

Book Club Help: Discussion Questions and Topics

Use the right questions to take book club discussions to the next level

The best places to turn for help with discussions are [reading group guides](#). These typically provide a brief summary of the book along with several discussion questions written specifically for a given book. Unfortunately, sometimes you will be unable to find a reading group guide for a particular book. In that case, you'll have to be a little more creative.

If there isn't a reading guide available for the book your group is reading, it would be a good idea to have each member write down a question before the meeting. Good discussion questions are typically somewhat open-ended and debatable, but are also specific enough to promote a focused discussion.

Sample Discussion Questions for Fiction

The following general questions can be applied to any novel, and they provide a good starting point for creating your own discussion questions for a given work.

- What was unique about the setting of the book, and how did it enhance or take away from the story?
- What specific themes did the author emphasize throughout the novel? What do you think he or she is trying to get across to the reader?
- Do the characters seem real and believable? Can you relate to their predicaments? To what extent do they remind you of yourself or someone you know?
- How do characters change or evolve throughout the course of the story? What events trigger such changes?
- In what ways may the events in the books reveal the author's worldview?
- Did certain parts of the book make you uncomfortable? If so, why did you feel that way? Did this lead to a new understanding or awareness of some aspect of your life you might not have thought about before?

Sample Discussion Questions for Nonfiction

While many book clubs choose to only read novels and other works of fiction, there are many fascinating works of nonfiction that make for excellent discussion. Biographies, memoirs, essays, and historical accounts can all be very good reads,

with topics ranging from politics and religion to science and technology. The following questions should help provide some ideas for discussion.

- What did you find surprising about the facts introduced in this book?
- How has reading this book changed your opinion of a certain person or topic?
- Does the author present information in a way that is interesting and insightful, and if so, how does he or she achieve this?
- If the author is writing on a debatable issue, does he or she give proper consideration to all sides the debate? Does he or she seem to have a bias?
- How has the book increased your interest in the subject matter?

(Adapted from <http://www.book-clubs-resource.com/running/discussion-questions.php>)