

# Checklist: Facilitating Book Clubs for Adult Learners, *with prompts!*

## I. Preparing Your Book Club

### Choose Appropriate Reading Materials:

- Understand your students' proficiency levels.  
Review intake assessment or have a short conversation, asking where the learner is from, how many people are in their family, why they want to study English, etc. You can ask students to read a sentence or paragraph aloud to gauge their level.
- Prioritize interest level to keep students engaged.  
Do your students enjoy romance, mystery, drama, or something else? Let them vote on what they want to read!

### Consider Topics Relevant to Their Daily Lives.

Do your learners drive for a rideshare company? Do they have children growing up with different cultural values? Are they sports fans? Do they love travel?

### Offer Different Formats:

- Physical books, e-books, audiobooks, and bilingual versions all work.
- Set clear goals:
  - Share the skills you will focus on: vocabulary, comprehension, speaking, fluency, etc.
  - Tell students what they're practicing so they understand why the work is important.

### Foster Open Discussions:

Ensure the environment is non-judgmental and inclusive.



## II. Building Community

### Group Norms Setting:

- Co-create rules with participants.  
Is it okay to talk while others are talking? Do they have to skip class if they haven't done assigned reading? Where should they go to get help?
- Discuss expectations, roles, and preferences.  
Assign roles within small groups. Someone can be the notetaker, someone can be the presenter, etc. This prevents the strongest speaker from dominating and encourages shy students to step up.

### Use Breakout Rooms and Small Groups (online):

- Allow a relaxed atmosphere for shy students to discuss the text.
- Limit groups to 4 people for personalized interaction.

### Integrate Polls (online):

- Gauge understanding.  
Zoom supports multiple choice questions and yes/no responses.
- Get feedback on feelings or energy levels.  
Ask students to show a picture of how they're feeling at the start of class. It lets you know if you need to go easy or full speed ahead.

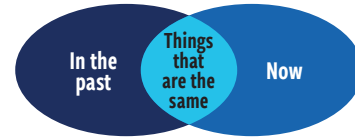
### Invite Community Visitors:

- Invite local figures related to the reading topic to speak in class.  
Is there a fireman in the book? A restaurant owner? A hair stylist?
- Facilitate real-world interaction with members of the community.

### III. Teaching Strategies

- **Emphasize Summarizing & Comprehension:**
  - Guide participants through the “5 Ws” and emotional reactions.
    - Who is the main character in the chapter?
    - What is the problem?
    - Why is the problem important?
    - When did the story take place?
    - Where does X work, go to school, etc.?
  - Aim for student-led discussions over time.  
Transition to group discussions without teacher guidance.
- **Tap into Sensory Details:**
  - Encourage visualization and sensory descriptions.
    - What does X’s neighborhood look like?
    - How does grandma’s cooking smell? How does it taste?
    - What does X see when she gets home from work?
  - Use relevant images. For example, share *National Geographic* pictures of animals.

- **Compare and Contrast:**



- Use Venn diagrams for visual comparisons.
    - How has the main character changed over the course of the story?
    - Who are the most important characters in the story?
  - Focus on character analyses, such as parent/child dynamics.
    - Why is the mom upset with her child’s behavior?
    - Which character do you relate to most? Why?
    - What can the characters do to understand each other better?
- **Build in Time for Reflection:**
    - Connect reading to personal experiences.
    - Discuss the learning process, identifying strengths and challenges.

### Benefits of Book Club Participation

- **For Educators:**
  1. Diverse Learning Opportunities: Educators can present lessons in a context-rich environment, enhancing traditional classroom teaching.
  2. Feedback Mechanism: In a more relaxed setting, students gain insights into their learning styles, strengths, and the areas that need improvement.
  3. Enhanced Community Engagement: Inviting local figures or community members related to the book strengthens ties with the broader community.
  4. Flexibility: Easily adapts to teaching in-person, hybrid, or remote.
  5. Professional Growth: Unique challenges and dynamics of book clubs aid in educators’ professional development and encourage thinking outside the box.
- **For Students:**
  1. Improved Language Skills: Regular reading and discussions help enhance vocabulary, comprehension, and spoken English.
  2. Confidence Boost: Students gain confidence to express themselves in a foreign language.
  3. Cultural Exchange: Reading materials expose students to various cultural contexts, broadening their horizons and fostering a sense of global citizenship.
  4. Community Building: Book clubs foster a sense of community and reduce feelings of isolation often experienced by language learners.
  5. Real-World Application: Discussions on practical subjects like job openings or pharmacy interactions provide students with language skills for daily life.
  6. Lifelong Learning: Book clubs instill a love for reading and continuous learning.