

My Ideas for Keeping Your Book Club Engaged Online



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I've been attending several different types of online groups from online happy hours with friends to more structured networking meetings, speaking groups, educational webinars, and video chats. Here are my tips for keeping your group strong.

1. Have the meeting last 60-75 minutes. Over 75 minutes people get antsy. If you're the online host or tech person on Zoom, House Party, Google Meet, or wherever you're hosting, be at least 5-10 minutes early. Some members will login early to socialize and chat.
2. Have a moderator that sets up the meeting and hosts or controls the technology piece of letting people into the video chat, etc. This should be a different role from the leader who leads the content of the meeting so the leader isn't trying to do both.
3. Start with introductions and an ice breaker question. Questions can be anywhere from serious to off the wall. You can have each member give a status update if time allows. Here are some sample questions. This can take 10—15 minutes or 20 depending on size of the group.
 - a. Tell us the craziest thing that happened to you this week.
 - b. Share your favorite childhood memory from (enter holiday of choice).
 - c. For more icebreaker questions go here: <https://toggl.com/blog/icebreaker-questions>
4. Have a designated host that creates a topic and or chooses the book of the week or month. This can take 5-20 minutes to summarize the topic or present information depending on type of book club or group.

5. Decide how the discussion will work. The leader can “go around the room” and give each person a chance to share or comment, or people can raise their hands and it be more random and open. I’ve noticed it’s harder online than in person to know who should talk next so having a leader who calls on people helps. Whichever way you find works for your group is best, just make sure everyone gets a chance to share if they want.
6. At the end of the meeting talk about the next meeting topic and any group issues.
7. Some people will want to chat or socialize afterwards. Leave time for that after the end of the formal meeting.

I hope this helps your book club or group keep connecting!

Happy reading!

Tricia



www.triciacopeland.com