

# Blog: 5 Smart Ways To Set Students Up for Book Club Success

Title Options: 5 Smart Ways To Set Students Up for Book Club Success

1. Setting Kids Up for Book Clubs with Intentionality
2. **5 Smart Ways To Set Students Up for Book Club Success**
3. Book Clubs for Kids: 5 Ways To Create an Engaging Experience

Real talk. During my first years of teaching, book clubs used to terrify me. Launching them seemed like an uphill battle. In a panic to get the groups rolling, I sent my readers off to talk and assumed they'd figure out how to have meaningful, organic conversations about their texts. Wow, I wish I had just slowed down a moment and made a game plan!

I now realize the importance of being *intentional* as I think about launching and running book clubs in the classroom.

## What are Book Clubs?

Book clubs are a shared reading experience among a small group of students. As students meet, they aim to facilitate discussions on a text rather than their teacher leading the group. Here are some essential ideas to consider when you start planning your book clubs:

- They're student-led
- Students should choose the books
- Conversations are natural and unscripted
- They're an experience for grades kindergarten and higher, not just upper grades
- They can be part of any unit

## 1) How to Form a Book Club

First, you'll need to decide on your book club format. We recommend 2 to 4 students per group to get truly engaged conversations.

Here are a few options for grouping:

- Place two reading partnerships around the same level to make a group of four
- Group students based on topic or author interest
- Have students select from a collection of books and group based on their choices

## 2) Selecting a Book for Book Clubs

One of the most critical tenets of book clubs is student choice. Students should be selecting their book, although you, as their teacher, can curate strong options to pick from.

To select their book, students can vote for their choice on a post-it or index card or by using a Google Form. [Click here to see an example form.](#)

Here are some tips for planning a strong book selection process:

- Showcase and highlight all books students can pick from by previewing the texts and giving students a short synopsis
- Give students time to explore each book option. We suggest walking around to showcase the possible selections.
- Books could match the genre you're studying during reading workshop
- Choices could also be part of an author study or study of a specific series

## 3) Scheduling Book Club Meeting Times

Before launching book clubs, you'll want to ensure a consistent formal meeting time throughout the week. We suggest creating a schedule where students can meet 2 to 3 times a week.

In addition to the book club meetings, clubs should also have **daily** quick check-ins to decide how many pages or chapters kids need to read during independent reading time and then at home that night. You want to make sure students have enough time to read and process the book between book club meetings. Once you've designated *when* students will meet, create a visual schedule or calendar for your students.

*Expert Tip: Book clubs can also collaborate during other blocks of your day, like during read-aloud. Instead of turning and talking with a partner during read-aloud, students can turn and talk with their book clubs.*

#### 4) Routines to Consider Before Launching a Book Club

Creating an engaged book club will take some effort — and it's well worth it! You'll want to consider those tiny routines and expectations to support your students in their book club conversations.

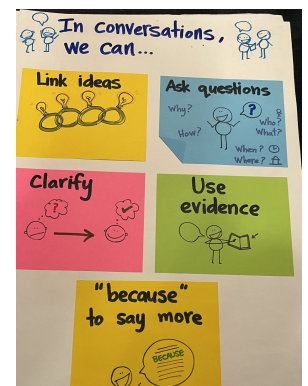
Here's a list of practices to consider:

1. Create a set-up routine for book clubs, along with an anchor chart:
  - Include a map of the classroom indicating where clubs will gather and meet
  - Include what materials to bring (book, reading response notebook, sticky notes, and pens or pencils.)
2. Invite book club members to get to know each other before jumping into discussing their texts:
  - Encourage students to create a club name to help form a group identity
  - Ask kids to draft a club constitution or club norms that might include the following:
    - How to be great listeners and speakers during meetings
    - What to bring to meetings
    - What to do if you're absent
    - What to do if you need to catch up
    - Roles and responsibilities of each member
3. Decide how you want students to store artifacts they use or create during their discussion
  - Consider keeping a physical folder stored somewhere in the room for each group
  - Consider having a digital folder on a Google Classroom for each group

#### 5) Supporting Thinking and Talking in Book Clubs

This is where the magic happens. After you set up all your routines and procedures, it's necessary to plan how you want student discussions to look, sound, and feel. Here are a few suggestions to immerse your students in powerful book club conversations:

- Show students videos of book clubs having discussions. After watching the video, have students name what they noticed about the book club and record their observations on an anchor chart called, *What Book Clubs Look, Sound, and Feel Like*.  
*The TCRWP has a [Vimeo account](#) with great video examples!*
- Support conversations with specific lessons on talk moves. You can teach these as [mini-lessons](#) or even snuck in as mid-workshop [interruptions](#) or [teaching](#)



[shares](#).

Here are strategy lesson ideas to consider:

- Role of the speaker vs. the role of the Listener
- How to share airtime in a group and invite new ideas in
- How to agree, disagree, add on, or change the subject
- How to pose a question
- How to record big ideas
- Consider creating copies of previously reading workshop strategies for students to have during their group discussion

With a strong plan, your book clubs will be off and flying in no time.

Here are a few additional resources to support your clubs along the way:

Books:

- Breathing New Life into Book Clubs by Dr. Sonja Cherry-Paul and Dana Johansen
- Hands Down, Speak Out by Christy Hermann Thompson, Kassia Omohundro Wedekind

Resources:

- [Accountable Talk](#)
- [Book Club Planning](#)

**Want to read more articles like this? Explore these next:**

- [Virtual Book Clubs for Kids — Getting Started](#)
- [3 Simple Ways to Support Independent Reading at Home](#)
- [Bringing the JOY Back into Your Reading Workshop](#)

## Newsletter

**Subject: Set your students up for book club success!**

**Preview:**  This will give you everything you need

Real talk, **Name**.

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In a panic to get the groups rolling, I sent my readers off to talk and assumed they'd figure out how to have meaningful, organic conversations about their texts.

*Wow, I wish I had just slowed down a moment and made a game plan!*

I now realize the importance of being intentional as I think about launching and running book clubs in the classroom.

**Book clubs are a shared reading experience among a small group of students.**

As students meet, they aim to facilitate discussions on a text rather than their teacher leading the group.

Some essential ideas to consider when you start planning your book clubs:

- They're student-led
- Students should choose the books
- Conversations are natural and unscripted
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With a little planning, your book clubs will get off the ground quickly and easily — and students will have a meaningful experience.

Keep reading for 5 smart ways to ensure student success.

**New on the blog: 5 Smart Ways To Set Students Up for Book Club Success**

Have fun with your book clubs!

Dahlia and the LP Team

# Social Posts:

## Post 1

### **5 Smart Ways To Set Students Up for Book Club Success NEW BLOG**

Set your students up for book club success!

Real talk...

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Wow, I wish I had just slowed down a moment and made a game plan!

I now realize the importance of being intentional as I think about launching and running book clubs in the classroom.

Book clubs are a shared reading experience among a small group of students — and they're powerful!

As students meet, they aim to facilitate discussions on a text rather than their teacher leading the group.

With a little planning, your book clubs will get off the ground quickly and easily — AND students will have a meaningful experience.

Read the latest blog: [5 Smart Ways To Set Students Up for Book Club Success](#)

## Post 2

### **How do you form a book club?**

To form a book club in your classroom, you'll first need to decide on a format.

We recommend 2 to 4 students per group to get truly engaged conversations.

Here are 3 options for grouping:

- Place two reading partnerships around the same level to make a group of four
- Group students based on topic or author interest
- Have students select from a collection of books and group based on their choices

Have you tried one of these 3 groupings for book clubs? What's your favorite?

## Post 3

### **How do you choose a book for your class book club?**

One of the most critical tenets of book clubs in the classroom is student choice.

Students should be selecting their book, although you, as their teacher, can curate strong options to pick from.

To select their book, students can vote for their choice on a post-it or index card or by using a Google Form or other survey tool.

Here are some tips for planning a strong book selection process:

- Showcase and highlight all books students can pick from by previewing the texts and giving students a short synopsis
- Give students time to explore each book option. We suggest walking around to showcase the possible selections.
- Books could match the genre you're studying during reading workshop
- Choices could also be part of an author study or study of a specific series

Happy planning!

## Post 4

### **Supporting Thinking and Talking in Student Book Clubs**

This is where the magic happens in your classroom book clubs.

After you set up all your routines and procedures, it's necessary to plan how you want student discussions to look, sound, and feel.

Here are a few suggestions to immerse your students in powerful book club conversations:

- Show students videos of book clubs having discussions. After watching the video, have students name what they noticed about the book club and record their observations on an anchor chart called, What Book Clubs Look, Sound, and Feel Like.

 Support conversations with specific lessons on talk moves. You can teach these as mini-lessons or even snuck in as mid-workshop interruptions or teaching shares.

Here are strategy lesson ideas to consider:

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