

The Basics of How to Give a Booktalk

What it is: Booktalking is structured enthusiasm for a book. It briefly tells your audience just enough about the plot and characters to hook them but not enough to spoil the ending! Think of it as a mini-mystery with a cliffhanger ending.

What it isn't: It's not a review or critique, nor is it a memorized excerpt from the book.

Types:

- Formal (written and memorized) – usually part of a program
- Impromptu/Off-the-cuff (largely ad-lib)
- Shelftalks (very brief – a single sentence or two – introductions to titles; often given in the stacks)
- Read-alikes (if you liked *Harry Potter*...)

Length: The shorter the better – 60 to 90 seconds is about right.

Potential audiences: Post-story hour age and up!

Portable programming: Many booktalks are done on the road, especially by public librarians in school classrooms. But they can also be given in senior adult centers, in club rooms, prisons, hospitals – wherever two or three (or more) are gathered together in the name of books and reading.

Resources: *You* don't have to write each booktalk you do. There are countless booktalks available in print and on the web. See the bibliography and webliography in your packet for resources.

Show and tell: Show your audience the books you're telling them about; use non-book resources, if available (transparencies, power point, etc.). Share excerpts from audio books. Show author websites.

Have handouts and be sure the books are available for circulation!