

Books for Discussion: Lists

Good selection requires reading widely simply to know books that others place on "best book club book lists". Examine the lists. Do you agree with their selections? Would they be on your list or your group's list of best books for discussion? If so, it may be a list you can trust and you may select a title without having to read it first! Read summaries and reviews, but reading it at the same time as your group will keep you enthusiastic and fresh!

1. The first list comes from Reading Group Choices, a "pioneer" in the book club industry. Reading Group Choices has been publishing a guide for 18 years, gathering information from thousands of book clubs. Their selections range from the very literary to the very popular. The following list includes their top choices beginning in 2002. How many titles have your groups discussed?

2002 -2012 Book Group Favorites from Reading Group Choices*

Hanna's Daughters by Marianne Fredriksson
Ahab's Wife by Sena Jeter Naslund
The Jew Store by Stella Suberman
Jim the Boy by Tony Earley
The Bonesetter's Daughter by Amy Tan
Big Stone Gap by Adriana Trigiani
To Kill A Mockingbird by Harper Lee
The Poisonwood Bible by Barbara Kingsolver
Girl in Hyacinth Blue by Susan Vreeland
John Adams by David McCullough
Cold Mountain by Charles Frasier
Atonement by Ian McEwan
Empire Falls by Richard Russo
The Lovely Bones by Alice Sebold
Peace Like a River by Leif Enger
Seabiscuit by Laura Hillenbrand
A Fine Balance by Rohinton Mistry
#1 Ladies Detective Agency by Alexander McCall Smith
Girl with a Pearl Earring by Tracy Chevalier
The Five People You Meet in Heaven by Mitch Albom
The Da Vinci Code by Dan Brown
Reading Lolita in Tehran by Azar Nafisi

East of Eden by John Steinbeck
Pope Joan by Donna Woolfolk Cross
Bel Canto by Ann Patchett
Life of Pi by Yann Martel
Middlesex by Jeffrey Eugenides
A Million Little Pieces by James Frey
Angry Housewives Eating Bon Bons by Lorna Landvik
Memoirs of a Geisha by Arthur Golden
Shadow of the Wind by Carlos Ruiz Zafon
The Time Traveler's Wife by Audrey Niffenegger
The Secret Life of Bees by Sue Monk Kidd
Year of Wonders by Geraldine Brooks
The Red Tent by Anita Diamant
The History of Love by Nicole Krauss
March by Geraldine Brooks
The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time by Mark Haddon
The Devil in the White City by Erik LLarson
My Sister's Keeper by Jodi Picoult
19 Minutes by Jodi Picoult
The Kite Runner by Khaled Hosseini
The Memory Keeper's Daughter by Kim Edwards
Snow Flower and the Secret Fan by Lisa See
Eat, Pray, Love by Elizabeth Gilbert
A Thousand Splendid Suns by Khaled Hosseini
The Glass Castle by Jeannette Walls
Water for Elephants by Sara Gruen
The Art of Racing in the Rain by Garth Stein
The Shack by William P. Young
Three Cups of Tea by Greg Mortenson and David Oliver Relin
People of the Book by Geraldine Brooks
Olive Kitteridge by Elizabeth Strout
Loving Frank by Nancy Horan
Little Bee by Chris Cleave
The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo by Stieg Larsson

The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks by Rebecca Skloot

The Hotel on the Corner of Bitter and Sweet by Jamie Ford

The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society by Mary Ann Shaffer and Annie Barrows

The Book Thief by Marcus Zusak

Still Alice by Lisa Genova

Sarah's Key by Tatiana de Rosnay

Cutting for Stone by Abraham Verghese

The Help by Kathryn Stockett

2. Compare to other lists that have been created with the largest group of readers in mind. For example, look at the 30 World Book Night titles for the U.S. 2012 chosen by a panel of booksellers and librarians.

<http://www.us.worldbooknight.org/wbn2012-the-books/see-all-30-books>

Is their overlap? What titles keep appearing? I choose one or two "popular" or "crowd pleasers" for the year.

3. Examine One Book One Community selections. The Library of Congress web site has selections from all over the country for the past 10 years.
<http://www.read.gov/resources>

The following two publications are great selection resources also. The new One Book One Campus or Common Reading programs offer provocative titles.

<http://www.randomhouse.biz/libraries/pdfs/onebook11.pdf>

<http://www.randomhouse.biz/libraries/pdfs/OneBook.pdf>

<http://www.randomhouse.com/acmart/images/PDF/RHFYECatalog2012.pdf> (First year & common reading selections 2012)

4. Another excellent resource is Seattle Public Library's Book Club in a Bag collection list which offers over 400 titles. Hennepin County Library also has such a service, offering over 150 titles. East Providence Public Library has chosen 38 books for our service. Naturally, we select books that have had success with book groups!

http://www.eventkeeper.com/kitkeeper/show_kit_list.cfm

<http://www.hclib.org/pub/bookspace/bookclubkit/index.cfm>