

## 36 Book Club Discussion Topics for Any Book!

You're in a book group and it's your turn to lead the discussion. You've found the perfect book, but there's no reading guide for it. What to do? Why, create your own, of course! With some all-purpose book club discussion topics like these below, you can turn out a top-notch discussion guide that will be an awesome fit for your book group.

Simply pick one to three topics from most of the categories for a well-rounded discussion.

### Overall

- What did you like best/least about the book, and why?
- Did you have expectations of the book (e.g., from reading reviews, hearing from friends), if so, did it fall short, meet expectations or exceed?
- What do you think of the book title and jacket cover? Do you think they adequately reflect the book's content, or are they misleading? If you had creative control, what changes would you make to these items, if any?
- Are you glad you read the book?
- What did you learn from the book? Did it change your perception? Did it leave you with questions you want to find answers to?
- Do you have a favorite quote or scene from the book? Why does this stand out to you?
- How do you think the book will age (or has aged)? If the book is recently published: Do you think it is one that people will still be reading in decades to come? If it was published in the past: Is it still relevant? If it was written now, how would it be different?
- Have you read other books on the same topic? If so, which would you recommend?
- What did you think of the book's ending?
- What audience would you recommend the book to?
- If you were making a movie of the book, who would you cast?

### Author/Writing

- Why do you think the author chose to write this particular book? What are they trying to convey, and were they successful in doing so?
- How would you describe the author's writing style? What did you like or not like about it?
- Does the author's writing style remind you of any other authors? If so, in what ways?
- If you were writing this book, would you tell the story the same way?
- If you could ask the author one question, what would it be?

## Story

- Was the story credible? For example, even in a fantasy setting, the characters' motives and actions need to make sense within the context of their world.
- What did you think of the pacing of the book? Did it hold your interest throughout? Were some parts too fast or slow?
- Did the author use symbolism? If so, what was the purpose of the symbolism? What was the author trying to convey?
- Did the plot proceed as you expected? What parts of it surprised you, if any?
- Did you wholly trust the narrator(s), or did you consider them unreliable in any way?

## Characters

- Did you relate to a particular character or the circumstances they were in?
- Which character would you most like to meet and why?
- Who relates the story and how does that color the telling?
- If the story had been told from a different perspective, what would have been different? Would you like to have heard from another character?
- Are the characters believable? For example, does a child narrator sound the age they are? Is the voice of a character in a historic novel true to the period?
- If you were in the character(s) situation, would you have responded as they did?
- What do you think happens to the characters after the story ends?

## Setting

- How well did the author paint a picture of the setting?
- How did the setting impact the story? If the setting had been different would the story have been different?
- Would you like to visit the setting of the book? If familiar with the setting, did it ring true?

*Continued...*

## Genre Specific Topics

- Nonfiction: Was the author able to convey things in an enjoyable way for a non-expert reader? Do you feel the author justified their conclusions? Would you prefer that the author provided more information, less information, or was it just the right amount?
- Memoir: Do you feel the author was being honest? Were their gaps in the story you wish had been filled, or parts where you wished for less information. If the book is fiction with biographical elements, why do you think the author chose to write in this way rather than as a memoir?
- Short stories: Which story did you like best/least, and why? How are the stories connected? For example, do they share a setting, themes or characters? Would you have liked to see any of these stories extended?
- Historical Fiction: Do you feel the book was well-researched? Did you spot any anachronisms, or any period-specific aspect that wasn't mentioned but should have been?
- Mysteries: When did you figure out "whodunnit"? What did you think of any red herrings, did you find them appropriate or forced? Was the ending satisfying?

## General Topics Relating to the Book

Finally, consider including one or two general interest topics that relate to the book but don't require detailed knowledge of the text. These can be especially helpful if your book group has a relaxed policy about members attending without having completed the book.

For example, these are some topics from past discussion on BookBrowse that relate to the book but do not require a person to have read it in order to participate:

- Do you see the appeal of the [insert relevant to the book] lifestyle?
- If you could start a movement in your community, what would it be? And why?
- Is prejudice nature or nurture?
- Do you think it's true that we care less about others' opinions as we age?
- What are popular and favorite recipes of your family and region?
- Do you agree that "marriage is such a dreadful gamble"?

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