Book club activities for kids that are not worksheets

Peabody blog · Reading · updated 2026-10-30

Book club activities for kids with no worksheet: act out a fable, map a fairy tale, cast the film, hunt for facts, play Book Bingo, each matched to its kind of story.

The book club activities that work best for kids are ones done with the story rather than about it: act a fable out and swap its ending, draw a fairy tale as a map, cast the film of a classic, or hunt for facts in a true book. None of them needs a worksheet, and most need nothing at all. The sheets and stories below are free on Peabody, like the rest of the site through the end of 2026.

Why not a worksheet

A worksheet turns a book club into school. What children rarely get is a room of friends arguing about whether the wolf had a point. An activity should send them back into the story, out loud and on their feet.

When school does want something written, Peabody has book report templates for every grade, from a kindergarten page that is mostly drawings to a high-school analysis. Keep those for home. The club is for talking.

One activity for each kind of story

When I wrote Peabody's club kits, I gave each kind of story one activity that suits the way that kind of story works. Here they are, each with a kit to try it on:

- Kind of story: Fable · The activity: Act it out, then swap the ending · Try it on: The Tortoise and the Hare
- Kind of story: Fairy tale · The activity: Draw the story as a map · Try it on: Little Red Riding Hood
- Kind of story: Myth · The activity: Make up a new myth · Try it on: Arachne the Weaver
- Kind of story: Legend · The activity: Make a poster for the hero · Try it on: Robin Hood
- Kind of story: Tale from elsewhere in the world · The activity: Tell it round the circle · Try it on: Aladdin
- Kind of story: Literary classic · The activity: Cast the film · Try it on: Alice in Wonderland
- Kind of story: True book · The activity: A fact hunt · Try it on: Naked Mole-Rats

Act it out, then swap the ending

Fables are short, with two or three characters, so a group can act one in five minutes with no rehearsal. Then do it again with one change: the hare does not stop for a nap. What happens now? Is the lesson still true?

Draw the story as a map

Fairy tales are journeys: a path through a wood, a house at the end, a long way home. Give each child a sheet of paper and ask for the map, with the places in order and a cross where the trouble starts. Then compare: the differences are what each child noticed.

Make up a new myth

Myths explain why things are as they are. Each child picks something ordinary, like why cats sit in boxes, and tells the story of how it began. Older readers can borrow the gods from the myth they just read.

Cast the film

For a longer classic: who would play each character, and why? A child who can say why someone should play the Queen of Hearts has understood the character. Add a poster, or the one scene the film must not cut.

Tell it round the circle

These tales were told aloud long before they were written down. The first child says a sentence or two and passes it on. The story will change on its way round, which is how such tales travel.

A fact hunt

For a true book, the leader reads three facts aloud (each kit has three), and the group hunts for where the book says each one. Then each child says one fact they did not know before, and one question the book left them with.

Activities that work with any book

When every child has read a different book, these still work:

- Book Bingo for the club. Hand out the bingo card, twenty-five kinds of books with a free centre. At the meeting, go round the squares: who found a book about long ago, a story at night, someone being brave?
- The thirty-second review. Each child gives four things out loud: a rating, the best thing in it, one change they would make, and who should read it. That is the short review on Peabody's report templates, said instead of written.

• The hot seat. One child is a character from their book and the others ask questions. The character has to answer the way the character would.
• Pick the next one together. Put what should I read next on a screen. The room answers three questions with three big boxes each, and it picks a book.
• A quiz on the big screen. The Book Club has ten quizzes, such as which story is it and real or made up, which a group can answer together on one screen.

How long an activity should take

About ten minutes in a meeting of thirty to sixty. The meeting plans print in three lengths, minute by minute: 30 minutes for ages 5 to 7, 45 for ages 7 to 11, and an hour for 10 and up. With under-sevens I would start with the acting and the drawing; older readers can take a whole meeting over casting a film.

If you need a story short enough to read and act in one sitting, the library has 425 free stories on 19 levels, and every one has a button to read it aloud.

Questions parents ask

Do these activities need anything printed?

Most need nothing. The map needs paper and pencils, Book Bingo needs the card, and the kits are two pages each if you want the questions in your hand.

What if a child does not want to act?

Give them a job: the director, the narrator or the one who calls "cut". Every activity has a part that is not on stage.

Do they work for a class of thirty?

Yes, in groups of five or six, each with its own story and its own corner. The class reading log has thirty rows for who read what, and you can print two for a bigger group.

Free at peabody.kids/blog/book-club-activities-for-kids