

Why start a reading group?

Research has shown that being a member of a reading group makes you happier, widens your reading habits and [helps you enjoy books even more](#).

Reading can be a solitary activity but when a book has moved or stimulated you it's rewarding to have the opportunity to discuss it with someone else. A reading group gives you that opportunity and encourages you to think a bit more about the books you read – why you like some and hate others, what genres appeal to you most and which characters you can relate to.

How do I set up a reading group?

Before you set up a new group, take a look at [Reading Groups for Everyone](#) to see if there is one nearby that you could join. Your local library or bookshop may well run reading groups so give them a call or pop in to find out if they are accepting new members.

If you don't find a suitable group you could ask family, friends, or colleagues to see if anyone knows of a group who'd welcome a new member, or if anyone would like to join a new one.

Here are some tips we've collected from experts on how to start a reading group:

1. The ideal group size is between eight and ten; this is large enough to allow for no-shows and small enough to make sure everyone can have their say
2. Monthly meetings work well because it gives everyone a chance to read the book, but are regular enough to keep people engaged
3. Libraries, bookshops, cafes and pubs are all ideal venues for hosting your group, as well as advertising for new members
4. You can choose books by taking turns, lucky dip or voting
5. Try preparing some basic questions to get the discussion started. Simple ones include: did you like the book? How did you feel about the characters? Would you recommend the book to others? Why/why not?

Choosing a book

Libraries are the perfect place to get borrow books for your group – many libraries will have specific reading group collections, or booklists from which you can choose. Librarians are also a brilliant resource for ideas on which books to try.

If you're buying books it makes sense to go for titles in paperback as they're cheaper, and bookshops can also provide great reading ideas and bookseller expertise if you get stuck.

Sometimes it is hard to know which books to choose, but [Reading Groups for Everyone](#) has themed monthly booklists and reader reviews to help inspire you. The Radio 2 Book Club features the best of [new fiction every fortnight](#), ideal for reading groups, and many groups like to use prize booklists for inspiration, such as the [Man Booker Prize](#) or [Baileys Women's Prize for Fiction](#).

Get involved

Don't forget to check the [Reading Groups for Everyone Noticeboard](#) for offers and competitions! If you want great reading group ideas sent straight to your inbox, you can sign up for our free [reading group newsletter](#).



BIG Book Club shadowing the Baileys Women's Prize for Fiction