

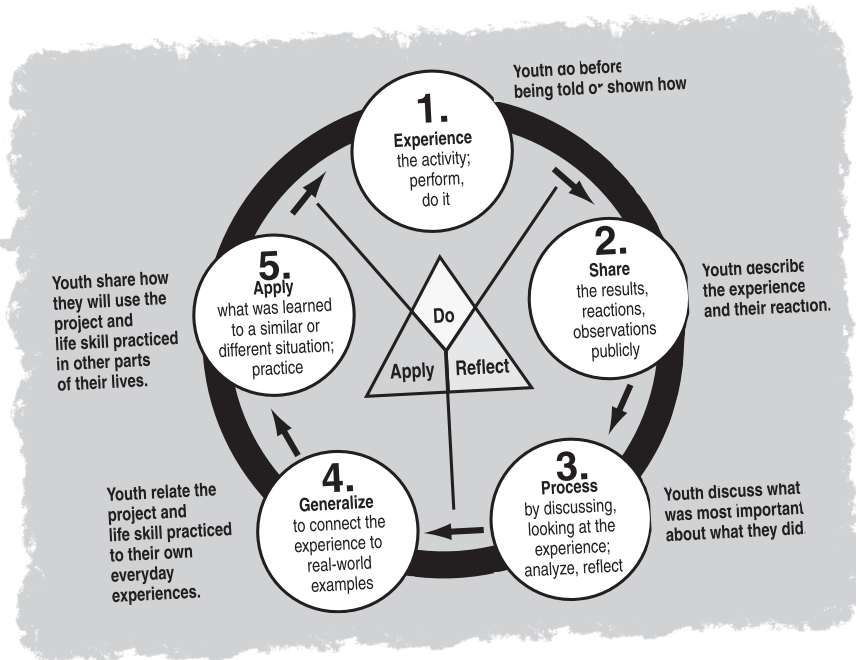
# Crazy *about* Books



Having Fun with a  
Reading Circle

# Experiential Learning Model

"Experiential learning" is what distinguishes 4-H Youth Development Education from many formal education methods. It involves providing opportunities for youth to practice what they are learning by sharing the experience, reflecting on its importance, connecting it to real life examples, and applying the knowledge that results to other situations.



Activities and learning experiences are designed with this model in mind. Your aim is to guide and support youth as they carry out the activity, and then help them reflect on what they did and how it applies to other situations.

Throughout this process be sure to take time to discuss and talk things over by asking questions related to the experiential learning model. You'll find that the *Crazy about Books* project has been specifically designed with this in mind. In addition, here are some other key questions for you to consider:

Examples of **sharing** questions:  
(What happened?)

- What kinds of things are you discovering from the books you are reading?
- What are you learning by taking part in discussions with other people who are reading the same books?
- What is the hardest part about belonging to a book discussion group? The easiest?
- What do you like the most about talking about books with other people? What don't you like?

Examples of **processing** questions:  
(What's important?)

- What do you think you are learning about communication from the books you are reading?
- What are you learning about communication through participating in book discussions?
- What is something important to keep in mind?

Examples of **generalizing** questions:  
(So what?)

- What kinds of things are you learning about yourself by being involved in this project?
- Why is what you learned important?
- How does this fit into other things that are happening in your family and community?

Examples of **application** questions:  
(Now what?)

- How have you been able to use the things you read about in other parts of your life?
- Describe a situation where the things you learned came in handy.
- If you haven't had a chance to use what you have learned, can you think of a way you might be able to in the future?



# Crazy *about* Books

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## *A note to Project Helpers:*

**C**ongratulations! A young person has asked you to help with this project. It's a part of the 4-H Youth Development Building Bridges: Reaching People Through Communication program and is intended to emphasize the role good reading skills play in the communication process.

This project is intended to be used by youth of various ages depending on their interests and the resources that are available to them. Middle school and high school aged youth will require less direct assistance from you; however, those who are younger will benefit from your support and guidance and the things you can do to help them get organized and stay focused.

### **Communication as a Primary Life Skill**

The focus of this project is on the life skill of communication with a particular emphasis on the importance of language and creative expression. Reading can be a life-long gift and the sooner youth catch on to how enjoyable it is, the more they will benefit.

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# Acknowledgments

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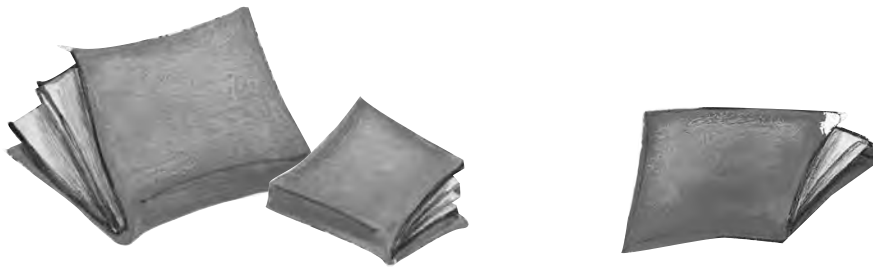


# Crazy *about* Books

**D**id you know that the next best thing to reading a good book is talking about it with other people who love to read? That's what this project is all about. It's a great way for friends who love books to have even more fun reading.

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# Getting started

**S**tart with a small group of friends who love to read. Invite them to get together and help make plans for organizing a book club. Here are some things to discuss. Use the planning guide at the back of this manual to write down your ideas.

## Ground rules

Here are some suggestions for your book discussion group:

- People need to listen to what others say instead of doing all the talking.
- No rude or insulting language is allowed.
- Everyone needs to read the book ahead of time.
- People need to come to meetings on time.
- If someone can't come to a meeting, he or she needs to let the others know about it.

### 1 When and where to meet.

Most groups meet on a monthly basis because that leaves plenty of time for people to read the book they'll be discussing.

You'll also want to figure out where to have your meetings. One way is to take turns meeting at one another's homes. Or, maybe you could meet in a special room at your local library.

### 2 How to choose which books to read.

Some book groups take turns deciding what to read for the next time. Another idea is to have each person suggest a book and then take a vote.

It's fun to read different kinds of books. Novels, mysteries and "best sellers" are great, but don't ignore other kinds of books. For example, pick out a "classic" that was written in another era, or try a biography or autobiography. There are many wonderful books about nature that are fascinating to read, and travel books can be fun, too.

### 3 How much time to spend discussing the book.

Book discussions should be fun! If they drag on for too long they'll become dull and boring. It's up to the people in your group to decide how much time to spend. You might want to set a time limit for your first discussion—for example 20 minutes—and see how it goes.

## Some questions and answers about book groups

**Q** What if you don't have time to read the whole book?

**A** Your group will need to decide the answer to this question. With longer books, one option would be to agree to discuss it chapter by chapter. That way it won't be so time consuming.

**Q** Does everyone have to buy a copy of each book that's being read?

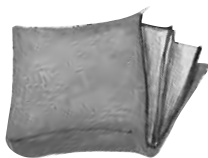
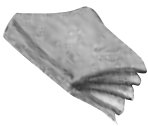
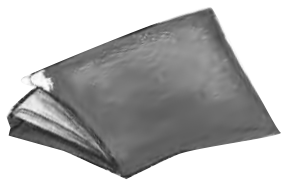
**A** Sometimes book groups work with librarians to make sure there will be copies for everyone. Libraries can arrange to borrow copies from other libraries through inter-library loan. Another option is for members who own their own copies to lend them to other members.

**Q** What if people start talking about other things besides the book?

**A** Have everyone agree to spend the first part of the meeting talking about the book. Afterwards, they can talk about other things. It's also a good idea to take turns being the discussion leader.



# How to lead a book discussion



- Have everyone vote on whether the title was right for the book. Ask people why they voted the way they did. Have everyone make up another title that would be just as good as the real one.
- Find out if everyone liked the way the book ended. Ask those who didn't like it to describe a better ending.
- Have people relate the characters and events they've read about to things they themselves have experienced. Give everyone a turn at sharing something from the book that reminded them of something or someone from their own life.
- Ask people to share their favorite things about the book—characters, passages or places. Have them describe what they thought was the funniest (or the saddest or the most moving) thing that happened.
- Ask people to describe how they would illustrate the book if they were asked to design its cover.
- Give everyone a chance to describe what the book was about in 10 words or less.
- Find out what people thought about the characters in the book. For example, what would you like to change about so and so?
- Have people take turns answering this question: If you were going to write a sequel to this book, what would happen in it?



## Additional responsibilities for the discussion leader

### 1. Help people agree to disagree.

It's okay if people disagree—in fact, it can lead to some interesting discussions. But if things get out of hand, here's where the discussion leader may need to remind people that everyone is entitled to his or her opinion. It's "off limits" to criticize or make fun of others for the way they feel about the book. The thoughts and opinions of everyone in the group need to be respected.

### 2. Help people listen to the person who's speaking.

Sometimes discussions get so lively that everyone starts talking at once. Here's where the discussion leader needs to step in and restore order. It might help to have a small bell or gavel handy for capturing people's attention. Or agree ahead of time on a signal that can be used to remind people to quiet down.

### 3. Prevent one or two people from taking over the discussion.

There's nothing more irritating than being in a discussion with someone who insists on doing all the talking. Often these people aren't even aware of what they're doing. That's why the discussion leader needs to be prepared to step in and give others a chance to speak. Say things like: "That's a very interesting point. Does anyone else want to pick up on it?" "Thanks for sharing that. Now let's see what some of the others have to say." "Let's come back to that idea later. But first let's give (name someone else in the group who wants to talk) a chance to make a comment."

### 4. Make sure that everybody has a chance to contribute.

Some people are reluctant to speak up. That means the discussion leader needs to make a special effort to include everyone. Asking questions that require people to take turns answering is one solution. Sometimes the discussion leader can call on people by name if it looks like they're being left out. For example, you might say, "We haven't had a chance to hear what Kelsey thought about the book. What was your reaction, Kelsey?"

### 5. Keep the discussion focused on the book.

If people start talking about other things, the discussion leader needs to step in with a gentle reminder. Usually it's enough to say something like: "That's really interesting. Maybe we can come back to that when we've finished our book discussion" or "Let's get back to what we were talking about before."

If that doesn't work, it could be a sign people have lost interest and it's time for the discussion to end.



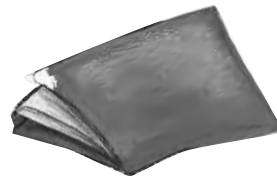
## More ideas for book groups

It's interesting to discover new words and the way writers use them to express feelings and experiences. Here are some ideas that can help people in your book group have fun with words:

- Encourage everyone to keep track of any quotes, dialogue segments or other passages in the book that impress them in a special way. (But don't write in or mark up a book unless it belongs to you personally!) When you get together to discuss the book, give everyone a chance to share what they've found.
- Suggest that everyone look for words the author uses that are new or different. It might be fun to ask people to find the definitions and bring them to the next meeting.
- Have each member bring one new word to the meeting so everyone can take turns leading a round of the Dictionary game. Here's how:

### Dictionary Game

1. Distribute slips of paper to everyone.
2. When it's your turn to be "it," read and spell your word so the others can make up a definition to be written out and handed back to you. (Be sure they sign their names first.)
3. Meanwhile write out the real definition on the same kind of paper so it can be slipped in along with the others. When all the definitions are in, read them aloud one by one (but do not mention who wrote them).
4. Then have everyone vote to see if they can identify the real meaning of the word



## Additional activities

Once your book group gets going, there's no limit to the fun you can have together. Here are a few suggestions:

### Holiday Literary Feast

Ask everyone to bring holiday treats as well as something to read that pertains to the holiday season. It could be a poem, a paragraph from a story, or even the words to a favorite holiday song. Have everyone take turns reading his or her selection to the rest of the group. Another idea is to go to the children's section of your local library and find a child's holiday book to read aloud at your party. (There are some beautifully written and illustrated books available that are worth reading regardless of a person's age!) Simply pass the book from person to person so people can take turns reading a page of the story out loud to the rest of the group.

If you want to exchange gifts, make it easy, inexpensive and fun. Ask each person to wrap a book they've already read and would like to pass along to someone else.

### Community Service Project

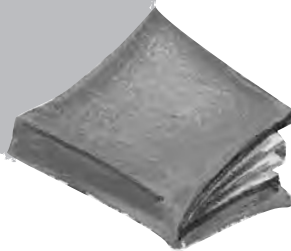
There are a number of places to share your love of reading and turn it into a unique and worthwhile community service project. Contact area daycare centers, elementary schools, 4-H Cloverbud Programs, and libraries. Ask about the possibility of scheduling times for your book club members to come for read-aloud or story sessions. You might also consider volunteering to read aloud at local hospitals, nursing homes or agencies that provide services for the visually impaired. Or, use a tape recorder to put together your own "taped book" and donate it to a daycare center or nursing home.

### Parent (Grandparent) Party

People who love to read often live in families where someone else loves to read too. So it might be fun for your book group to invite moms, dads and other relatives to a special meeting planned just for them. (Why not do it for Mother's Day, Father's Day or Grandparents Day?) Ask your local librarian to suggest a book for reading aloud that would appeal to all ages, or look for poems or readings about families.

Here are some other things to do at your party:

1. Ask your "guests" to take turns sharing the title and a short description of a favorite book they remember reading when they were your age.
2. Have everyone recommend the title of a book they read recently which others might enjoy as much as they did.
3. Have everyone tell something about one of the best books they've ever read.



# Personal Project Goals

I want to be part of a book discussion group because: \_\_\_\_\_

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I would like to have our group read the following kinds of books:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fiction        | <input type="checkbox"/> Mysteries         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Travel writing | <input type="checkbox"/> Science fiction   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Nature writing | <input type="checkbox"/> Spiritual writing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Biography      | <input type="checkbox"/> Other:            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Poetry         |  |

Some specific titles and authors I would like to read with our book group:

_____	_____
Title	Author
_____	_____
Title	Author
_____	_____
Title	Author
_____	_____
Title	Author
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Title	Author

# Book Group Membership

Name	Address	Phone Number

## Our Book Group's Ground Rules

In order to make sure we all enjoy belonging to this group, we each agree to the following:

1. We'll make sure everyone has a chance to talk and contribute ideas.
2. We won't make fun of what another person says even if we disagree with it.
3. We'll come to meetings on time.
4. We'll notify the others if we have to miss a meeting.

5. Other Rules

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# Group Project Plans

## Meeting Dates

Date	Time	Location	Discussion Leader
Date	Time	Location	Discussion Leader
Date	Time	Location	Discussion Leader
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# Books Read

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Title Author  
**Comments:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Title Author  
**Comments:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Title Author  
**Comments:**

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Title Author  
**Comments:**

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Title Author  
**Comments:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Title Author  
**Comments:**

# Books Read

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Title

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Author

Comments:

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Title

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Author

Comments:

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Title

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Author

Comments:

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Title

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Author

Comments:

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Title

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Author

Comments:

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Title

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Author

Comments:



# Amazing Words

A list of amazing words discovered while reading

Word	Definition	Use it In an Example
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<hr/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
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## Ideas for the fair

**B**ook-lovers needn't be shy about all the fun they're having. Call your County Extension Office to find out how to take these ideas to the fair. Or think of other places that would be interested in exhibits. Talk to your local librarian about setting up some space in the library for people who belong to reading circles like this one.

### Book Review

Choose your favorite book and write a short review. Include a brief summary of what the book was about, as well as your reaction to it. Describe what you liked as well as what you didn't like. Explain why you would recommend this book to others and any other comments you would like to pass along to readers.

### Book Display

Select a theme so you can put together a display using books, props, and other visual aids. For example, it could have to do with people or places you've read about, or it might relate to the kinds of books you enjoy reading (books about animals, biographies, mysteries, etc.) Talk to your local librarian or visit a bookstore to get ideas.

### Book Cover Illustration

Select one of your favorite books and create a cover illustration for it.

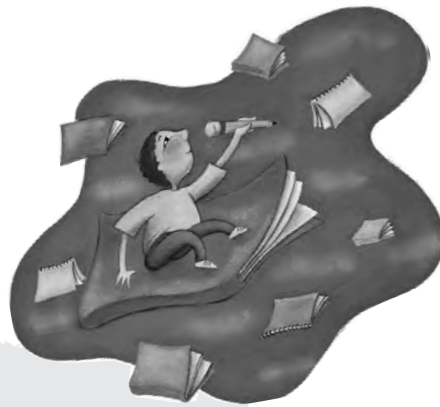
### Top 10 Poster

Create a poster about 10 of your all time favorite books. They can be books you've read with your book group or on your own.



### **Taped Book**

Make a cassette recording of a child's book.

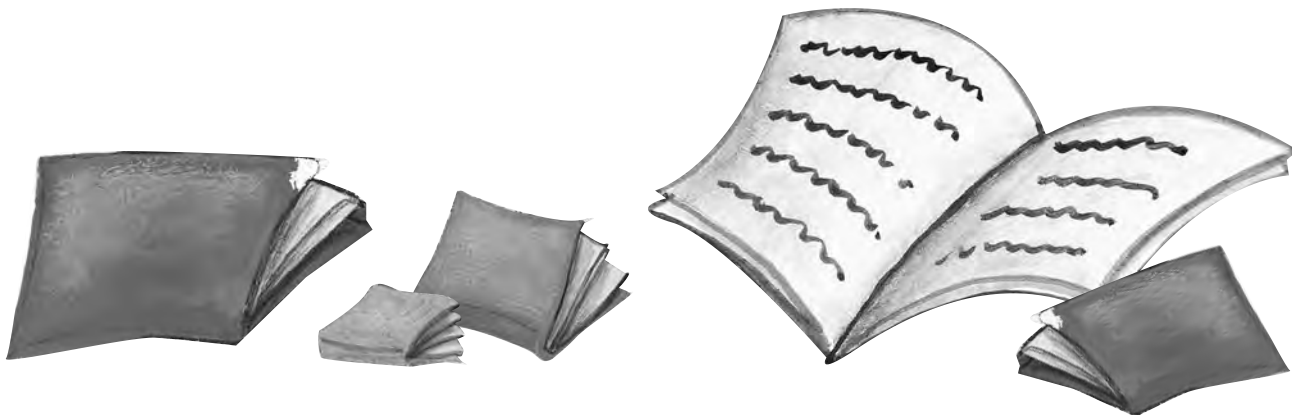


### **Amazing Words Poster**

Create a unique poster using the most intriguing new words you discovered from the books you've read.

### **Reading Scrapbook or Collage**

Assemble a scrapbook or collage using magazine or newspaper articles, illustrations or clippings that relate to the various books you've read.











Other books  
in this series  
include:

**4-H Public Speaker's Handbook:**

*A Youth's Guide to Preparing and Presenting Speeches and Demonstrations*

**A Parent's Guide to Public Speaking**

**Communication Activities for 4-H Clubs and Other Youth Groups**

**Creative Wordworking:**

*Fun Ideas for Writers*

**It's All in the Family:**

*Source Book of Communication Activities, Projects and Other Things to Do Together*

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