

# Booktalking Guidelines

## Structure

There are three key elements to a good booktalk: the hook, the content, and the cliffhanger.

- 1. The Hook – present something that will grab the listener’s attention**
  - Link the book to a particular movie
  - Read a gory/scary section
  - Use props
  - Use sound (play a book on tape)
  - Get the audience to participate – repeat/discuss key phrases, title, etc.
  - Read a part of the book
  - Relate the events/feelings in the book to current events/feelings in the listener’s lives
  
- 2. The Content – tell about the characters and/or plot**
  - Provide facts, then move to something shocking or surprising
  - Know a secret, talk about it, don’t reveal it
  - Copy dialogue to read or share as reader’s theatre
  - Tie the plot into a historical event or time period
  - Get into character; use voice or facial expression
  - Show a great picture (especially good for non-fic)
  - Tell something interesting about the author, especially when the book is an autobiography or is written by a local author.
  
- 3. The Cliffhanger – end your booktalk with something unresolved; leave them wanting more, so the reader will want to read the book to find out what happens next.**

## How to Create a Booktalk

- 1. Read the book!**

Read as many different books as you can. You can booktalk a book without reading it in its entirety, but it won’t be as effective. Also, your audience may ask questions that you can’t answer!
  
- 2. Read reviews.**

This can be helpful. You may find author information or your hook by reading what others have to say.

**3. Take notes.**

It's difficult to remember all the details of a book. Jot down the essential information on index cards: author, title, and brief plot summary, age appeal, main characters, and booktalkable sections. You can use these as you booktalk to jog your memory, if needed.

**4. Look for the hook.**

As you read, look for the hook. What is it about this book that might grab the reader's attention and make them want to read it? Is it a character or an event in the story? How does it relate to the target audience's life? Are there pictures to show?

**5. Decide what/how you want to share.**

Finalize what you want to do. How much information/plot are you going to share? What technique would work best?

**6. Write down your booktalk.**

Writing it out will help you focus on what to include and give you a chance to revise it for more impact. Don't read this written version, or you will lose your audience, but a written version will help you remember what you want to say. Take into consideration the "Make them on the short side." Remember that attention spans are short.

**7. Practice!**

- Read the talk to yourself, out loud. If possible, use a tape recorder.
- Use any movement, drama, voices, etc. that you plan to use in your booktalk.
- Practice in front of a friend.
- Know the talk to tell without having to use your notes.

**8. Make a handout about the title you booktalk.**

This helps your audience remember the book that you talked about. They can ask for them by name and author when they visit a library or bookstore.

**10. Present!**

Give the talk and evaluate how it went.

## Booktalking Resources in Print

Bauer, Caroline Feller

*Leading Kids to Books through Crafts*

Baxter, Kathleen A. & Marcia Agness Kochel

*Gotcha! Nonfiction Booktalks to Get Kids Excited About Reading*. Libraries Unlimited, 1999.

*Gotcha Again! More Nonfiction Booktalks to Get Kids Excited About Reading*. Libraries Unlimited, 2002.

Bodart, Joni

*Booktalking the Award Winners; Children's Retrospective Volume*

*Booktalking the Award Winners; Young Adult Retrospective Volume*

*Booktalking with Joni Bodart*

*Booktalk! 2*, and *Booktalk! 3*, and *Booktalk! 4*, and *Booktalk5*

Bromann, Jennifer

*Booktalking That Works*, Neal Schuman, 2001.

Cox, Ruth E.

*Tantalizing Tidbits for Teens: Quick Booktalks for the Busy High School Library Media Specialist*. Linworth, 2002.

Gillespie, John T. and Corinne J. Naden

*Newbery Companion : Booktalk and Related Materials for Newbery Medal and Honor Books*

Langemack, Chapple

*Booktalker's Bible: How to Talk About the Books Your Love to Any Audience*.

Greenwood, 2003.

Littlejohn, Carol

*Keep Talking That Book!: Booktalks to Promote Reading Grades 2-12*. Libraries Unlimited, 2001.

Polette, Nancy

*Multi-cultural Readers Theatre: Booktalks*

Rochman, Hazel

*Tales of Love & Terror: Booktalking the Classics, Old & New*

Schall, Lucy

*Booktalks Plus: Motivating Teens to Read*. Libraries Unlimited, 2001.

Sullivan, Ed.

"Beyond Homework: A Librarian Makes the Case That Biographies Can Be Great Reads, Too."

*School Library Journal*, February 2001, pp. 38-39.

Thomas, Rebecca

*Primaryplots2; A Book Talk Guide for Use with Readers Ages 4-8*