Booktalk Boot Camp

Why Booktalk?

Booktalking

- Increases circulation.
- Promotes your collection efficiently.
- Reaches more people in one program than you may see in a whole week (especially teens).
- Is an activity whose primary audience is the nonuser.
- Is the most effective way to motivate reading.
- Increases the audience's awareness of the library.
- Builds relationships with people.
- Provides effective outreach to community groups.

What is a Booktalk?

A booktalk is a trailer designed to get someone to read a book. It is a way of "selling" the merchandise, a performance to get the audience excited about your book.

Tips for Writing Booktalks

- ❑ Choose only books you like, ones that you are enthusiastic about.
- ❑ Be sure to read all the books you are booktalking.
- ❑ When reading the book, look for exciting or humorous incidents, special character portrayals, mood or atmosphere—some "hook" for readers.
- ❑ After reading the book, ask yourself what the book made you think of: stories in the news; concerns in people's lives? What appealed to you?
- ❑ Don't give away the ending or any other secrets.
- ❑ Don't give a book review - it should not include evaluations or critical material.
- ❑ Read the book jacket or the blurb on the back, to see what the publicists thought was significant or attention grabbing.
- ❑ It's okay to check out reviews, too, both print and online.
- ❑ Think of different ways to begin: with a question; setting the scene; focusing on a character; telling a little about the plot; or setting the mood.
- ❑ Don't tell too much about the book. You want to pull readers in, but not drag them through the whole book. Leave the listener wanting more.
- ❑ Read aloud a passage if you want, but only if it is short and *really* worth reading. Don't read from most books you booktalk.
- ❑ Keep booktalks the length of a movie trailer - 2 to 4 minutes.
- ❑ Prepare what you are going to say about each book. You don't need to memorize, but you *do* need to know the points you are going to make. Practice until you are comfortable with your material.
- ❑ There are as many ways to booktalk as there are book talkers. Find your own style, your own way. Failure is a good way to learn.

Amy Howlett VT Department of Libraries amy.howlett@state.vt.us

Tips for Planning and Presenting Booktalk Programs

1. Know your audience. Ask the group's teacher/leader about your audience's reading interests, personal interests, and attention spans, and plan your presentation accordingly.

2. Think accessibility. How will you structure the experience so children can end up with titles? Will you use books by the same author? A theme that includes current DCF books and adds in others? A library display so that the audience finds a connection to the booktalk you gave when they visit?

3. Are there digital ways you can capture the booktalks? Ilsley youth TV has contributed www.youtube.com/watch?v=AUxG8XW)JPs , brief descriptions of all 30 books with book jackets. (Tricia Allen and Curt Broderson, DCF Award List 2014/2015 viewed 4/29/14) Publishers have created book trailers for many of the DCF titles—*Doll Bones, Flora & Ulysses, Primates* and others.

4. Always prepare more than you will need. If a book goes over like a lead balloon, move to something different.

5. Don't try to "elevate" their tastes. Include some titles that you know are super popular (e.g. Captain Underpants for young kids; The Hunger Games for young adults). This will give you credibility, thus making the group more likely to pay attention.

6. Start strong and end strong. You may find it best to begin with a known author.

7. Accept that a booktalk program is a performance and learn how best to influence the audience.

8. Variety is ***key***. Since you may be covering over 15 books in one shot, vary the types of books you present as well as the lengths and styles of the booktalks. If you present a "dark" title, follow it up with a light or funny one. Be sure to include nonfiction as well as fiction. Some people like to use themes, but if you do that, make sure it is very broad (e.g. "survival" and then use wilderness, growing up, dysfunctional families, etc. or "food", and have that be the entrée into a number of stories).

9. Introduce yourself and warm up the crowd with a personal anecdote or joke, show enthusiasm, keep good eye contact, invite interaction, and alter your presentation as needed to keep everyone responsive. Involve the audience as often as possible.

10. Remember to repeat the title. Your audience will forget the name of the book unless you repeat it and hand out a booklist or bookmark. Should you give the bookmark first or last?

11. Remember why you're there. Don't just sell books, sell reading and sell the library too. Talk about new resources, upcoming programs, ways to use the library.

12. Have a system ready so listeners can check out books on the spot.

13. Keep records of the books used and make notes about what worked and what didn't.

A Few Resources

Kathleen Baxter, nonfiction booktalks Catch her in School Library Journal or online at http://www.slj.com/author/kbaxter/#_

Booktalking http://blogs.slj.com/teacozy/2011/02/25/booktalking/ Blog post on preparing for a day of booktalks at a school by Liz Burns.

Booktalking Colorado http://ppld.org/booktalking/tips Rules for talking to teens, booktalks, and convivial posts sponsored by the Pikes Peak Library District.

Booktalking Tips http://nancykeane.com/booktalks/tips.htm NH librarian Nancy Keane's website with practical tips from librarians in the field.

Baxter, Kathleen A. Gotcha Covered!: More Nonfiction Booktalks to Get Kids Excited about Reading. Bibliographies and booktalks. 2005. Sorted by category—adventures, disasters, explorers, freaky and gross chapters.

Bromann, Jennifer. More Booktalking That Works / Jennifer Bromann. Neal-Schuman Publishers, 2005. grades and preparing for change. 200 booktalks. Better for teens but includes materials for younger with index by genre and theme. Self-help, internet and computers, transsexuals, football.

Diamant-Cohen, Betsy. Booktalking Bonanza: Ten Ready-To-Use Multimedia Sessions for the Busy Librarian / Betsy Diamant-Cohen and Selma K. Levi. ALA, 2009. Websites and online videos to pair with booktalks. E.g., immigration ties in origami, music, activities and books sorted by age group.

Sullivan, Michael, 1967. Serving Boys through Readers' Advisory. ALA, 2010. Lists of great titles, advice on booktalking for boys, with some booktalks on older books (2008).

INSTITUTE of Museum and Library SERVICES

This program is supported in part by the Institute of Museum and Library Services, a federal agency, through the Library Services and Technology Act.

A FEW BOOKTALKING TIPS

1. Choose a book you love.

2. Remember there are different ways to booktalk:
   - ✓ plot summary
   - ✓ voice of a main character
   - ✓ exciting incident

3. Give the title of the book and the author at the beginning of the talk and show the cover.

4. Use your face and eyes to sell the book. Don't read from notes.

5. Don't tell the ending. Leave the reader wanting to know more.

6. Practice, practice, practice.

This program is supported in part by the Institute of Museum and Library Services,
a federal agency, through the Library Services and Technology Act.

A FEW BOOKTALKING TIPS

1. Choose a book you love.

2. Remember there are different ways to booktalk:
   - ✓ plot summary
   - ✓ voice of a main character
   - ✓ exciting incident

3. Give the title of the book and the author at the beginning of the talk and show the cover.

4. Use your face and eyes to sell the book. Don't read from notes.

5. Don't tell the ending. Leave the reader wanting to know more.

6. Practice, practice, practice.

This program is supported in part by the Institute of Museum and Library Services,
a federal agency, through the Library Services and Technology Act.

A FEW BOOKTALKING TIPS

1. Choose a book you love.

2. Remember there are different ways to booktalk:
   - ✓ plot summary
   - ✓ voice of a main character
   - ✓ exciting incident

3. Give the title of the book and the author at the beginning of the talk and show the cover.

4. Use your face and eyes to sell the book. Don't read from notes.

5. Don't tell the ending. Leave the reader wanting to know more.

6. Practice, practice, practice.

This program is supported in part by the Institute of Museum and Library Services,
a federal agency, through the Library Services and Technology Act.

Book Connections
Princesses and 12 year olds

Frogged. Vivian VandeVelde. 2013
Princess Imogene kisses a frog and unexpected things happen

Rapunzel's Revenge. Shannon and Dean Hale. 2008 Suppose Rapunzel was a tale set in the West, and Gothel, the witch, loved money above all.

The Princess Academy. Shannon Hale. 2012 Every teenage girl must attend and learn how to become a princess.

Ella Enchanted. Gail Carson Levine. 1997. Cinderella must always obey. Unless perhaps something changes?

The Stinky Cheese Man and Other Fairly Stupid Tales. Jon Scieszka and Lane Smith, 1992. *The Other Frog Prince* and more fractured tales.

Newsgirl. Liza Ketchum. 2009
San Francisco in the spring of 1851 has a lot to offer boys. How about twelve-year-old Amelia Forrester?

The Cavendish Home for Boys and Girls. Claire Legrand. 2012. Victoria knows she's perfect; until her best friend disappears.

Book Connections
True Tales

Primates. Jim Ottaviani. 2013
Three young scientists are guided to life-changing observations of great apes: Goodall, Fossey, Galdikas.

Bodies from the Ash: life and death in ancient Pompeii. James M. Deem. 2005
Pompeii in photos, the bodies of those long dead saved by plaster casting.

Bomb: The Race to Build - and steal - the world's most dangerous weapon. 2012. Steve Sheinkin. True stories of a spy, a Norwegian resister and the genius in charge of the atom bomb.

Amelia Lost: the life and disappearance of Amelia Earhart. Candace Fleming. 2011.Who was Earhart and how do we know what we know?

Emperors of the Ice. Richard Farr. 2008.
23 year old Cherry joins Scott in the Antarctic in 1910. Who will survive?

Titanic Sinks! Barry Denenberg. 2011. Newspaper tells all! Fiction added to fact for you are there sensation.

This program is supported in part by the Institute of Museum and Library Services,
a federal agency, through the Library Services and Technology Act

Book Connections
How does it feel?

Boy on the Wooden Box. Leon Leyson. 2013. Memoir of the Holocaust. A 10 year old boy lives the unthinkable.

Wonder. R.J. Palacio. 2012. Auggie experiences 5th grade, both the cruelty and friendship school can mean.
.
Owen & Mzee. Isabella Hatkoff. 2006
A hippopotamus away from his pod and an Aldabra tortoise are friends.

Okay for Now. Gary Schmidt. 2011. Baseball, birds and a small town frame Doug's life until his brother returns.

Rules. Cynthia Lord. 2006. Catherine wants a normal life, one without the rules that help her brother David. "Keep your pants on in public."

Little Dog Lost. Marion Dane Bauer. 2013. A boy, a dog, and an old man. A dog story with a happy ending!

Listen. Stephanie S. Tolan. 2008. A wild dog pulls 12 year old Charley out of her self-absorption. Will she be able to train him, as she assures her father?