Book club roles for kids, in plain words: six jobs and how to share them

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Six book club roles for kids (Question Asker, Word Collector, Picture Maker and three more), what each one does, and free role sheets and question cards to print.

Giving each reader a job is the easiest way to make a kids' book club talk: nobody waits to be asked, and everyone arrives with something to say. Peabody's any-book club kit has six roles in plain words, a sheet for each to print, question cards that work for any book, and a planner for a club where everyone reads a different book. All free, like the rest of Peabody through the end of 2026.

The six roles

- Question Asker. Brings three questions the group can talk about, the kind with more than one right answer: one that starts with "why", one with "what if", one about a choice someone made.
- Word Collector. Finds three words that are new, strange or just good, and what they mean in the story.
- Picture Maker. Draws one moment from the reading, and the group guesses which part it is.
- Connection Finder. Links the story to something else: another book, a film, the news or their own life.
- Best Bit Reader. Picks a short passage to read aloud and says why it's the best bit.
- Story Shrinker. Tells what happened in the reading in five sentences or fewer, without spoilers past this week's stop.

Each role prints on its own page with boxes to fill in by hand. Swap roles every meeting, so every reader tries each one.

Questions for any book

The kit's question cards print twelve to a sheet, for three ages. For the youngest: "Who was your favourite in the story? Why?" and "What do you think happens after the last page?" For eight to ten: "When did you most want to keep reading?" and "Who is telling the story, and how would it be different told by someone else?" For eleven and up: "Which detail seemed small at first but mattered later?" Shuffle them, and each reader draws one.

When everyone reads a different book

A club doesn't need twelve copies of one book. In a theme club, everyone reads a book of the same kind, each at their own level, and the club talks about all of them at once. The kit's planner picks four free stories from the library for four readers of different ages, and one 45-minute plan whose questions work for every book of the kind.

A 45-minute meeting

1. Five minutes: hello, and each reader holds up their book and gives it one word.
2. Ten minutes: book talk, a minute each, no endings.
3. Fifteen minutes: the roles report, and the group talks.
4. Ten minutes: something to make (a comic strip, a fact card, a map of the journey).
5. Five minutes: vote on the next book with the paper ballots.

Why roles help a quiet reader

In a club with no jobs, the same two children talk and the rest wait. A role gives a quiet reader a reason to speak and something prepared to say: the Word Collector doesn't have to have an opinion about the whole book, only three words they liked. It also spreads the kinds of thinking around the table. Over six meetings every reader has asked questions, summed up, drawn, connected and read aloud, which is most of what a teacher hopes a reader will practise. Keep the role sheets short; a role that takes longer to fill in than the chapter took to read has stopped helping.

Questions leaders ask

What age are roles for?

From about seven. Younger readers do better with one shared job a meeting, done together: everyone draws their favourite part, then everyone guesses.

What if a reader didn't finish the book?

They report on as far as they got. The Story Shrinker's rule (no spoilers past this week's stop) works for everyone.

Do the roles have to be these?

No. Change them, add your own, or drop the ones your club doesn't like. They're starting points, not rules.

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