

Book Club Help: Selecting a Book

Determining selection criteria can tailor your book club to your community.

With today's countless selection of titles available, how can you choose the best possible books for your reading group? First, you'll need to agree on a procedure by which the group selects books.

Every well-run book club has some kind of set process for choosing books. Usually this involves the group as a whole voting to narrow down a pool of suggestions made by various members. For example, each member might submit an idea she has for a book and then the group would discuss the selections and vote. It's a good idea to think about how far in advance you want books to be chosen. Keep in mind that deliberations can be heated and lengthy. Choosing books several meetings in advance will prevent you from wasting too much time in each meeting just trying to figure out what to read for the next one. Some groups dedicate entire meetings to picking out books to read for the next several months.

Once you have your procedure in place, you still face the often daunting choice of what books to consider. A good place to start might be a book you have already read and really enjoyed. The best books can be read over and over again, so why not share them with the rest of your group? Also take into account the tastes and interests of members. Is there a particular genre that people seem to like? Many book clubs adapt themes in which they exclusively read books of a given genre or subject matter. Books that have been well received by other readers and critics will likely make good choices, so best seller lists and book reviews make excellent resources for book clubs in search of titles. Another good place to look would be [online book clubs](#), where past reading schedules and reviews of past books are often posted. Finally, don't rule out the classics as possible choices for your book club. Works that have survived the test of time usually make for great discussion, and since you're not reading them for a class, you may end up enjoying them more than when you read them back in high school.

For book clubs with more serious themes, it's important to bring out a selection of those books from the library when making determinations. Also, another point to consider – do you have enough copies to support a book club? Is it possible to buy a few additional copies just for the book club and then donate the copies to a local shelter or add to the collection?

The success or failure of a book club can often be determined by the quality of books selected, so it is very important to put some thought into what you pick. With the right selection of books, your reading group will likely enjoy months of interesting discussion.