



BOOK CLUB HUB

How to start a book club



Contents

What is the Book Club Hub and why is it important?	3
The power of reading and importance of being in a book club	4
Why join or start a book club and how the Book Club Hub website can help	5
Choosing what to read and managing the conversations	6
Icebreakers	7
Frequently Asked Questions	8
About The Reading Agency	9



What is the Book Club Hub and why is it important?

The Book Club Hub is a platform connecting readers and book clubs of all ages across the UK. It will still be managed by The Reading Agency.

The Book Club Hub offers book club leaders access to free offers from publishers and prizes in return for reviews, gives them the chance to read the latest books and author news to help them pick their next read, and allows them to download resources to use with their club. Readers can also share reviews of the books they have read and find recommendations to help them pick their next read.

For every book club, every genre, every reader.



What is on the Book Club Hub?

- **Home Page:** A carousel displaying the most recent news and offers. This includes offers for both children and young people, so there'll be constant news and offers for book clubs of all ages
- **News:** News articles from our publisher and prize partners, spotlight book clubs, and content from The Reading Agency. This is where we will also spotlight book clubs with the spotlight articles. Clubs can filter depending on whether it is adult, children's or young people's content
- **Find a Book:** A place for clubs to search for titles and read reviews from other readers. Booklists from The Reading Agency and prize lists are hosted on this page
- **Offers:** Clubs can search through the offers from our publisher and prize partners, receiving free copies in return for reviews (due approximately six weeks after they receive their copies). Clubs can also apply to read and review both published and upcoming titles
- **Resources:** Resources (e.g. discussion guides, downloadable booklists, library resources) can be filtered by their target audience (adult, children's or young people's content)
- **Find a Book Club:** The 'Find a Book Club' page allows readers to locate book clubs near them to join
- **My Group:** Accessible to registered book club members. Clubs can track their members and the books they've read. Clubs can tag what books they'd like to read as 'TBR pile', tag books they have read to keep track, and can leave their own reviews

Contact bookclubhub@readingagency.org.uk with any questions.

The power of reading and importance of being in a book club

1 in 2 (50%) adults in England don't regularly read for pleasure, rising to over 2 in 3 (68%) of young people aged 16-24.[i]

That's why, more than ever, book clubs are an important step to fostering a love for reading, building local networks and inspiring people to pick up a book and feel the proven power of reading.

The need:

- Around 8.2 million people (18% of adults) in England and Northern Ireland score at the lowest level of proficiency in literacy (at or below Level 1)[ii]
- Low levels of literacy cost the UK an estimated £81 billion a year in lost earnings and increased welfare spending, impacting on 'the success of the economy as a whole'[iii]
- Adults with lower levels of literacy are more likely to believe that they have little impact on political processes and are less likely to participate in volunteer activities[iv]
- Reading extensively and for pleasure can foster the development of stronger reading habits and increase literacy skills at a greater rate than through formal literacy lessons[v]
- Reading groups and shared reading have been found to improve wellbeing, alleviate mental and physical health conditions (depression, dementia, chronic pain[vi])

We believe book clubs have the power to continue to encourage and foster a community of readers. Our recent research collated from book clubs across the UK shows:

- **94%** read more widely, feel more connected to others and talk about reading with others
- **91%** find reading more enjoyable when they can discuss the book with others
- **90%** feel happier
- **78%** feel more confident to try other things
- **77%** read more

We have also found participation in shared book clubs is linked to enhanced relaxation, calmness, concentration, quality of life, confidence and self-esteem, as well as feelings of shared community and common purpose.

Book clubs are more than books – they're about connection, discovery and the joy of reading together. So why not pick up a book and find a club that interests you? You never know where the next story might take you...

Discover a book club near you on our 'Find a Book Club' page and find out more about our **reading research** and the **benefits of joining a book club**.

[i] The Reading Agency (2024) [The State of the Nation's Adult Reading: 2024 Report](#)

[ii] Wheeler et al. (2024) [Survey of Adult Skills 2023 \(PIAAC\): national report for England](#) Estimated number of adults calculated from [Population estimates for England and Wales - Office for National Statistics](#) (2023, England males & females, 18 and over)

[iii] World Literacy Foundation (2023) [The Economic and Social Cost of Illiteracy 2023](#)

[iv] OECD (2023) [Do Adults Have the Skills They Need to Thrive in a Changing World?](#) | OECD p 163-166

[v] Hiltor, S, et al. (2018) [A Society of Readers](#) Demos p. 26

[vi] Billington, J and Steenberg, M. (2021) [Literary Reading and Mental Wellbeing](#).

Why join or start a book club?

Book clubs offer a fantastic opportunity to spend time with people who have similar interests to you and want to read great books. You can start one with people you already know, or find a local group to join (via our website) and meet new people.

If you often read books and are desperate to talk to other people about it, a book club is the place for you. Or perhaps you don't often read, and want the motivation of being part of a group to inspire you to read more regularly. Maybe you just love spending time with people, eating, drinking and talking!

How to start your book club

If you want to set up your own book club, start with people you know. Invite family, friends or colleagues to join, and you can even encourage them to bring another person. There are no set rules on how a club should run – it's up to you!

Here are a few tips to help you get started:

- The club can be any size you like, but we think 8-10 is a good number of people. It's large enough to allow for no-shows and small enough to make sure everyone can have their say
- Most clubs meet once a month, giving everyone a chance to read the book and regular enough to keep people engaged, but you can meet more or less regularly depending on what works best for your members
- Host the club at home, in the library, or a local café or pub

How can the Book Club Hub help?

Once you have set up your group, make sure you sign up to the [Book Club Hub](#) website which features:

- **My Group:** Accessible to registered book club members. Clubs can track their members and the books they've read. Clubs can tag what books they'd like to read as 'TBR pile', tag books they have read to keep track, and can leave their own reviews
- **News:** News articles from our publisher and prize partners, spotlight book clubs, and content from The Reading Agency. This is where we will also spotlight book clubs with the spotlight articles. Clubs can filter depending on whether it is adult, children's or young people's content
- **Find a Book:** A place for clubs to search for titles and read reviews from other readers. Booklists from The Reading Agency and prize lists are hosted on this page
- **Offers:** Clubs can search through the offers from our publisher and prize partners, receiving free copies in return for reviews (due approximately six weeks after they receive their copies). Clubs can also apply to read and review both published and upcoming titles
- **Resources:** Resources (e.g. discussion guides, downloadable booklists, library resources) can be filtered by their target audience (adult, children's or young people's content)

Choosing what to read

There are lots of different ways to choose your books – take turns to pick one, vote on a selection, or do a lucky dip. Some groups like to focus on specific genres or themes, and others are open to anything. Many people say that, as a result of being in a book club, they've read books that they wouldn't otherwise have chosen, so we recommend being open to different suggestions.

Libraries are the perfect place to get books for your club, and many libraries have specific book club collections, or booklists that you can use to choose your next read. If you're struggling to choose, ask a librarian to offer a recommendation.

If you prefer to buy your books, booksellers can also provide great ideas and expertise to help you select a book. They can order in sets for your club, and paperbacks might be the best option as they're cheaper.

On the Book Club Hub, we work with publishers and other bookish organisations such as prizes to **offer** sets of books for clubs. These are free and all you need to do is send a review back to us. Keep an eye on the offers page and sign up to our **newsletter** to hear the latest offers. You can also take a look at our **find a book** page for inspiration from The Reading Agency and our partners.



Managing the conversations

We know you're excited to get talking about the books you're read, but what happens when the discussion doesn't go as planned?

Everyone comes to the club with their own opinions and experiences, and it's important that people are respected and able to share their thoughts. There may be things that people disagree on, but healthy debate isn't a bad thing! Remind everyone to consider the language and tone they're using, and to listen to others and acknowledge their perspectives.

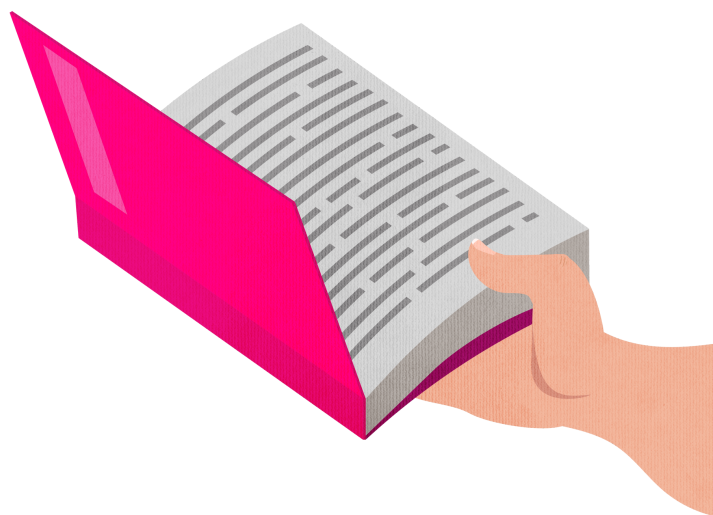
Make sure everyone has a chance to contribute if they want to, and understand that some people prefer to listen, while others are more vocal.

Icebreakers

You've read your book and come together with your club to discuss it, but where do you begin? Sometimes it can be difficult to know what to talk about first, so these handy questions will help to break the ice and get the conversation flowing.

- Did you enjoy the book?
- Would you recommend it to a friend? Who and why?
- How did it make you feel?
- Why do you think the author chose the title? What other title do you think the book could have?
- What are the main themes of the book?
- Did anything surprise you?
- If there were any plot twists, did you see them coming?
- If you met the author, what would you ask them?
- Did you like the writing style?
- Who was your favourite character?
- Are there any characters you can identify with?
- Which character would you most like to meet in real life?
- Does it end how you expected?
- What do you think happens after the end of the book?
- Does it remind you of any other books?

If you would like to write your own reviews or build your club's social media profile, check out our suggestions in our **Book Club Leader Guide**.



Frequently Asked Questions

Resetting Your Password

To reset your password, please follow the instructions below:

- Go to www.bookclubhub.co.uk/login
- In the bottom right corner of the screen, click 'Forgotten password'
- On the next screen, enter the email address you used to initially sign up with the Book Club Hub in the 'Username' field
- Once entered, an automated email will be sent to this address
- Follow through the instructions to reset your password
- Once changed, go back to the login page and enter your email address and new password
- If there are any further issues, please email bookclubhub@readingagency.org.uk.

Editing Your Personal Details

To edit your details:

- Go to www.bookclubhub.co.uk/login and log in
- Click on 'Hi_____' in the top right-hand corner
- This will take you to a page where you are able to edit your password, email, first name and last name.

Joining Your Book Club Online

To become a member of your book club on our Book Club Hub website, you need to:

- Go to www.bookclubhub.co.uk/login and log in
- A guide here: <http://bookclubhub.org.uk/bch-get-ready-to-connect>

Editing Your Book Club Details

To edit your book club details:

- Go to www.bookclubhub.co.uk/login and log in
- Click on the 'My Book Club' tab near the top of your screen
- If you are a member of more than one book club, a list of these will appear here
- Click on the book club you would like to edit the details for
- An overview of this book club, including its location on a map will appear on the next screen
- Click 'Edit book club', which will take you to a screen where you are able to edit the details including location, members and information
- To ensure your book club appears with the search function, please make sure to include the postcode of where the club meets.

About The Reading Agency

Everything changes when you read.

Welcome to The Reading Agency. We're a UK charity with a mission to inspire social and personal change through the proven power of reading. We work with individuals of all ages, communities and trusted partners to share the transformative benefits of reading for happy, healthy and thriving lives.

In the UK...

- 1 in 6 (8.5 million) adults struggle to read^[1]
- 1 in 4 children in England cannot read well by the age of 11^[2]

This limits life chances and choices.

Reading for pleasure and empowerment makes us more aware and informed. It helps us grow our imaginations. It makes us more empathetic and understanding of other people and cultures. It supports our health and wellbeing. It increases our ability to learn new skills. It helps us to communicate our ideas more effectively. It opens doors. It brings joy.

We know that not everyone has an equal start in life, so we support readers to create social connections and improve their reading skills. We help people manage their health and wellbeing through reading. Working with public libraries, prisons, hospitals and other community settings, last year our wide range of activities touched the lives of two million people. But with a UK population of over 67 million that isn't nearly enough. We want to get more people fired up about reading because everything changes when you read. The Reading Agency is an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation.

Find out more at www.readingagency.org.uk
@readingagency

^[1]England & Northern Ireland (UK): Country Note--Survey of Adult Skills First Results, p.6

^[2]National Statistics (2022) Academic year 2021/22 Key stage 2 attainment

