

Getting Started

Books Connect

FIRST MEETING

- Discuss how your reading group might work . People may be a bit nervous, and unsure of what to expect, so explain the purpose of the group – simply to discuss books and share your feelings and reactions to them.
- Remember it's not about book reviews or being a literary critic. Emphasise that group discussions will focus on the reading experience – what members thought about the book, how it made them feel, where they read it, would they recommend it to someone else.
- Everyone is entitled to their own views about a book – don't take it personally if someone totally disagrees with you – that's part of the reading group experience.
- And hopefully it will be fun – a social occasion that everyone enjoys, perhaps with tea, coffee or a glass of wine.

IDEAS TO GET YOU TALKING

• Favourite Books

Ask each person to talk about a book they've particularly enjoyed – it could be brand new or an old favourite. If you meet in the library, have a look around to find a book you would recommend to someone else.

• Book Covers

Stand up 10 books and discuss the covers – which do you like? Which don't you like? What are the reasons for your preferences? Who do you think they're trying to appeal to?

• First Lines

Take the first few lines from several books, and discuss them. Do they make you want to read more? Or do they put you off completely? A few examples are enclosed in this pack, as a Quiz Sheet to get you started.

DESERT ISLAND BOOKS

Which 3 books would you want to have with you if marooned on a desert island? Would they be fiction to help you cope with the situation, or practical books which could help you survive? Discuss with the person sitting next to you.

What do you like to read?

- What do you like to read?
- Are you a new reader, unsure of what you like yet, and exploring lots of different books?
- Or are you stuck in a groove, looking for something new challenging?
- Will you read anything, or do you hate some sorts of books?
- Do you prefer books that take you away from the stresses of everyday life, or something that reflects your daily experiences?
- Novels or biographies? Poetry or plays? Film or book? Magazines or newspapers? Travel or gardening? What do you enjoy?
- Do you prefer books that lull you to sleep, or books that make you sit up and take notice?
- Do you read books recommended by friends or the TV/newspapers/library?

There are some more questions included in this pack.
Use the sheet **What Sort of Reader are You?**

What sort of reader are you?

WHAT SORT OF A READER ARE YOU?

- **Where do you read? In bed? On the train?**
- **When do you read? Waiting for the bus? At night?**
- **Are you a skipper or a plodder? Do you read every single sentence, or skip over the boring bits?**
- **Do you ever cheat, and look at the ending first?**
- **Are you a single or a multiple reader? Do you have lots of books on the go, or just one at a time?**
- **Is there a book you've always meant to read, but never got round to?**
- **What else do you do while reading? Listen to music?**
- **What book did you read for the dirty bits?**
- **Do you ever re-read books? Do you have old favourites, or do you always want something new?**
- **Who is your favourite wise character/villain/hero?**
- **Have you ever fallen in love with a character from a book?**
- **Which book most enabled you to see the world from someone else's point of view?**
- **Do you own many books? Where do you keep them? Are they organised or messy?**