

**Interested in setting up a Reading Group?
Below are a few suggestions to help get you started.**



What is a Reading Group?

A reading group is basically a group of people who meet regularly to talk about what they have been reading. It is supposed to be informal, relaxed and most importantly enjoyable! There is no set number of people who should be in the group, although you want to have enough people to make a discussion possible, and not so many that people don't all get the chance to speak. Probably between 6-10 people is a good number.

Why are Reading Groups so popular?

They provide a good way to meet and mix with other people and discover new authors and titles at the same time. Sharing your views with other people and listening to theirs can make you look at the world in a whole new light. One person's "good read" is another's "most disliked" and finding out the reasons why is always interesting - and often good fun!

Who is in a Group?

Whoever you want. It could be a group of friends, or work colleagues, or parents who meet at the school gates, or even people who have come together in response to an advert by someone setting up a group.

Where does a Group meet?

Some groups take it in turns to meet at each other's homes, or in a cafe, or pub, or community space. Each group decides what is best for them.

When does a Group meet?

Again, this depends on what suits the members. It is probably best to decide on a set day each month e.g the last Monday evening every month between 7-8pm, so everyone remembers when a meeting is coming up. You need to leave enough time between meetings so people have a chance to read the book, and not so long that they have time to forget or lose interest. An hour tends to be the average time people meet to discuss a book, but whatever suits the group best is fine.

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What should the Group read?

This is up to the members. A lot of groups read a mix of authors and titles throughout a year, but you may decide to read books in a particular genre e.g. Crime, or on a theme, or focus on fiction or non-fiction. There are no right or wrong books to read.

How does the group run?

i) Choosing a book

In a lot of groups each person takes it in turn to choose a book the group will read next. That way everyone has a chance to suggest a book they want to share with others, and also get lots of chances to try authors they may not have picked themselves.

ii) Format of the meeting

You may decide to take it in turns to start the meeting off – perhaps the person who has chosen the book speaks first – and then other people chip in. You may want someone to lead the meeting to make sure everyone has the chance to speak and stop lots of different conversations taking place at the same time.

For the first meeting of the group you may want to talk generally about the books you like, your favourite authors, where and when you like to read, your worst read ever, do you re-read books etc. This breaks the ice and gets people talking and discussing together.



iii) Questions and topics to consider

When discussing the book you may like to think about the following

- Who was your favourite character and why
- Did you like the author's style of writing – easy to read, descriptive, clunky etc?
- Was the length of the book right – did the story go on too long, could it have been better edited?
- What did you think of the ending?
- Did the plot/storyline keep you gripped
- Did the cover of the book give a true idea of what the book was about, or did it make you think you would be reading a totally different type of book?
- Has anyone read other books by the author/on the same topic?

You will often find discussions about the book lead on to discussion about situations and experiences in people's own lives.

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Useful websites

There is a lot of information you can find to help you and your reading group. Publishers often have pages devoted to reading groups, and you can download guides for particular titles, look at book reviews and see what other people thought of the book you are thinking of reading.

A few websites are listed below in no particular order

www.readinggroups.org - This is run by a charity called The Reading Agency and has lots of information about reading groups, news and special promotions.

www.fantasticfiction.co.uk – Lots of information on authors, the books they've written, and when they were published

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b006s5sf> - This is the BBC Radio 4 Book Club programme site

www.readinggroupguides.com – A US site but has various guides you could find helpful in your discussions

<http://readers.penguin.co.uk/> - Penguin's site for reading groups

<http://www.randomhouse.co.uk/readersgroup/readingguides.htm> - Lists guides available for Random House titles

www.amazon.co.uk – This includes customer reviews on books – both positive and negative!

<http://www.whichbook.net/> - A different way of choosing a book by deciding on different aspects of a story e.g, happy, sad, long, short etc.

www.booktrust.org.uk – Aims to encourage people of all ages to enjoy books

Kingston Libraries has a selection of reading group sets available for groups to borrow. For details of how to sign up to this service e-mail readinggroups@kingston.gov.uk or visit the libraries website at www.kingston.gov.uk/libraries, or ring 020 8547 5006