

What is a Booktalk?

You can think of a *booktalk* as being similar to a movie trailer or a movie preview. The purpose of a booktalk is to “sell” a book you love to other people – make them want to read it.



How do booktalks differ from book reviews?

Although they are similar, they perform different functions. In a book review, the reviewer is judging the book. The book is recommended or not and may contain criticism. A *booktalk* only includes recommendations without criticism.

What’s going to happen with the booktalk I create?

Mr. Haddad would like to record your booktalk into a voice recorder and turn it into a podcast for a website Mr. Haddad is working on (mrhaddad.net). There you’ll be able to listen to your booktalk podcast, as well as those from students from other classes. Before long, we will be able to build a library of booktalks to help others find good books in our library! We only want quality booktalks available on the website, so you’ll have to earn a “B” or higher to make it on the website.

What will my booktalk sound like when it’s done?

Your booktalk podcast will have 6 basic parts:

I. Music

Your booktalk podcast will begin with a brief, 5-second piece of music to give your booktalk some style. You will be able to choose the music that will begin your booktalk. You may decide a particular style of music better suits the theme or topic of the book.

II. Introduction

You will begin with an **interesting**, **creative** and **inviting** introduction. Only use your first name. In your introduction, we should hear:

- “Welcome to Renton Booktalks”
- “Today I will be talking about...”
- The complete title and author’s name (pronounced correctly!)
- A personal, unique statement that gains the listener’s interest and trust
- A friendly, enthusiastic tone in your voice

“Hello and welcome to Renton Booktalks. I’m Chris and today I’ll be talking about a great ghost story you’ll never be able to put down – unless you put it down because you’re too scared! A woman who is famous for her frightening tales wrote this story. Her name is Mary Downing Hahn and her book is titled *Deep and Dark and Dangerous*.”

III. “Selling the Book”

This is the heart of the booktalk. It’s here where you are actually “selling” the book to the listeners – convincing them your book is worth reading! In your “sell,” we should understand the basics of the story’s:

- main character
- setting
- conflict

This section of the booktalk should end with a clever “hook” or “cliffhanger” that leaves the listener feeling desperate to find out what happens – but to find out, the listener has to read the book! NEVER give away the ending of a story – why would anyone want to read the book if you give away the best parts.

The main character, Ali, has a mother who is tense and nervous, not just some of the time, but all of the time. Like many teenagers, this 13-year-old loves her mom, but sometimes feels she might suffocate under her watchful eyes. Ali gets her chance for freedom when she receives an invitation to spend the summer in their family’s old vacation home, live with her aunt, and babysit her young cousin. Ali’s mother refuses. She says her daughter can’t go. Her daughter *won’t* go. But Ali ends up going anyway. And almost as soon as she arrives she wonders, “Was my mother right?”

There is nothing as good as a ghost story - except, of course, a ghost story told by a great author. The author of *Wait Till Helen Comes* and other ghoulish stories is ready to send a shiver...or two...or three - right up your spine.

IV. Critique

This will be one short paragraph telling why you would recommend this book to your peers. Again, be creative and interesting!

As a big fan of scary stories, I can tell you that this is one of my favorites. While it isn’t very gory, I was definitely impressed by the way the author always had me feeling nervous about what would happen next. It’s very easy to visualize everything that’s happening in this story, as the author does a magnificent job of describing every detail – perfect for a scary story like this. Pick this book up when you’re ready for a good scare!

V. Closing

Thank everyone for listening and sign-off with an interesting tag line like “Keep reading!”

Thank you for listening! And remember – if you ever need a recommendation on a good book, Renton Book Reviews is the place to be!

VI. Music

Your booktalk will conclude with the same music that introduced your podcast – there’s nothing to choose here.

Tips on Giving a Great Booktalk

- Practice your booktalk repeatedly! The best booktalks sound like a conversation – not like a reading.
- Talk with enthusiasm! Listeners won’t be excited about the book if you aren’t – but don’t overdo it.
- Booktalks work best if you like the book a lot! It’s much easier to show genuine enthusiasm if you loved the book.

- Think carefully about what you want to say and revise your ideas.
- Great beginnings make great booktalks. Think about your first line. Ask your audience, “Do you like to laugh?” or “Do you like to be scared?” Or say, “I never liked a character as much as...” Or, “If you like books by J.K. Rowling (for example), you’ll love this one.”
- Great endings make great booktalks. Try not to say, “I love it.” Try instead to say, “I didn’t read it once. I didn’t read it twice. I read it three times!” Instead of saying you loved something, *show* your love for it with your actions and words.
- A good booktalk makes one strong point – one thing that the listener will remember as he/she is running to the library looking for your book.
- You don’t need to explain everything that happened, and you don’t want to give away the exciting stuff. The part where you “sell the book” shouldn’t be more than 200 words.
- Describe the feeling you had while reading. Were you happy? Were you scared?
- The book you choose to booktalk should be available in our library. This will make it easy for other students to find the books you discuss.

Example Booktalk:

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The main character, Ali, has a mother who is tense and nervous, not just some of the time, but all of the time. Like many teenagers, this 13-year-old loves her mom, but sometimes feels she might suffocate under her watchful eyes. Ali gets her chance for freedom when she receives an invitation to spend the summer in their family's old vacation home, live with her aunt, and babysit her young cousin. Ali's mother refuses. She says her daughter can't go. Her daughter *won't* go. But Ali ends up going anyway. And almost as soon as she arrives she wonders, "Was my mother right?"

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