



Book Club Discussion Guide



This guide is a resource to help you spark discussion among your book club group and connect the themes from the stories you are reading to real-life issues facing women and girls today.

Don't try to tackle every question below every time. Choose a few that interest you most and feel free to add your own questions as well.

Having some questions ready can be helpful to get the discussion started, and then you can follow where your group conversation leads.

Below you'll find general questions that could be used for any type of book, plus a few that are specific to fiction or nonfiction.

A final reminder, topics like child marriage, sexual violence, and exploitation can be intense and distressing. When you are discussing books with tough topics, start the meeting by naming the topic and inviting people to step away or take a break at any point without needing to give an explanation.

General Questions

- What surprised you most about this book?
- Was there something you assumed about the time period or the setting that was different or more complicated than you first thought?



- If your group has read multiple books set across different regions or time periods, how do drivers of inequality (poverty, climate, social norms, economic insecurity) look different in each setting? How do they affect people's (or characters') lives?
- Who has the power to decide their own future? The future of others? How is that power exercised, through the law, customs, family pressure, force, or something else?
- Is there one line or scene that you can't stop thinking about? Why has that stuck with you?
- Did the book change anything about how you think about choice?
- What would you want a leader, teacher, parent, or policymaker to take away from this book?

Fiction



- Is the protagonist or narrator female? An adult? Whose perspective dominates the story, and whose is filtered through others?
- Do the characters conform to the traditional gender roles of their community or resist them? Who pays a price for pushing against expectations?
- Whose voice was missing in this book? Whose story would you want to read to fill in that gap?
- Do economic limits shape a female character's choices? Trace one decision she makes and the constraints behind it.
- Does the main character celebrate, resist, or feel ambivalent about the roles the community expects, like wife, mother, or daughter? Can you remember a passage or scene that highlights this?
- How does the main character treat other women and girls in the story with solidarity, rivalry, protection, silence?

- Does the ending affirm the status quo, imagine a change, or lack a resolution? What does that choice suggest about the author's point of view?

Non-Fiction

- Do the people profiled or the community norms described conform to the traditional gender roles you are used to? Who enforces the roles, and who pays a price for resisting them?
- Whose testimony or first-person account is central to the book, a survivor, an activist, a researcher? What other accounts would you like to hear to fill in the gaps?
- Does the book share any specific stats or data points that stuck with you or surprised you?
- Do the events or issues described in the book relate to anything you've experienced or you've seen family members experience?
- How do the girls/women in the book describe their own reasons for the choices they make? Do other people or institutions describe it for them differently?
- If you could ask the author or an interview subject a follow-up question, what would you ask?
- What is the author asking the reader to do with the information they have shared?

Child Marriage Issue Resources

Use these resources if you want to include current info on child marriage in your discussions.

- [How Does Child Marriage Impact Girls](#) from VOW for Girls
- [Learn More About Child Marriage](#) from Girls Not Brides
- [Child Marriage Atlas](#) from Girls Not Brides

