**Host a Book Chat anywhere!**

# **What is Book Chat?**

A Book Chat is a gathering where people come together to share book recommendations, favourite stories, and other bookish business. Book Chats inspire Tasmanians to read more, embrace all readers, and start a conversation with their friends, colleagues, and neighbours about what and why they read.

Reading does not have to be a solitary activity and at Book Chat, it isn’t. Research shows that people are more likely to read when reading becomes social, either through formal Book Clubs, shared reading time, or just a bookish conversation with a friend. Book Chats make reading social and will help more Tasmanians discover the joy of reading this Tasmania Reads Week.

Book Chats are welcoming and inclusive. Everyone is welcome, no matter what they genre or format they read. All mediums belong at Book Chat – whether it be magazines, manga, comic books, audiobooks, picture books, novels, or video game guides. Acceptance, joy, and inclusion should be at the core of your Book Chat planning, messaging, and activities.

**What a book chat isn’t...**

A Book Chat is not a Book Club – participants are not expected to have read the same book or books, nor are they expected to follow a prepared discussion guide. Instead, they can talk about any book they want – their favourite book, what they’re currently reading, or what they want to read!

**How to host a Book Chat**

Hosting a book is easy. The most important thing is to keep people comfortable, engaged, and inspired. Some things to think about when planning your Book Chat are:

* Who is facilitating? These chats need someone to keep the conversation flowing and on track! This person can lead a more formal discussion or activity or be in a more casual role ensuring everyone is engaged.
* Who is it for? Is it aimed at adults or children, or both? Is it a public event, or an in-house activity for staff?
* Are you having a theme? For example, you could do Wine and Crime, Swords and Sorcery, In Love with Romance, Stories in Languages other than English, Indigenous Storytelling, Books for Dudes, Book Recommendations – you can even use props or dress up! The possibilities are endless!
* When will it be? Will it be at lunch time, after work, or a staff morning tea?
* Will it be catered? You could ask people to bring a plate, organise some catering, or just have tea and coffee. Food and drink are great for opening conversation and warming up the group.
* How will it run? Will you have one large group, break into smaller chat groups of people with similar taste in books, do a Book Chat speed date or a combination of all three?

**During Book Chat**

The time has come! Your participants are ready, you have some food or drinks set up, and everyone is excited to start talking about books.

You can start the conversation anyway you like. You can use some props, such as chatterboxes or piles of books, or you can keep it simple. To get the ball rolling, you might put some example questions to the group, or distribute cue cards with sample questions that people can use to start their own conversations.

Some good starter questions are:

* What are you currently reading?
* What was the most recent book you read?
* What is your favourite book of all time and why?
* What is your favourite genre and why?
* How do you pick a book?
* How do you read, eBook, print or audio?
* If you could meet an author, who would it be?
* If you could live in any book, what book is it and where would it be?
* Who is your favourite villain?
* Who is your favourite hero/heroine?

Once the conversation is going, let it flow! You may need to guide it, or make sure everyone is engaging, but now is the time to have fun, get inspired, get social and chat away.

After your Book Chat is finished, and people have hopefully found some new books to read and some like-minded people, let us know how it went by emailing tasmania.reads@libraries.tas.gov.au, and sharing to your social media with the hashtag #TasmaniaReads.

Remember, if you have read everything on your shelf [[become a Libraries Tasmania member](https://libraries.tas.gov.au/public-libraries/membership/how-to-join/) and explore Tasmania’s largest bookshelf.](https://libraries.tas.gov.au/public-libraries/membership/how-to-join/)