Reading contest will help interest students in the library and build a reading habit

1. Send out letters to area schools.
2. Register each student as the agree to participate.
3. Help each child to find books in their own reading level (correct reading level is no more than 3 mistakes on a page when reading aloud.)
4. Quiz each student after they have read their book. Here how to give a short quiz on the student’s book.
5. Open the book to any page and look for a person’s name or an action, and ask the student to tell you about it without looking at the book. For instance, you open a page at random and see the name, George. “Who is George?” you ask. “What does George do in the story?”
6. Do this five times at random in the book.
7. At the end of a month, count up the books each student has read, and make a list of who is in first place, second and so on. Contact your Board of Trustees and with their help organize an award ceremony for your contestants.

**Starting a Reading Club**

1. Choose a good book and have at least ten copies for each of the reading club members (to be kept at the library).
2. Meet regularly each week at the same time. Give an assignment at the end of the discussion for the club members to read before the next meeting. (You read the chapter ahead of time and organize at least ten questions for the reading club meeting.)
3. Periodically give the reading club members some recognition, such as at the award ceremony for the reading contest.

Here are some more ideas:

**Organizing and Leading a Reading Club**

1. **Read the book:** This may seem obvious, but it is the most important step, so it is worth stating. It is a good idea to plan on finishing the book a little earlier than you might otherwise so that you have time to think about it and prepare before your book club meets.
2. **Write down important page numbers**: If there are parts of the book that made an impact on you or that you think may come up in discussion, write down the page numbers so that you can access the passages easily while preparing and leading your book club discussion.
3. **Come up with eight to ten questions about the book**: Want to come up with your own questions? Check out the tips for writing book club questions on page two.
4. **Let others answer first**: When you are asking questions, you want to facilitate discussion, not come off as a teacher. By letting others in the book club answer first, you will promote conversation and help everyone feel like their opinions matter. Note: Sometimes people may need to think before they answer. Part of being a good leader is being comfortable with silence. Don’t feel like you have to jump in if no one answers immediately. If needed, clarify, expand or rephrase the question.
5. **Make connections between comments:** If someone gives an answer to question 2 that connects well with question 5, don’t feel obligated to ask questions 3 and 4 before moving to 5. You are the leader and you can go in whatever order you want. Even if you go in order, try to find a link between an answer and the next question. By connecting people’s comments to the questions, you’ll help build momentum in the conversation.
6. **Occasionally direct questions toward quiet people**: You don’t want to put anyone on the spot, but you want everyone to know their opinions are valued. If you have a few talkative people who always jump right in, directing a q question to a specific person may help draw out the quieter people ( and let the loud people know it is time to give someone else a turn.)
7. **Rein in tangents**: Book clubs are popular not only because people like to read, but also because they are great social outlets. A little off topic conversation is fine, but you also want to respect the fact that people have read the book and expect to talk about it. As the facilitator, it is your job to recognize tangents and bring the discussion back to the book.
8. **Don’t feel obligated to get through all the questions**: The best questions sometimes lead to intense conversations. That’s a good thing! The questions are there as a guide. While you will want to get through at least three or four questions, it will probably be rare that you finish all ten. Respect people’s time by wrapping up the discussion when the meeting time is over rather than pushing on until you finish everything you planned.
9. **Wrap up the discussion**: One good way to wrap up a conversation and help people summarize their opinions of the book is to ask each person to rate the book on a scale of one to five.

**Tips:**

1. When writing your own book club discussion questions, avoid questions that are too general, like “What did you think of the book?” Also avoid questions that have yes or no answers. You want to ask questions that are open ended and help people talk about themes and how the book relates to deeper issues.
2. Do not make dismissive statements toward other people’s comments. Even if you disagree, take the conversation back to the book rather than saying “That’s ridiculous, “ etc. Making people feel embarrassed or defensive is a sure way to shut down the conversation.

**Time and Place**: Be sure to set a consistent time and place for meetings, so that you do not have to go through the process of scheduling each meeting. An ideal size for a book club is 8-11 people.

**Discussion questions for Fiction (stories which did not really happen)**

## Specific questions to ask to make sure that the chapter assigned for the day was read and understood. Ask some specific and some general questions.

### Remember: don’t ask questions which can be answered with a “yes” or a “no”. Such questions don’t promote discussion. Ask questions that begin with “How...?” or “Why?” or “What?”

### Sample book: The Gold Diggers Specific questions for Chapter One,

1. Why couldn’t Karanja use a real gun?
2. How will Karanja defend himself?
3. Describe the dangers in Karanja’s mission.
4. What details are given about Karanja to make the reader feel sympathetic toward him?
5. What name do they give to illegal digging?

## General questions:

### What was unique about the setting of the books and how did it enhance or take away from the story?

### What specific themes did the author emphasize throughout the novel? What do you think he or she is trying to get across to the reader

### Do the characters seem real and believable? Can you relate to their predicaments? To what extent do they remind you of yourself or someone you know?

### How do the characters change or evolve throughout the course of the story? What events trigger such changes?

### In what ways do the events in the book reveal evidence of the author’s world view?

### Did certain parts of the book make you feel uncomfortable? If so, why did you feel that way? Did this lead to a new understanding or awareness of some aspect of your life you might not have thought of before?

### General questions about Chapter One, The Gold Diggers:

### 1. How close to real life does the story seem?

### 2. What interests you about the story?

### 3. Which characters do you like?

# Discussion questions for Nonfiction (factual stories).

While many book clubs choose to only read novels and other works of fiction, there are many fascinating works of nonfiction that can make for excellent discussion. Biographies, memoirs, essays, historical and scientific accounts can all be very good reads. The following questions should help provide some ideas for discussion:

What did you find surprising about the facts introduced in this book? How has reading this book changed your opinion of a certain person or topic? Does the author present information in a way that is interesting and insightful, and if so, how does he or she achieve this? If the author is writing on a debatable issue, does he or she give proper consideration to all sides of the debate? How has the book increased your interest in the subject matter?