

Activity	Book Fair Game
Aim/ Key learnings	<i>Participants will explore a collection of books and playfully create marketing & display materials/plans for this collection</i>
Method	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A group activity for children or adults • A professional development activity to encourage innovative thinking
Preparation and Materials Required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least one book per person • At least one large sheet of paper per person • Drawing/art materials • Play money • Optional - Post-Its (at least one per book)
Duration	<i>As required</i>

Outline

This game can be played with a library's collection or with a bookseller's stock. It is meant for all ages.

When hosted in a library, school, or community venue and partnered with a bookseller, publisher or local retailer, it's a great way to bring together business and the community in the name of play and literacy. Sellers get access to a new community of potential customers, who become well acquainted with their stock through playing the game.

Libraries and other venues demonstrate practical partnerships with business - and communities get a unique opportunity to explore the world of books. This activity has been tested with groups from 5 people to 100, ages 6 and upward. Larger groups may be split into teams of up to 10 people.



Need further information?

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How to Play

Explain that you are going to play a game based on book fairs, where publishers buy the rights to books they wish to sell. (In our 100-child test, we made this one part of a day-long roleplay adventure, where the children were ninjas defending their kingdom from bandits. Realising that their community needed stories and knowledge as well as battle skills, the ninjas were sent on a mission to acquire books for their kingdom's bookstores). Give all participants one book each and get them to sit in a circle. (In larger groups, each team forms its own circle).

Tell the participants it doesn't matter which book they start off with, as they will be swapping books later on. Remind participants to look after the books in their care. Give them two minutes to skim the first book, prompting them to flip through the pages, look at any pictures, examine front and back cover, notice whether it's fiction or non-fiction, what age range.

Tell participants "Pass the book to your left." Let them skim their new book, except now they just have one minute.

Tell participants "Pass the book to your left." Let them skim their new book, except now they just have thirty seconds.

Tell participants "Pass the book to your left." Let them skim their new book, except now they just have a moment to sniff the book!

With older participants, you can put post-it notes into the books and allow them, in each round, to make written notes of their thoughts about the books. Now the team has a group discussion about all of the books, deciding which ones they think are Awesome, which are Very Good, and which are Just Okay.

Prompt them to think about which age range the books are for: a book which is not good for them might be brilliant for an older or younger child. Teams must sort all of their books into three piles: **Awesome**, **Very Good**, **Just Okay**.

Now combine all teams' piles into three mega-selections of books.

Awesome Books are given a cash value of **500**.

Very Good Books are given a cash value of **200**.

Just Okay Books are given a cash value of **100**.

The teams are given \$2000 of play money. (You can adjust this amount if you wish). They must buy books from the mega-selection which they will then have to sell in their home town. They give instructions to one person (in our schools event, it was the team's teacher) to go to the Book Fair and buy books with the money they have.

Teams race against one another to get the best book and may even outbid one another. The event organiser mans the "bookstall" with the three piles of books. Once the teams are done buying books, give the teams time to discuss their purchases.

Now tell them they must create posters to go in the shop window of a bookstore, encouraging people to buy the books. (If desired, you can specify that the posters must mention title, author, illustrator, and lead a discussion about what sort of information should be on such a poster).

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Participants can work alone or together. Teams can make multiple posters for the same book. Give them space to innovate, and the more resources you offer the better. (In the teen version, teams have made videos and games, and even created promotional materials to be sold in supermarkets alongside the posters). Poster-making might run for anywhere from 20 to 45 minutes depending on participants' engagement.

At the end of the session, teams can display and present their work to the whole group. When running this event using books from a library collection, we recommend you add a challenge where players have to take out at least two books from your library. This boosts lending rates and plays to the maxim "Always make them join, always make them borrow".

If you are running this event in partnership with a retailer, publisher, or bookseller, we recommend that they hold a book fair after the play session, in which members of the public are invited to buy the books they have been using in the game. People might buy books on the spot or be given an order form to take away. Because the game has acquainted them with the books on offer, it encourages people to make informed and enthusiastic choices as customers.

Adapted from [Matt Finch's Book Fair Game](#) and used with permission.

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