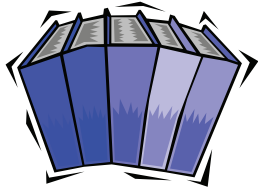


# Suggestions for a Successful Book Discussion

- Limit your discussion group to no more than twelve people.
- Choose both a starting and ending time for the discussion. One hour is standard. Give participants at least one month to read the book prior to meeting.
- Choose one person who will prepare some discussion questions ahead of time and then launch the discussion.
- If you choose the book, show up for the discussion. Open the discussion with why you chose the book, and whether it met your expectations.
- Plan to finish reading the book several days before the planned meeting. This will give you some time to think about the novel before the discussion takes place.
- You may find a reading group guide pertaining to your specific book to be helpful. These are good sources of themes, character descriptions and questions to discuss. Many discussion guides can be found and printed from [ReadingGroupGuides.com](http://ReadingGroupGuides.com). There is also a list of questions that will work for any book. Ask a librarian for assistance in locating helpful resources.
- Don't allow one person to dominate the discussion. Everyone should have an opportunity to express their thoughts and ideas on the story. You may want to try a round table discussion format where everyone has a chance to speak.
- Likewise, avoid tangents and off-topic conversation that do not pertain to the book.
- Do allow time for open discussion after reading guide questions have been answered.
- Some book groups like to add food to their meetings, or have the meeting in an interesting place such as a restaurant or garden, to enhance the discussion.
- A great way to end the discussion is to ask whether or not participants enjoyed the book, and ask how they would rate it on a scale of one to five.

**BORROW-A-BOOK CLUB**



**BURLINGTON COUNTY  
LIBRARY SYSTEM**

## **How to Start a Successful Book Discussion**

It seems you can hardly open a book these days without someone mentioning to you that they've read that title in a reading group. From small groups that gather in living rooms and libraries to the millions who tune in to find out Oprah's picks each month, reading groups are everywhere! So now you think you'd like to start your own reading group, but aren't quite sure how to begin.

The easiest way to start a reading group is to phone a friend! Call or e-mail one or two friends who share your love of books and suggest you read one together. Pick a book you think you'll all enjoy and set up a date to discuss it. If each of you brings a friend to the next meeting, soon you'll have a regular group going!

If you can't find friends who are interested in a reading group, try suggesting it to coworkers or other parents at your child's school. You could also put up a notice on the bulletin board at your church or gym. Online reading groups often grow out of chat room groups, bulletin board posters, or members of an e-mail mailing list. Anywhere that people meet and talk is a place to consider looking for reading group members.

Once you've gotten your group going, you'll want to lay down any ground rules for your group, discuss how you'll be organized, and consider how you'll make your book selections. Some groups specialize in certain types of reading--nonfiction, mysteries, foreign authors. It might be a good idea to appoint a secretary who keeps track of your book lists (both what you've read and what you plan to read), sends out reminders about your meetings and host or snack schedules, and contacts a local bookstore about getting enough copies of the book for your group.

People join reading groups for many reasons: the reading of good books and the discussions they inspire, exposure to new ideas and differing viewpoints, and an opportunity to socialize with other book lovers. Whatever your reasons for starting one or joining one, as long as you remember to keep it fun and keep the focus on books, you're sure to find your reading group a rewarding experience!