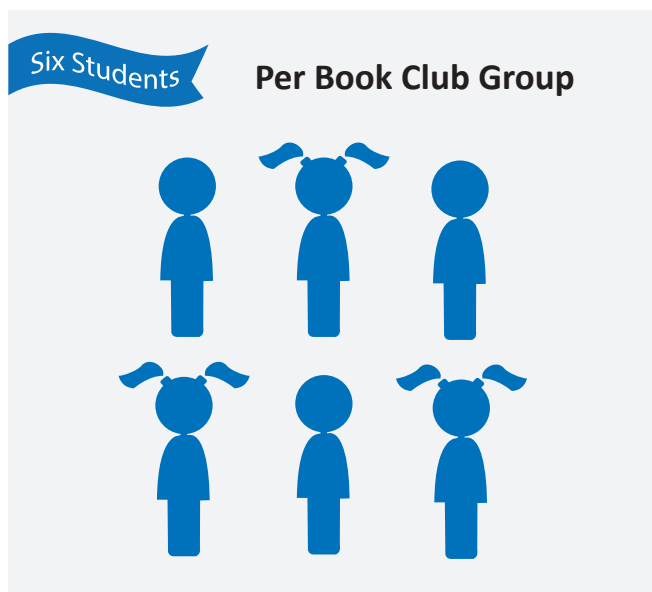


# The Most Frequently Asked Questions About... **Book Clubs**

*Book Clubs are once again on the rise as we see more and more teachers requesting materials to help support these initiatives in the classroom. Many teachers know that Book Clubs are an engaging and empowering method for getting students involved in reading however, there are a lot of decisions and set up required once a teacher decides to launch Book Clubs. We've compiled our most frequently asked questions about Book Clubs and spoke with our Content Specialists/Certified Teachers to gain some insight.*



## How Many Students Should You Assign to a **Book Club**?



The age and maturity of your students will be huge indicators of how big your groups can be and how many groups you allow to run at once. There is no magic number that makes a Book Club “right,” but just like the traditional small group, about 6 students is a great place to start. When deciding on a group size, consider the where and when of your Book Clubs. Will students be meeting in the classroom, during their ELA block? Will they be meeting after school at the library? The setting matters! You’ll also need to consider the key roles and functions within the groups, such as rotating discussion leaders, and how to assign those roles. Does everyone in the group get a job to do? Ask and answer these questions for yourself before deciding on how big your groups can be.

# How Do I Start A Book Club In My Classroom?

Kicking off a Book Club in your classroom is not a complicated process, but there are several considerations to be made while planning and at the onset. Below are some of the steps we recommend for starting a Book Club:

## ① Choose a setting – Where and when will students be meeting?

As a classroom teacher, deciding if Book Clubs are conducted during or after class will have huge implications for daily planning.

## ② Consider roles and functions in the groups – What are the important jobs and who will have them? Below are several adaptable roles you can consider for your Book Clubs;

- ▶ Discussion Leader (preps questions for discussion)
- ▶ Vocabulary Detective (locates important words/phrases or unknown words/phrases for research)
- ▶ Character Detective (takes the lead on character analysis)
- ▶ Setting Detective (takes the lead on setting analysis)
- ▶ Visualization Leader (identifies passages that help create mental images)
- ▶ Powerful Predictor (makes predictions of what will happen during next reading)
- ▶ Master Summarizer (summarizes what was previously read/summarizes group discussion)

We listed more than 6 roles to show the versatility of Book Clubs. If you prefer a smaller group, some jobs can be combined into one. If you prefer a larger group, there are additional literary/genre elements that can lend themselves to becoming “jobs.”

## ③ Choose a group size – How many Book Clubs will you have running and how many students will be in each one? Now that you’ve decided on some of the most important pieces like setting and roles, you’re ready to determine your group size.



Choose a setting



Roles & Function

*Did You Know...*

Students who are “proficient” in reading are...

**5x more**

likely to graduate high school.



Choose group size

- ④ Forming groups** – Who will be in each Book Club? There are ultimately two paths to choose when it comes to forming your groups... Will you form groups based on student interest? Or will you form groups based on abilities? If you'd like groups to be based on interest, present students with several options of books to read and group together students who have chosen the same book. If you'd like to group students based on abilities, consider personality types since there will be jobs to fill and students will need to work collaboratively during discussion times.



### Forming groups



### Agreed upon rules

- ⑤ Agreed upon rules** – What are the rules we must follow in Book Club? Once the idea of Book Clubs has been launched and children are aware of their groups/books, get together as a Whole Group to discuss agreed upon rules for discussion. It is imperative that students are owners in this process if we are going to expect them to take the rules seriously. Book Clubs are meant to run independently from the teacher so it's important for this discussion to include everyone. Are the rules clear? Do they make sense? Have students sign their name at the bottom of the rules and tell them this is a "contract" between the whole group for responsible behavior.

- ⑥ Special notebooks** – Where will we keep track of our books and thoughts? Dedicate a special notebook for keeping track of the books they've read, their thoughts while reading, and/or important notes from group discussions.



### Special notebooks



### Accountable Talk

- ⑦ Encourage the use of Accountable Talk** – How can we interact positively and responsibly with friends? Check out this video from TheTeacherToolkit.com of Accountable Talk in action.

- ⑧ Let Book Clubs run independently** – What should I do now that Book Clubs are running? Stay out of it! This is probably the hardest part for us as teachers. Once the Book Clubs are up and running, it's really best for you to avoid getting too involved in any one group. One of the main purposes of Book Club is to promote responsible conversations between peers and the constant presence of a teacher will defeat that purpose. If you chose your classroom as the setting, circulate the room while clubs are in session and take note of the rich discussions happening with your students.

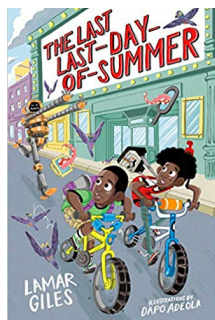


### Run independently

# I How Do I Promote My Book Club? 4

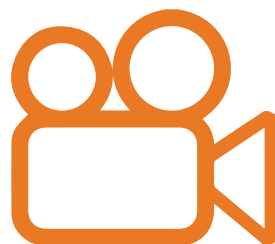
Start promoting Book Clubs several weeks before you intend on actually implementing them and continue to promote them as the year goes on:

1



Hang posters in the room of books you intend to use as options to start generating interest in what's to come. Book posters often feature larger than life versions of a book cover or sometimes special illustrations from the contents of a book.

2



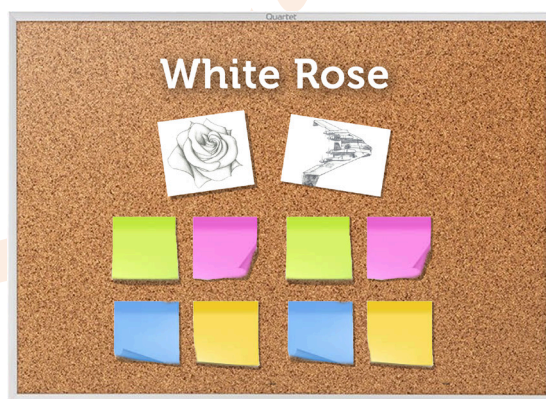
Assign reading projects where students pick their own books and then create a Book Trailer encouraging others to read the book. Use some of these student-generated selections as options for Book Club and replay trailers as you get closer to launching. Check out this video to see an example student-made book trailer: Wonder Book Trailer (Student Created).

4



Keep an extra bin in the library where students can recommend books they enjoyed reading to their classmates and consider using some of these as Book Club reads.

3



Once Book Clubs are running, keep the interest alive with an Instagram-style bulletin board where students can “post a picture” that they create from one of the passages they’ve read. Encourage others to “leave comments” in the form of sticky-notes.

# What Is the Difference Between Book Clubs and Literature Circles?



The terminology “Book Clubs” and “Literature Circles” are often used interchangeably by educators, but these methodologies have two different purposes at their core. Book Clubs focus primarily on comprehending a story and understanding the plot development. Literature Circles include both of these components of a Book Club, but also additionally require readers to focus explicitly on literary elements, genre characteristics, and author’s purpose/craft. Literature Circles are driven more by the academics of literacy while Book Clubs allow for communication to flourish among students.

## How Do I Know If My Book Clubs Were Successful?

Here are some questions that can help you determine success of the Book Club activity:

- ▶ Did I establish purpose for the book club- was that purpose met?
- ▶ Did I stress the importance of book club?
- ▶ Did the students persevere through a difficult book?
- ▶ Was there respectful, but lively discussions about the themes and topics the book presented?

There are a lot of different ways to gauge the success of a Book Club. The bottom line is if the Book Club promoted reading and discussion then it served its purpose.

As you plan for the next set of titles for book club or lit circle be sure to take student recommendations. Building student advocates and acknowledging their suggestions within the class can help bolster excitement and support for this important literacy activity.

***Happy Reading!***



Accountable Discussions Video

<http://www.theteachertoolkit.com/index.php/tool/accountable-discussions>

Wonder Book Trailer (Student Created)

[https://youtu.be/AvVG9k3\\_Yfk](https://youtu.be/AvVG9k3_Yfk)