



Ten Steps to Set Up a Book Group

1) Enlist Members

It may seem like a daunting task to find people that want to join a book group but when you start asking you will probably find there are more willing participants than you have space for! Finding members can be as easy as phoning a friend, asking a colleague, or putting up posters. Also decide how big you want your group to be, between 5 and 10 members is an ideal amount for a good discussion.

2) Choose A Name

It is a good ice breaker when you start a new group to get everyone to suggest a name. If you have several suggestions you can put it to the vote. Will you be a "Bookworms" or something more original?

3) Time

Decide a time to meet and how often you will get together. Meeting once a month is the usual frequency for book groups and gives enough time for everyone to listen to the book.

4) Venue

The venue is very important as it has to be somewhere that is accessible for everybody. You can meet in members' homes on a rotation basis, or hire a room, or meet in your local library or community centre.

5) Choose A Group Leader

A leader is important as they take responsibility for making sure everyone knows the meeting dates and encouraging the group to choose the next books to read. They can also help in starting the book group discussion or directing it if the conversation is waning. This does not have to fall on one person all the time, the group can take it in turns possibly with each person undertaking it for a year.

6) Set Ground Rules

It is useful to have some ground rules particularly around the discussion process as you want to encourage opinions but don't want one person to dominate or those who are more introverted to feel they can't put forward their view. Be aware of any accessibility needs and remind members to respect others' opinions. Whilst not compulsory, refreshments can be a good idea but agreement needs to be reached on how these are provided and who pays for them. Lastly a book group discussion cannot be had if no one has attempted the book so members need to be encouraged to listen to the book or at least try it. A discussion can be just as valuable for those who couldn't get on with the book as they can explain why they felt they couldn't continue and so you get some interesting points of view.



7) Join Calibre Audio's Book Group Support Scheme

Calibre supports those book groups who qualify for our service by providing multiple digital copies of a book to ensure that all members of the group can listen to the same book at the same time. There is a yearly subscription fee for this service which is £18 per person per year including VAT. For this you can receive the amount of books you require up to twelve times each year to cover all your book group meetings.

We also offer a three month free trial for all new groups to help while the groups are being established and to make sure that the service works for the group. If you would like to take advantage of this scheme, then you can fill in the book group application form on the website and we will contact you to finalise the details. You can also contact our Membership Services team to enquire over the phone if you would prefer on 01296 432339.

8) Choose Booklists

This is something that all the group should get involved in to achieve a varied and interesting list. You could decide what type of books you are going to read, either specific genres like crime or romance or prize-winning books or a mix of fiction, non-fiction or poetry. Radio shows and media articles are good places to pick up book recommendations also. Calibre has a dedicated book group collection list, including best sellers, classic novels, modern fiction and popular non-fiction covering a wide range of reading tastes. Book groups who join Calibre can receive this list to help them compile their choices for their next meetings. This list is constantly being added to and book groups can suggest books that aren't on there as it may be possible to include them.

9) Discussion Questions

It is a good idea to produce a list of general discussion questions to get the group talking or else you can use the list of questions on Calibre's website.

10) Themes and Ideas

Keep your book group members engaged and interested by introducing different themes and ideas to some of the meetings. For example, you could produce a short quiz on the book or author you are listening to and read it out in the group for people to answer or tie into events and anniversaries happening nationally and listen to a book based on these.