spark the most discussion so don't be too prescriptive and if you don't get time for all of the questions that's perfectly ok.

## Tips

Welcome people, even if they haven't read the book – life is too short to read a book you don't enjoy.

Start small and stick at it.

Prepare to challenge your reading habits, beliefs, and opinions.

Think creatively – want a rest from reading books, have a swap meet. Have half your group read the book and half watch the adaptation of it.

Be open to new and different.