

# Reading Boosters

## Social Aspects of Reading

### Overview and Tips

Reading may be considered by some as an individual pursuit, however reading, at its heart, is actually a very socially-driven practice.

Many researchers advocate for discussion around books (Margaret K. Merga, Aidan Chambers, Teresa Cremin) because it is these social aspects of reading that help young people to understand their own reading likes and dislikes, become aware of new authors and books, know how to recognise good writing, and learn about the world. Merga (2015) suggests that “linking books to pleasure and excitement [during discussion] potentially enhances the appeal of engaging in recreational book reading”.



Photograph by Greene County Public Library  
retrieved from <https://flic.kr/p/238PKA6>

Reading as a social practice could include some of the following:

- Try a *book blanket* activity, championed by Professor Teresa Cremin, such as the one in the ‘choosing strategies’ sections of this website.
- Make time for book-based discussion, giving your students the opportunity to share their excitement about what they have been reading, but also to pique the curiosity of other students in the class.
- Host a student book club, and be flexible about the form that this takes. Food is always a big draw-card, and exclusive use of the library space during lunch time is also appealing to students.
- Use online platforms to exploit the social aspects of reading, such as the excellent *Shelftalkers* website ([www.shelftalkers.slav.vic.edu.au](http://www.shelftalkers.slav.vic.edu.au)). Students can write their own reviews for the website, or use the reviews of other students to inform their next reading adventure. The website includes free teacher resources which help

students write a successful review.

- Access a copy of Aidan Chambers' book *Tell Me* which includes a range of activities designed to promote discussion around books.

## Further Reading

Chambers, A. (2011). *Tell Me (children, Reading & Talk) with the Reading Environment*. Thimble Press.

Kuzmičová, Dias, P., Vogrinčič Čepič, A., Albrechtslund, A. B., Casado, A., Kotrla Topić, M., Mínguez López, X., Nilsson, S. K., & Teixeira-Botelho, I. (2018). Reading and company: embodiment and social space in silent reading practices. *Literacy*, 52(2), 70–77.

Merga, M. K. (2015). "She knows what I like": Student-generated best-practice statements for encouraging recreational book reading in adolescents. *Australian Journal of Education*, 59(1) 35-50.