

# How to host a Silent Book Club

Want to bring book lovers in your community together in a unique and peaceful way? A Silent Book Club offers the perfect opportunity to enjoy your own reading in the company of others. It's a simple concept: gather at a local spot, read silently for a set time, and then chat (or not!) afterwards. No assigned reading, no pressure – just the joy of books and community.



## What you will need to get started

- ☐ A passion for reading!
- ☐ A friend or two who might be interested.
- ☐ A welcoming venue – a café, library, community centre, TRA hall, or even an outdoor space if the weather allows. You can find your local library by visiting [camden.gov.uk/library-information](https://camden.gov.uk/library-information), emailing [libraries@camden.gov.uk](mailto:libraries@camden.gov.uk) or phoning 020 7974 4444.
- ☐ A way to communicate with your members (for example, a local email group, social media page or WhatsApp group).

# Timings

It can take around three to four weeks to get your Silent Book Club off the ground. Here's a suggested timeline with to-do lists to help you begin:

## 4 weeks before:

- ❑ **Gauge interest:** Chat with friends, neighbours, or local groups to see if there's enthusiasm for a Silent Book Club. You could also listen to a book as a group by visiting Camden's digital library or borrowing CDs. Find out more by contacting your local library or visiting [camden.gov.uk/digital-library](https://camden.gov.uk/digital-library).
- ❑ **Find a co-organiser:** Having someone to share the initial tasks with can make it easier and will help when you are away or have less time.
- ❑ **Pick the venue for the first sessions:** Consider venues that are accessible, have a quiet space and are free or low-cost.
- ❑ **Check out Camden libraries:** they often host reading sessions and other events celebrating books and stories. Visiting your local library or attending a session could spark ideas.

## 3 weeks before:

- ❑ **Set your meeting schedule:** Decide on a day and time that is likely to suit people who are interested (e.g. a weekday evening, a weekend afternoon). Consider holding sessions at different times of day or days of the week so more people can make it.
- ❑ **Create a communication channel:** Set up a simple email group or a private social media page where you can share information about meetings.

## 2 weeks before:

- ❑ **Spread the word!** Promote your Silent Book Club through local notice boards, at TRA meetings, and word of mouth. Your local library may also be able to help promote it in the neighbourhood.
- ❑ Keep it simple when promoting it. Mention what it

is, when and where it will be held, and how people can get involved.

- ❑ **Plan your first meeting:** Decide on the structure (e.g. 15 minutes of introductions, 1 hour of silent reading, optional social time afterwards). Consider if you would like refreshments and managing allergies if so.
- ❑ **Consider any initial 'icebreaker' questions** for the social time, although remember there's no pressure to talk!

## 1 week before:

- ❑ **Confirm details** with your venue.
- ❑ **Send a reminder** to those who have expressed interest about the first meeting.
- ❑ **Prepare a small sign** if you think it would be helpful for people to find your group at the venue.

## On the day:

- Meet your volunteers before the event starts
- Set up the venue together – decorate, lay out the food, plates and cutlery and arrange the tables and chairs etc.
- Clearly display the ingredients labels on the cakes and other food
- Enjoy yourself!

## After the event:

- Ask your volunteers to help clean up
- Leave the event space clean and tidy
- Take everything home with you
- Consider some communication after your session. For example, celebrating your session with a social media post, sending an email or WhatsApp to people who came to say thank you, thanking the venue, and sharing the date of the next Silent Book Club meeting.