

RA in a Day 2015

Reading Experience Discussion

The most interesting/surprising ideas or best examples that emerged from the table discussions

QUESTION #1

If you were to have some leisure time for reading in the next week, how would you go about choosing a book (or several books) to read next? Describe specific steps or strategies or considerations.

- Look through the catalogue
- Twitter
- NetGalley
- Edelweiss- publisher catalogues and Catalist
- 49th Shelf website
- Goodreads
- NovelList
- To be read lists
- On order records
- Visuals
 - Staff picks
 - Displays
- Websites , social media, and personal recommendations
- Displays
 - Staff picks
 - Book stores
- Reviews and publication catalogues online
 - Magazine lists for mainstream titles: Oprah, Vogue, Men's Health and Harper's Bazaar

QUESTION #2

What particular elements do you look for in a satisfying, enjoyable book? Could you describe the Perfect Book that you would love to read?

- Character you care about or relate to in some way
- Plot or situation that you can relate to based on your own experiences
- Various types of people that helps to expand your world view
- “Perfect book” is everchanging based on where you are in your life situation

QUESTION #3

What particular elements do you not like and would try to avoid in a book chosen for pleasure?

- All can be affected by situational factors
 - Negative/bleak (soul-sucking)- abuse
 - Overly complex and descriptive
 - Too unpredictable and emotionally challenging
 - Generalities- entire genre
 - Dislike the feeling we might get from reading a title- perception of disdain/judgement from others resulting in shame

QUESTION #4

Which statement comes closest to describing you as a pleasure reader:

“I am an omnivore and I read everything.”

“I am a selective reader who tries to read high quality, important books”

Selective

- Conscious of where recommendations come from
- Time, enjoyment, and learning experience
- Bad experience with a specific genre or author
- Read books related to job in the library
- Stimulate positive emotions

Omnivores

- Opens up possibilities to something new

- Mix up light reading with non-fiction or heavy reading

QUESTION #5

Have you ever had a Bad Reading experience, where you picked up a book expecting it to be wonderful, but then you hated it and felt that you had been betrayed by the book? What happened? What made the experience so bad/ upsetting/ disappointing?

- Do not expect so much from a book- if you remove the expectation than you will not be disappointed
- Invest so much time in books only to be disappointed by a sudden turn but you continue reading because you have invested that much time
 - You can't know if you didn't like the book if you haven't read the entire book
- Bad endings but the rest of the book is good
- Feeling of betrayal if the plot and character are not what you expected
- Only give the book a 100 page chance
- Becomes worse when a favourite author becomes bad
- Not enjoying a book because of the stage of life you are in- perhaps you can identify with a different character when you re-read a book
- Stubborn readers will continue reading/skimming just to find out what happens instead of giving up completely
- Readers remember a bad reading experience far more than the book
- Cautious when reading similar author afterwards
- Too much hype about the book and a feeling of betrayal
- Books that "everyone" loves or we are supposed
- Reminds us of what we look for in a book and how we define good
- A number of things can put you off- character or voice
- A book can be a "bad read" when you have read an amazing book and find that nothing measures up to it
- Will stop reading if it is badly written or not interested in the material

Examples of Bad Books

- Not Wanted on the Voyage- Timothy Findlay
 - poorly written, deliberately obtuse
- The Goldfinch- Donna Tartt
 - there could have been sections omitted
- Fifty Shades- E.L. James
 - refusal to read or stopped reading it
- The Wind Up Bird Chronicles- Haruki Murakami
 - Very masculine- could not relate
 - Setting was hard to visualize
- Uncommon Ground- Justin Trudeau
 - Read like an academic paper/political campaign- not personal
- As She Grows- Lesley Cowan
 - Not well written, lacked authenticity and bad ending

QUESTION #6

How do you feel about the format of the books you read for pleasure- for example, hardcovers, paperbacks, ebooks, audiobooks? How important to you is the book as a physical object? Have your preferences changed at all over time?

- People have diverse tastes and either love or hate the format of a book
- Narrator can make or break a book
- E-books and audiobooks are convenient
- Retention of book is dependent of format- not the same in an e-book
- Advantage of reading the book in all the formats at the same time
- Different formats are advantageous for Book Clubs as they can have more access

Hardcover and Paperbacks

- The tactility and senses experienced- feeling of a book in your hands, the smell of an old book

- Greater connection with this format
- More time to enjoy a physical book
- Sometimes the smaller print in mass market is harder to read

E-Books

- Ease of use- you can always have your book with you on your phone
- Anonymity
- Adjust font size of print for differences in eyesight
- Convenience of e-books

Audiobooks

- People enjoy listening while they are in the car
- Details are sometimes hard to follow
- Hard to listen to when you are driving when you need to stop and are at the midpoint of a sentence
- You can get more engaged when listening to a book by listening – get caught up in the emotion of the narrator

What are the implications for Readers' Advisory work?

- Keeping your own bias out
- Be aware of situational factors/needs
 - Age
 - Personal circumstances
- Purpose or environment of the reading experience
- Preferred format
- Ask customer about previous reading experience or have them name a book or author they enjoy
- Be open-minded at what you recommend- you do not need to like a book to recommend it
- Do not judge a customer's reading preference

- Find out what the individual defines as a good book
- What are you looking for from reading experience
 - Tap into what the person wants at the time- perfect book for this minute
- Judging a book by its cover varies depending on the reader's perception
- Helping a reader understand the why they didn't like a book
- Knowledgeable about different authors and series
- Beware of bestsellers- they may not be everyone's cup of tea
- Discussing multiple types of formats when recommending books