

Booktalking Guidelines and Resources

Structure

There are three key elements to a good booktalk: the hook, the content, and the cliffhanger.

- 1. The Hook – present something that will grab the listener’s attention**
 - Link the book to a particular movie
 - Read a gory/scary section
 - Use props
 - Use sound (play a book on tape)
 - Get the audience to participate – repeat/discuss key phrases, title, etc.
 - Read a part of the book
 - Relate the events/feelings in the book to current events/feelings in the listener’s lives
- 2. The Content – tell about the characters and/or plot**
 - Provide facts, then move to something shocking or surprising
 - Know a secret, talk about it, don’t reveal it
 - Copy dialogue to read or share as reader’s theatre
 - Tie the plot into a historical event or time period
 - Get into character; use voice or facial expression
 - Show a great picture (especially good for non-fic)
 - Tell something interesting about the author, especially when the book is an autobiography or is written by a local author.
- 3. The Cliffhanger – end your booktalk with something unresolved; leave them wanting more, so the reader will want to read the book to find out what happens next.**

How to Create a Booktalk

- 1. Read the book!**

Read as many different books as you can. You can booktalk a book without reading it in its entirety, but it won’t be as effective. Also, students may ask questions that you can’t answer!
- 2. Choose a wide variety of books of different genres and reading levels, and make sure they are actually available to your audience.**

Select a wide variety of books appropriate for the occasion and audience. This will help to ensure that you reach all students. The books need to be on your shelves. Kids get frustrated when you tell them about a book that really excites them but there is no copy in the library!
- 3. Read reviews.**

This can be helpful. You may find author information or your hook by reading what others have to say.

4. Take notes.

It's difficult to remember all the details of a book. Jot down the essential information on index cards: author, title, and brief plot summary, age appeal, main characters, and booktalkable sections. You can use these as you booktalk to jog your memory, if needed. Also, keep a file of these to customize booktalks to teacher's request.

5. Look for the hook.

As you read, look for the hook. What is it about this book that might grab the reader's attention and make them want to read it? Is it a character or an event in the story? How does it relate to the target audience's life? Are there pictures to show?

6. Decide what/how you want to share.

Finalize what you want to do. How much information/plot are you going to share? What technique would work best?

7. Write down your booktalk.

Writing it out will help you focus on what to include and give you a chance to revise it for more impact. Don't read this written version, or you will lose your audience, but a written version will help you remember what you want to say. Take into consideration the "Make them on the short side." Remember that attention spans are short.

8. Practice!

- Read the talk to yourself, out loud. If possible, use a tape recorder.
- Use any movement, drama, voices, etc. that you plan to use in your booktalk.
- Practice in front of a friend or spouse.
- Know the talk to tell without having to use your notes.

9. Make a handout of titles you plan to booktalk.

This helps kids/teens remember the books that you talked about. They can ask for them by name and author when they visit a library or bookstore. This also helps you keep track of what you've booktalked, so you don't repeat yourself!

10. Present!

Give the talk and evaluate how it went. You can informally talk with the teacher about their thoughts, if you'd like. This can be helpful. Keep notes for possible changes.

Booktalking Resources in Print

Bauer, Caroline Feller

Leading Kids to Books through Crafts

Baxter, Kathleen A. & Marcia Agness Kochel

Gotcha! Nonfiction Booktalks to Get Kids Excited About Reading. Libraries Unlimited, 1999.

Gotcha Again! More Nonfiction Booktalks to Get Kids Excited About Reading. Libraries Unlimited, 2002.

Bodart, Joni

Booktalking the Award Winners; Children's Retrospective Volume

Booktalking the Award Winners; Young Adult Retrospective Volume

Booktalking with Joni Bodart

Booktalk! 2, and Booktalk! 3, and Booktalk! 4, and Booktalk5

Bromann, Jennifer

Booktalking That Works, Neal Schuman, 2001.

Cox, Ruth E.

Tantalizing Tidbits for Teens: Quick Booktalks for the Busy High School Library Media Specialist. Linworth, 2002.

Gillespie, John T. and Corinne J. Naden

Newbery Companion : Booktalk and Related Materials for Newbery Medal and Honor Books

Langemack, Chapple

Booktalker's Bible: How to Talk About the Books Your Love to Any Audience.

Greenwood, 2003.

Littlejohn, Carol

Keep Talking That Book!: Booktalks to Promote Reading Grades 2-12. Libraries Unlimited, 2001.

Polette, Nancy

Multi-cultural Readers Theatre: Booktalks

Rochman, Hazel

Tales of Love & Terror: Booktalking the Classics, Old & New

Schall, Lucy

Booktalks Plus: Motivating Teens to Read. Libraries Unlimited, 2001.

Sullivan, Ed.

"Beyond Homework: A Librarian Makes the Case That Biographies Can Be Great Reads, Too."

School Library Journal, February 2001, pp. 38-39.

Thomas, Rebecca

Primaryplots2; A Book Talk Guide for Use with Readers Ages 4-8