

Terrific Booktalk Tips



The purpose of a booktalk is to make listeners want to read the book. So think like you're half actor, half salesperson!

1. Choose your book. (In this case, one fiction and one nonfiction title that relates to it. The subject the books have in common is the theme of your presentation.)
 - Read them all the way through!
 - Choose books you like, or with parts you like.
 - Choose books that everyone doesn't already know about.
2. Organize your thoughts. (Planning your approach saves time and makes your talk better. Lists help you focus on what's most interesting or unusual about each book.)
 - List what you liked best about each book--interesting facts, overall impressions, or favorite parts.
 - List main characters and circle one or two you find most interesting.
 - What is the tone of each book—funny, scary, dramatic, informative?
 - Once you've decided what to include (step 3), make an outline of your talk. Use it to write your talk word-for-word and memorize it, or to shape less formal comments using a few notes.
3. What to Tell
 - Set your booktalk up with title, author, and a bit about main characters and what it's about. A snappy opening line ("Have you ever . . ." or "What would you do . . .") can grab listeners' attention.
 - Share a little plot or content, but NEVER give away the ending!
 - Read a short, interesting passage that sets up a conflict or expresses the tone. It might include lots of action or show a character's personality.
 - Finish with a teaser or cliffhanger—something that leaves your audience wanting more. If you can, end with the title of the book.
 - Keep it short! Your whole talk should take less than four minutes.
4. Presentation Tips
 - Relax. Speak clearly, expressively, and not too fast; make eye contact with the audience.
 - Be dramatic. Could you give the talk as though you were a character in the story, saying "I" and using the character's accent and gestures?
 - Are there two characters who see things differently? Choose a short scene and present it from both points of view.
 - Is there a repeated phrase or recurring joke in the book? Use it!
 - Use props or play appropriate background music. But keep it simple!

