

Encouraging book talk

Quick, fun ways to get pupils talking, sharing and buzzing about books



Introduction

Simple and straightforward ideas can go a long way in creating a buzz about books across the school. Often, pupils struggle to know what to read next, and peer recommendations can be a powerful way to guide and inspire their choices. This resource is packed with fun, low-maintenance activities that help students share their reading experiences, make recommendations to one another, and discover new favourites. Whether you have 10, 20 or 30 minutes to devote to pupils talking about what they have read, sharing preferences or exploring new titles, here you will find practical ideas that can be put into action straightaway to promote reading for pleasure in your classroom.

If you have 10 minutes...

One-minute monologue

Students pair up and take turns to give a one-minute ‘pitch’ about a book they have read recently. Encourage them to include what they liked, who they would recommend it to and their favourite moment in the book.

Do judge a book by its cover (blurb and first page!)

Set up a few books on tables. Students rotate every two minutes, quickly browsing and jotting down one reason they might want to read each book based on the cover, blurb or first page.

Sticky note reviews

Students write short book recommendations on sticky notes and place them on a “Book Buzz” wall or directly on the book cover in the classroom or school library.

If you have 20 minutes...

Book recommendation bingo

Create bingo boards/cards with prompts like “A book with a twist ending,” “A book that made you laugh,” or “A book with a strong female lead.” Students can chat to one another about books they have read and find peers who can recommend books that match each square on their bingo boards.

Mini book club circles

In small groups, students discuss a book they have all read or share different books around a theme (e.g. mystery or friendship). Each student gives a short summary and recommendation.

Desert island reads

Discuss which reading material (e.g. books, comics, magazines) pupils would take to a desert island. Pupils can list their top five reads on postcards and decorate them with different locations.

If you have more than 30 minutes...

Peer book awards

Host a mini “Book Oscars” where students nominate and vote

on books in fun categories like “Best Villain,” “Most Unexpected Ending,” or “Book I Couldn’t Put Down.” Include short speeches or presentations.

Book recommendation posters or clips

Pupils create posters or short video clips recommending a book. These can be displayed around school or shared on a communal screen.

Reading café

Set up a relaxed “café” atmosphere with snacks and soft music. Pupils rotate through tables where peers present and discuss their favourite books. Include themed tables like fantasy, graphic novels or non-fiction.