World Book Night
23 April

Bookshop Toolkit

- Get involved in World Book Night
- The booklist
- Fundraising
- How to celebrate
Get involved in World Book Night

We’re so excited that you want to join in with World Book Night 2020! This toolkit will help you to get involved by planning your own activity in your bookshop.

What is World Book Night?

World Book Night is the annual celebration of books and reading that takes place on 23 April. People from all backgrounds are brought together for one reason – to inspire others to read more. The best part about it is that everyone can get involved! Whether you read a lot or don’t know when you last picked a book up, you can join in the celebration in so many different ways.

Why is World Book Night important?

World Book Night is run by The Reading Agency, a UK-wide charity that tackles life’s big challenges through the proven power of reading. In England, 31% of adults don’t read for pleasure, rising to 46% of young people (aged 16 to 24). We know that reading for pleasure is linked to fewer feelings of stress and depression, better sleeping patterns and improved literacy.

As well as celebrating reading, we work with publishers to donate books to organisations across the country, including prisons, colleges, hospitals, care homes and homeless shelters, and many more. These organisations reach non-readers and those who don’t have access to books. Since 2011, we have given out over 2.7 million books. We believe that everyone can participate in World Book Night, and for many this book will start their reading journey.
The Booklist

Every year, we work closely with publishers to put together a list of books that encourage and inspire everyone to read. What we look for is simple – good, enjoyable and engaging books. We include a variety of genres: fiction and non-fiction as well as books aimed at young adults.

All books are in-print and available to borrow from public libraries or buy from retailers. Most titles are also available in digital format, as eBooks or audiobooks, so you can find the book that is best for you.

Find out more about the books at worldbooknight.org/books

Using the booklist in your bookshop

The World Book Night list offers the perfect selection of books to offer your customers. You can use the booklist to create exciting displays in your bookshop, using the resources from our website to make it eye-catching.

There are different ways that you can use World Book Night as both a commercial and charitable opportunity for your shop:

- **Buy a book to give away**

  Encourage shoppers to buy a book to give to someone else. This might be a friend, family member or even a stranger on the street! World Book Night is all about sharing the joy of reading, and there’s no better gift than a book.

- **Donating books to local organisations**

  As part of World Book Night, we work with publishers to donate books to organisations around the country that can reach non-readers, lapsed readers and those who don’t have access to books. Bookshops can help us to reach even more people, by giving books that people have donated to local organisations. This is the perfect opportunity to free up space in store by donating books that haven’t been bought.

  You can also encourage people to buy a book that you will then keep and donate to a local organisation, to still make the sale.
Fundraising

As a charitable programme, fundraising and donations are so important to help keep World Book Night running. It’s easy to add a fundraising element to your activity:

1. If you’re holding an event, ask everyone who comes along to make a donation to World Book Night
2. Get sponsored to do a run or walk, and get fit while raising money for literacy
3. Many companies will match a donation that their employee makes or collects, so if you raise £100, it may turn into £200! Contact your HR department to find out if your company offers this
4. Ask everyone who buys a book in the lead-up to and on 23 April to donate an extra £1 towards World Book Night

You can donate the funds directly at https://www.justgiving.com/thereadingagency

"It can be hard to find ways to reach people in ways that you can really achieve positive effects, but I think this is what World Book Night is all about.

World Book Night Volunteer, London, 2016"
World Book Night at Waterstones, Doncaster

Leilah Skelton, Senior Bookseller

As booksellers, we relish the feeling of getting books into hands, and especially so when we know that we are opening a world of reading to someone who has yet to discover its benefits. In many ways, it’s World Book Night all the time when you work in a book shop, but it’s undeniably true that as booksellers, we mostly interact with people who are already book enthusiasts, and already familiar with the effect a good book can have on an individual. The greatest power of the World Book Night initiative, as I see it, is to take books further than their usual reach.

What we did at Waterstones, Doncaster

In 2017, at my branch of Waterstones in Doncaster, we decided not only to encourage our customers to follow the idea of giving a book to someone who wouldn’t necessarily have access to books, but also offered our store as a physical space to act as a link between giver and receiver, with a clear focus on local community betterment:

Option 1: Buy a book and share it with someone who wouldn’t discover it otherwise.

Option 2: Let us help you to help our local community. Purchase a book of your choice with us – fiction, non-fiction, or children’s – and a bookseller will get it into the hands of someone in Doncaster who’d appreciate it. This year, we’re reaching school libraries, care homes, the homeless, and many others in our town.
The uptake was encouraging. The feedback that I received from pictures shared on social media of our sandwich board advertising was positive, and I encouraged other booksellers who liked the idea to copy our approach if they wanted, as the really positive thing about the idea is that it could be applied to any bricks and mortar bookshop – from chains to independents, big or small.

The process we adopted not only allowed an even distribution across the local organisations that we intended to support, but also benefited the store with sales, and provided a link between giver and receiver for those that wanted it. There is a strong desire amongst residents here to affect positive change on their own doorstep, and in essence, we simply positioned ourselves as enablers of this process.

Practically, we had to keep the donated books separate from the regular shop stock, and have a bookseller willing to do the legwork at the end of the drive to get the donated books out to the selected local organisations, but that small amount of effort was worth it to push those books out further than our usual shop-floor reach. And really, isn’t that what World Book Night is all about...?

“\nOur own world can be so many things in a day. From perfect to terrifying to undeniably impossible to understand. Escaping that, to tuck your mind into other worlds is a luxury everyone deserves. And sometimes, if we’re lucky, we can pull some more sense back into ours.\n
Sophia Thakur, World Book Night 2020 author\n"
How to celebrate

There are so many different ways that you can celebrate World Book Night! We’ve provided some ideas here, but you can do anything you want to celebrate books.

We love seeing how people are celebrating World Book Night, so make sure you post photos on social media using #WorldBookNight.

Hold an event

Who doesn’t love a book-themed event? We think that World Book Night is the perfect time to throw a party, and it doesn’t have to be at night! You could hold a coffee morning, afternoon tea, dinner party or even cocktails and theme it all around books. Anyone for a Tequila Mockingbird or A Rum of One’s Own?

Ask your guests to bring a book – you can swap these at the event, or collect them all to give to charity

Create literary-inspired food and drinks

Ask all your guests to dress up as their favourite characters from books

Show a film adaptation of a book

Organise a murder mystery and find out if any of your guests are better than Miss Marple or Poirot

If any of your guests are budding writers, ask them to bring an extract of their work along for a storytelling session

Everyone loves a pub quiz, so host a quiz night, with some special bookish rounds
Author visits

World Book Night is about celebrating all books, and it offers you a perfect hook for an author event! You can invite any author to speak, and use our branding to make it World Book Night themed.

Inviting an author to speak is a great way to engage people with books. Your attendees will have the opportunity to hear from the author about writing the book, and can ask them any question they like! Before inviting an author, think about the people who will be attending your event and what they would like, as well as how many people will attend.

Recommendation wall

There are so many books out there, so how do you decide what to read? Recommendations are one of the best ways to find something new for yourself or to share a book that you’ve loved with other people. You could create a book recommendation wall or table in your shop and ask everyone to add suggestions of books that they’ve loved. Display some of the top suggestions to introduce your customers to new reads.

If your customers are particularly adventurous, you could even have a book lucky-dip by the till. Wrap up some books, charge customers a small amount of money to enter, and they can go home with an unexpected new read.

Celebrate with your reading group

Did you know that being part of a reading group is linked to relaxation, better quality of life and feelings of shared community and common purpose? Many people find that being part of a reading group gives them more motivation to read, as well as a perfect reason to regularly see friends.

If you bookshop hosts reading groups, get them involved by meeting on 23 April for a World Book Night special:

- Choose a book from the World Book Night list to read and discuss
- Ask everyone to bring a friend who doesn’t regularly read