



Top Ten Tips for Great Booktalks in the Classroom

1. Pick a book you like A LOT.
2. Think about what you want to say. A good booktalk makes one strong point, a “takeaway” that listeners can remember.
3. Keep it short! A good booktalk is never much longer than a minute and a half. You can sometimes say everything you need to in 30 seconds!
4. Describe the plot in one or two sentences. You don’t need to explain everything that happened, and you don’t want to give away the exciting stuff.
5. Describe the feeling you had while reading. Were you happy? Were you scared?
6. Is there an image in the book, or a passage, or a particular moment that captures why you liked the book so much?
7. Great beginnings make great booktalks. Think about your first line. Ask your audience, “Do you like to laugh?” or “Do you like to be scared?” Or say, “I never met a character I liked as much as...” Or, “If you like books by Dav Pilkey (for example), you’ll love this one.”
8. Great endings make great booktalks. Try not to say, “And if you want to know what happens, you’ll have to read the book.” Try instead to say, “Rush right to the library, and ask Mrs. White for a copy.” Try not to say, “I loved it.” Try instead to say, “I didn’t read it once. I didn’t read it twice. I read it three times.”
9. Wear or carry a prop connected to the storyline to pique your audience’s interest. For example, if you are going to booktalk *Holes* by Louis Sachar you might wear sneakers, or carry a wand while talking about *Alice the Fairy* by David Shannon.
10. Smile!

Booktalks: First Steps for Teachers

1. Designate a space for booktalking. It could be a chair located in the room or a platform.
2. Model booktalking yourself. Every day for a week, give a talk to your students about a book you’ve read that they might enjoy.
3. Ask students to sign up in advance to booktalk. Place the sign-up sheet or poster in a prominent place in the room.
4. Signal the beginning and end of the booktalk with a special sound or chime.
5. Create a pin for a child to wear throughout the day that says, “Ask me about (book title)” to spur more conversation. Download the reproducible from the Chairperson’s Online Toolkit at www.scholastic.com/bookfairs.