



Planning a Book Discussion

- 1) Create a realistic timeline for planning your event – at least two weeks, preferably more!
 - a. Decide what your goals are for the event
 - i. Does it matter to you how many people come?
 - ii. How long the discussion goes?
 - iii. Does it matter if participants have read the whole book or just part of it?
 - iv. Are there specific things you'd like to avoid?
 - v. Plan with the end in mind
 - b. To get what you really want, room and facilitator scheduling often take two to three weeks
 - c. Leave yourself enough time for something to go imperfectly and you'll have time to fix it
 - d. Divide up the various tasks among multiple people and be clear about who's doing what as well as the communication that will happen
- 2) Find a comfortable space that will lend itself to an effective group discussion
 - a. Ensure there is ample seating space for participants
 - b. Chairs should be set up so that all participants can see each other (rather than lecture style, or in a straight line)
 - c. Find a space with limited distractions, such as noise or people passing through
- 3) Identify a facilitator, and review participant and facilitator guide
 - a. Each member will likely welcome an introduction to their role in the event
 - b. Expectations can be shared prior to the meeting, and can also be reviewed at the opening of the discussion
 - c. To locate a volunteer facilitator for a Go Big Read discussion, contact Stephanie Lee at hlee535@wisc.edu.



For more information see: <http://www.gobigread.wisc.edu/>

- 4) Promoting the event
 - a. All groups require participants, so you will need to be sure to invite people to join the group
 - b. Look for people who may have diverse opinions and perspectives because that often contributes to a richer discussion
 - c. Be certain that promotional materials include the location and the start and end time and any other expectations you have of participants (i.e., those who have read the whole book, must live in a certain residence hall, music majors only, etc.)
 - d. Available tools at UW-Madison include e-mail lists and the Go Big Read Calendar of events (<http://www.gobigread.wisc.edu/events/>)
- 5) Allow for 60-90 minutes of discussion
 - a. You want to make sure that participants are aware of the timeline so they can plan to stay for the entire discussion
- 6) Provide snacks if appropriate and possible
 - a. Food often helps people relax and warm up for discussion
 - b. Be cautious of allergies and other food sensitivities
 - c. You can certainly have a successful discussion without providing food, perhaps by holding a discussion following a meal

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