

The role of the Book Club co-ordinator

Below are some tasks that may be performed by the club co-ordinator.

These tasks can be delegated to other club members; however it is probably best that one designated person acts as the library liaison.

- Sign up for a Book Club co-ordinator card and keep contact information up to date including a contact email address, we suggest creating a book club specific email.
- Maintain book club membership list
- Maintain list of books read
- Make copy of club rules available to all members
- Organise and/or book the meeting venue if required.
- Check availability of book selection (one week prior to collection)
- Collect book club set from library
- Return complete book club set to library by due date
- Maintain order at meetings
- Lead discussions at meetings (this role may be rotated amongst members)

The first meeting of your book club

First meeting – preparation

When inviting people to attend your first meeting, ask them to bring along a book they have recently read. This makes an interesting first discussion, before the first assigned book is handed out. It also gives everyone a chance to get to know their fellow book club members.

Name tags can be helpful as everyone is getting to know each other.

Tea and coffee (or a glass of wine!) can also help to break the ice and make new members feel welcome.

Keep a written record of all decisions about how the group will run and distribute it to the group at the next meeting.

A good mix of people will provide lively, comfortable and fun discussions. Different opinions and styles should be sought and encouraged – if the members of the group or the books you choose to read are too similar, the collective responses may be limited and over time, members may become disinterested.

In your first meeting...

What is a book club?

Discuss the aim of the group.

Getting to know you

Ask each person to talk about the book they have brought with them, or have read recently. This activity will also provide people with an idea of what a Book Club does and allows people to get to know each other a little. It will also lead to discussion of reading likes and dislikes.

Decisions, decisions, decisions...

- **Regularity of meetings:** how often would your members like to meet? Monthly meetings are the norm but it is up to the group.
- **Where to meet:** will you always be in the same place or different places each month?
- **Reading interests/preferences:** what do the members like to read? Who will choose the books? Take it in turns or a group decision? All at the start of the year or as you go?

Running an effective Book Club meeting

The structure of a meeting is very much the choice of the group. It may be causal and conversational or follow a formal agenda. The group may wish to adapt its style as it develops.

Start the meeting

It is advisable to formally start the discussion in some way. This helps you get the group discussion started on time.

Discussion

Make sure your club has at least two members who are willing to lead discussion; this will ensure a long life for your club. Often the most successful clubs are those in which participants take turns in leading. Some clubs use co-leading, a process in which two people lead a discussion together. Before the entire club meets, the leader should prepare the discussion questions with a co-leader or another member of the club. Because each person will bring a different point of view to the reading, two people working together can prepare better questions than either could on their own. Downloadable discussion questions/guides are available online on the catalogue record of each book club set. The library also provides hard copies of the discussion questions.

Etiquette

Adhere to agreed book club meeting guidelines.

Closure

At the end of the meeting collect all the books and issue the next set of books. Confirm details of the next meeting and arrange for someone to contact those members who were not present to swap books and notify of the next meeting.

Reserving and returning a book club pack

Reserving a Book Club pack (to be done 7 – 10 days before you need the set)

- Go to <https://library.frankston.vic.gov.au/Home>
 - Click on the heading **Library Services** - Select **Book Club**
 - Under the heading 'Book Club Sets' select *View and reserve titles*
1. Browse through the records and click the checkbox for the title to be reserved
OR
For a particular title, click on **Options** then **Refine results** from the drop down menu.
Enter the title and click Search.
 2. When the title appears you will see (1 copy) at the bottom right of the screen, this means 1 set. If there are any reserves already on the item they will be indicated here e.g. (1 copy, 1 reserve). In this example the set is not available to be allocated to you, search for another title.
 3. Once a title is chosen, place a reservation by clicking on **View Availability**. In this screen if the status field has an **On loan date** it means that this set is not available to be allocated to you, search for another title.
 4. If the status field only shows, for example 'Book Club (Set: 08 Nov 2019) click on **Place Reservation**.
 5. At the login screen enter your Book Club Coordinator card number and Password.
 6. At the Place Reservation screen the pick up location will have a default location already set.
 7. Select the **Continue** button (Or the **Cancel** button if you don't wish to place the reservation).
 8. Details of your reservations will be displayed on screen. This includes your current rank in the waiting list.
 9. You can now **Logout** from your account.
 10. You will be notified via your nominated email address when your reservation is available for pickup.

Handy Tip: Reservations are held for 10 days. If not collected by that date, items are sent on to the next Book Club on the waiting list or are put back into the Book Club Collection.

Returning a Book Club Pack

A complete Book Club set can be returned to any of our Branches. The Outreach Team will then check to confirm all books in the set are returned and are in good condition.

Meeting etiquette for book clubs

The following may be discussed early in your book club's life, or as the issues arise. It can be helpful to revisit decisions made – perhaps at the first meeting of each year to decide if things are working well for all members.

Reading the book

If a member has not read the book, should they still attend the meeting? Will the club provide a report on the plotline at the start of the session?

Social discussions

Club members may wish to meet before or after to socialise and chat. You may wish to establish guidelines to ensure sufficient time is dedicated to discussing the book. How will you ensure everyone gets a chance to contribute to the discussion?

Refreshments

If you are not meeting in a café, restaurant or pub, and would like to have refreshments during your meeting, a catering roster could be useful.

Guests

Are guests of members permitted? If so, are there limitations on who would be welcome, and how many times they could come along before being required to formally join the group?

Is handiwork permitted?

Another person knitting or crocheting during discussion may distract some people.

Are children permitted?

The group may be happy to allow children who do not make a disturbance or club members may wish to hire a joint babysitter.

Are pets permitted?

Note that many venues will not permit pets inside, so this will depend on where your group meets and how the group feels about pets.

Discussion ideas for book clubs

All of the book club sets provided by Frankston City Libraries come with a hard copy of a reading guide. These guides contain questions that can prompt and guide group discussion on each book. Members of the club may wish to take it in turns to do extra research on the author of the books or reviews to present background information to the group.

General discussion points may include:

Characterisation

The way the author develops the characters in a common discussion topic. Our response to characters is driven by our personal experiences, so each member of your group is likely to have a different view on the character.

Characters' actions

Are characters' actions the result of destiny or choice? Discuss your thoughts about their actions. They will reflect the way you assign moral responsibility for what happens in the novel.

Social implications

Changing circumstances of the external world affect characters' (and our) concepts of right and wrong and our place in the universe. Questions raised in literature concerning moral responsibility connect to the events happening in our daily lives.

Symbolism

Symbols have specific political, religious or cultural references. What symbols are used in the novel and what do they mean?

Author's purpose

What meaning or message is the author trying to convey with the story and situation in the novel?

Credibility

During your discussion, you will be able to discern the author's reasons for stretching credibility. Some novels are flawed because they ask us to take too much for granted; in others, such as fantasy, the unusual is accepted as par for the course.