

Reader's Advisory Resources and Links

Kitchener P Library	http://www.kpl.org/books_more/if_you_like.html http://www.kpl.org/books_more/booklists.html
All About Romance	http://www.likesbooks.com/ifyou.html
What should I read next?	http://whatshouldireadnext.com/
Library Book Lists	http://librarybooklists.org/fiction/adult/ifyoulike.htm
Good Reads	https://www.goodreads.com/list/tag/read-alikes
Teen Reads	http://www.teenreads.com/
Book Trust – Children 0-5	http://www.booktrust.org.uk/books/children/booklists/241/
Book Trust – Children 6-8	http://www.booktrust.org.uk/books/children/booklists/242/
Book Trust – Children 9-11	http://www.booktrust.org.uk/books/children/booklists/243/
Book Trust - Teens	http://www.booktrust.org.uk/books/teenagers/booklists/244/
Cozy Reads - Mystery	https://www.goodreads.com/genres/cozy-mystery http://www.cozy-mystery.com/
Children's Picture Book Database	http://dlp.lib.miamioh.edu/picturebook/
All Readers	http://allreaders.com/
Novelist – on our website databases	
Novelist K-8 on our website databases	
Overbooked	http://www.overbooked.org/

*If you come across excellent lists please share them with us.

Readers' Advisory Interview

The readers' advisory interview uses the same welcoming behaviors as the reference interview. Approachability is the key. Use appropriate body language and make sure patrons understand you have time to talk books and reading with them.

The open question varies in the readers' advisory interview from the reference interview. In the readers' advisory interview, you are trying to engage the patron in a conversation that elicits a broad set of information about their reading interests and habits. The two phrases you can use are:

"Tell me about a book you read that you really enjoyed."

"Tell me the story of the last book you enjoyed."

These will elicit the information you need from the patron to appropriately suggest books that match their needs and interests. Here are some categories to watch for as you try to gauge and match their interests.

- Genre: Does the patron enjoy mysteries, biographies, or romance novels?
- Setting: Where is the story set? One city or around the world? Outdoors?
- Time: When is the story taking place? Past, present, future?
- Length: Does the patron like short stories or epic novels?
- Hero: Is the main character innocent or sophisticated? One hero or many?
- Plot: Does the story have a point? A definite beginning and end?
- Pacing: Does the author move the story with action or dialogue?
- Subject: What or who is the book ultimately about?

Readers enjoy books for many reasons. Some become connected to a particular type of story or genre. Some enjoy one genre, such as mysteries, but only if they are set in a particular country, such as English mysteries. They may need a particular setting, such as mountains or small towns, or need a particular subject in the background, such as horseracing, to pique their interest.

Almost all readers go through periods of change in their reading habits as they move through life. Assuming that your regular patrons only want one type of reading material year after year limits them and you in achieving their reading goals.

Some of the best ways to improve your skills in readers' advisory are to keep a record of your own reading, browse the new book shelves and best seller lists regularly, and set a goal of doing at least one readers' advisory interview each reference shift.

Hints and Tips for Readers' Advisory

- Browse with the patron – be among the books as you move along in the readers' advisory interview to allow them time to look over new materials.
- Find the common thread in their reading habits and don't be afraid to suggest books outside their normal genre or subject if you see a connection.
- SUGGEST books, don't recommend. Recommending books means that you are endorsing them, or creating the illusion that you know a "good" book from a "bad" book. When you suggest, you are letting the patron make a choice without feeling pressure from the "expert."

- Let the patron say “No” and don’t feel like a failure when they do. When a patron doesn’t like a particular suggestion, you can gain valuable information.
- Watch for easily misunderstood phrases like “good literature” or “classics.” Some readers think Stephen King is a classic writer, while others will disdain any popular author.
- Use a follow up question like “Be sure to let us know how you liked the book.” or “Are there any other books I can help you find.”

Key Behaviors

- Talk books at the reference desk with other staff so patrons can feel comfortable asking for help. Patrons will hear you and respond with questions of their own.
- Be prepared for a discussion and for personal questions – Remember, in these cases the patron is not your friend, but your customer. However, there is more of a social connection with reading, especially for pleasure, than with searching for information, so be prepared to have patrons ask about your reading habits. A general response like “I enjoy all types of books, that’s why I work in a library. Let’s see if we can find something for you” is usually effective.
- Use displays for attracting attention (new books, genres, formats).
- Be VERY careful when suggesting books in a series. Some patrons love series, and some do not. Make sure if you are suggesting the first book in a trilogy that you tell the patron about the series. Or, if you suggest a book out of order in a series, make sure the patron knows how it fits into the larger series. Some series books can be read in any order, and some need sequence in order to make sense.
- Encourage patrons to select more than one book. Patrons usually need several choices once they get home to make sure they have a successful reading experience. Choosing more than one item will encourage them to experiment.

The key to successful readers’ advisory services is to have a commitment to serving readers in the library. A responsive attitude and maintaining a neutral stance on the “quality” of an individual’s reading habits will encourage good readers’ advisory interviews. Be aware of popular titles and hot topics, and understand that there are many tools to help you along the way.