

How to start a book swap

Book swaps can be a great way to share your love of reading and discover exciting new books. The **Get Hastings Reading** campaign believes that book swaps are also a great way to support and improve literacy levels in the community.

Our Research Manager, Anne Teravainen-Goff says:

“National Literacy Trust research tells us there is a strong relationship between children without access to books and low literacy levels. A book swap can be a great way to give children the opportunity to choose a book for themselves that excite them and start to build a lifelong love of reading.”

Step 1: Choose a great location

Find a place that is visited by lots of people every day with a good place nearby to sit and enjoy a book. Don't worry if it seems a bit unusual at first, putting books where people might not be expecting them be can be a great way to encourage interaction.

Some of our suggestions are:

- Cafes
- Doctor and dentist waiting rooms
- Shops
- Places of worship
- Sports clubs
- Community venues.

Step 2: Find the books

Friends, family members and colleagues are a great people to go when gathering books for your book swap. You might also want to reach out to local bookshops or charity shops to see if they have any spare books that they could donate.

Another option might be approaching local businesses to see if they are able to sponsor some books on the bookshelf. Ideally the bookshelf should have something for everyone,

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but don't worry about the range of books at first. As more people find out about and use the book swap, the number of books will naturally grow.

(If you need some books for children or young people, get in touch with us at gethastingsreading@literacytrust.org.uk and we can help you to find some.)

Step 3: Get the word out

Let people know about the book swap via friends, family members and colleagues and use social media to spread the word further. Make sure you connect with local community groups to broaden the audience and don't forget to use the hashtag #GetHastingsReading!

Think about writing a letter to the local paper to let people across the town know about the book swap. Who knows – you might inspire more people to do something similar!

Step 4: Enjoy!

Reading books is one of the most pleasurable ways to spend your free time, so once you've set up your book swap, make sure you enjoy its benefits too. You might want to think about introducing new ways for people to engage with the book swap such as encouraging people to write post-it note reviews about the books and displaying them for others to read.

Don't forget to tell us what you are doing so we can celebrate your successes! [Get in touch](#) or tweet us using #GetHastingsReading.