

11. Lending Books

Think carefully about the type of lending system that will work best at your library. It is recommended that you discuss these ideas with the library committee as soon as you can. Once a decision is made, you will then be able to make the appropriate return date labels (see chapter 6) or prepare exercise books. Putting the finishing touches to your lending system is the final step in the list of essential tasks recommended by this book when you set up a library. When the lending system has been prepared, the library can open and books can be lent.

What does lending books mean?

Lending books means users can take fiction or information books away from the library (in other words, borrow them) for a set time to read or study on their own.

Some readers find borrowing books confusing. If readers are having problems understanding, explain that to be lent a book by the library or to borrow a book means to take it for a short time and then to return it by a set date. The librarian or library monitors should only lend books to readers who return their books, in good condition, to the library by the day stamped (or written) on the return date label.

Reference books, like encyclopaedias and dictionaries, should not be lent. Instead, encourage readers to use reference books in the library. Make sure these books have the library's nameplate glued or rubber-stamped inside them to avoid arguments about ownership.

Lending books will involve making guidelines for the borrowers. It is best to put up a poster, near the librarian's desk, so that readers can easily remember the rules. Figure 11.1 shows a model set of borrowing rules.

Two methods of lending books are described in this chapter. You need only choose one of these methods. It is recommended that you discuss which would be best

for your library with the library committee. Remember that you have to decide on your method well before you actually open the library.

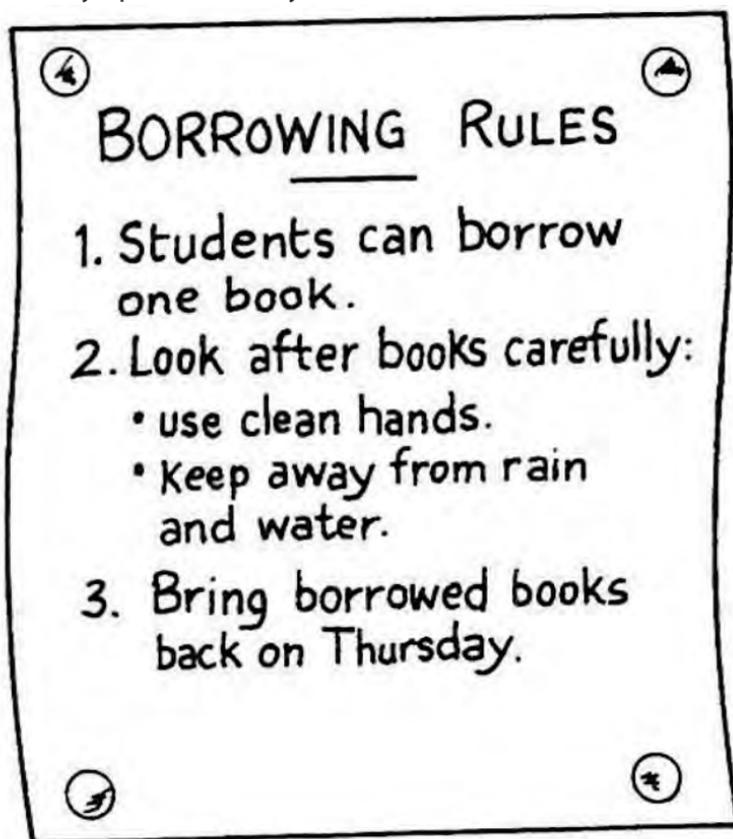


Figure 11.1. A poster showing borrowing rules in a school library.

Why lend books?

Lending fiction and information books promotes literacy and learning, allowing people to study or read in their own time. If your library has restricted opening hours, readers may feel frustrated because they do not have enough time to finish finding the information they want. It is widely accepted that students who regularly read books and magazines find their schoolwork easier.

Some users may be keen to borrow books, but will need the librarian's help to find a suitable book at the right level so that they can enjoy reading it without supervision or repeatedly having to look up words in a dictionary.

How do you decide borrowing rules?

To avoid losing books through confusion about lending or borrowing, and to avoid causing bad feeling, we recommend that you decide some basic library rules before allowing readers to borrow books. It is best if you make these decisions with your library committee.

Decide how many books each reader can borrow

One book is probably enough, especially if you do not have a large stock at your library.

Decide how long a reader can keep a borrowed book

A week is about the right length of time for most users to read a book of their choice. It might be easier for the librarian if all books are returned on the same day of the week (e.g. Thursday), especially if this is the day when the library club meets. Then library club members can help put books back on the shelves.

Decide whether to charge fines

Some librarians worry that if they lend books, a few will not be returned to the library by the correct date, as stamped or written on the return date label. That is why they ask for a small fee for every day a book is kept out of the library after the day it is due back. This is called charging a fine.

The longer the delay before the book is returned the more money the borrower will owe. Once the book is returned, the fine stops growing, even if they do not pay it right away. No other books can be borrowed by that person until they pay their library fine. The aim is for readers to remember to return the book they have borrowed on the correct day, as they will dislike paying fines. If you tell

people that they can borrow the book again if they have not finished it, they may also be encouraged to return the book on the day stamped (or written) in the date label.



Figure 11.2. A librarian checking out a book (Lesotho).

Fines are useful because everyone is treated the same way and the money raised can help to pay for book repairs and new titles.

However, many librarians have found that fines cause problems because people are confused by the idea or because families cannot afford to pay them. Olga Tsimanyane, Education Officer, Ministry of Education, Botswana, warns, 'Be lenient with fines; otherwise, you may scare off the students.'

If you decide to charge fines for overdue, lost, or damaged books, make sure you explain the rules well and make a simple-to-understand poster. You might choose to have an 'amnesty week' once each term, when late books can be returned with no fines.

You may also find that keeping money, even very small amounts, in the library is a problem. You will need a lockable drawer or a lockable cash box to secure the fine money.

Decide whom to lend to

In a school library, you will lend to all the learners. In a community library, you might want to lend only to village residents. Visitors from other places may take the books home with them and not bring them back, and it will be hard to find them. In addition, in a community library, you might decide to charge a small yearly membership fee for those who want to check out books. In that case, you would only lend to those who are on the list of those who have paid the fee.

Decide what to do about lost or damaged books

There are some well-tested ways of making sure missing library books are returned to the library. If you know a reader has not yet returned the book they borrowed, here are some ideas:

- If the book is late, encourage the person who borrowed the book to find it and return it to the library soon. Remind him or her of the fine, if you have a fine system. Library monitors could help you do this. Send a message to the classroom requesting the student to return the book to the library.
- Give each form teacher a list of books that are missing from the library. Ask the teacher to make students look for these titles, in their form room, dormitories, or home, and to return them.
- Ask the headteacher to read out the names of the students who your records show have not returned books.
- If you find some readers regularly spoiling or losing books, despite lessons and individual help from the librarian, try keeping a list of readers who are temporarily not allowed to borrow books. 'This acted as a real deterrent for other kids, and as time passed, their names could be removed from the list of problem students so that they could be given a second chance at the librarian's discretion,' explained Liz Platt, working

in Zanzibar with colleagues Halima Khamis Hamad and Wanu Amour.

- Finally, ask the library committee to recommend that the headteacher not award end-of-term certificates until all books are returned or accounted for.

How do you register borrowers at a community library?

At a community library, before you begin lending out books, you need to register your borrowers. (In a school library, you can skip this step because the school already has the information.) This means writing down information about how to contact them in case they forget to return a book. If your library charges borrowers a yearly fee, registering them can help you keep track of who has paid. For each borrower, record the following information: name, address or neighbourhood, phone number (or any other information you could use to send them a message), and the date they paid their borrower's fee (if applicable). For children, also include their age, parents' names, and school.

How do you record books lent by the library?

First of all, before lending any library stock, it is essential that all information books and fiction books have a return date label glued into the front and that the name of the school or library be written or stamped in one or more places inside the book. The book should also have an accession number, a shelf list card, a title card, and a spine label. Look back at chapters 6 through 8 if you have not yet completed any of these tasks. You can choose from two alternative methods of recording which books are lent by the library. Decide with the committee which would be best at your library.

1) Lending using an exercise book (lending register)

To make a simple record of who has borrowed what items from the library, use a big exercise book, with ruled columns as shown in figure 11.3 and 11.4. If your library is at a school with many students, you might prefer to write this information in a different book for each class.

Every time someone borrows a book from the library, write down in the exercise book:

- The borrower's name and gender
- The borrower's class (for a school library) or age category (for a community library)
- The book's name/title
- The accession number
- The date the book is due back

The advantage of this method is that it is very quick to set up. It is particularly good for primary school students.

The disadvantage is that it takes a long time to use. You will have to write in all the information for every book that is borrowed. It is also hard to trace who has borrowed which books and which ones are returned late, because the borrowers' names are not written down alphabetically.

Nonetheless, this method of borrowing books is excellent for a classroom library. One adaptation you could make is to give every reader their own page in the borrowers' exercise book. This is useful for English teachers who wish to see how well a student is progressing with their reading.

Returned books

When a book is returned, the librarian or library monitor initials the lending register on the same line and writes the date returned.

Visitor's Name	Male/ Female	Class	Title	Accession Number	Date Due Back	Librarian's Initials	Date Returned
Naomi Shongwe	F	8	The People's Representative	25	June 7		
Edward Jafali	M	6	Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone	402	June 8		

Figure 11.3. An example of the exercise book system of recording books lent by a school library.

Visitor's Name	Male/ Female	Age			Title	Accession Number	Date Due Back	Librarian's Initials	Date Returned
		0-13	14-20	21+					
Grace Dlamini	F			✓	<i>Introduction to Coffee Farming</i>	53	June 7		
Alexander Mohale	M	✓			<i>The Cat in the Hat</i>	865	June 8		
Rose Ahenkorah	F		✓		<i>Signed, Hopelessly in Love</i>	178	June 9		

Figure 11.4. An example of the exercise book system of recording books lent by a community library.

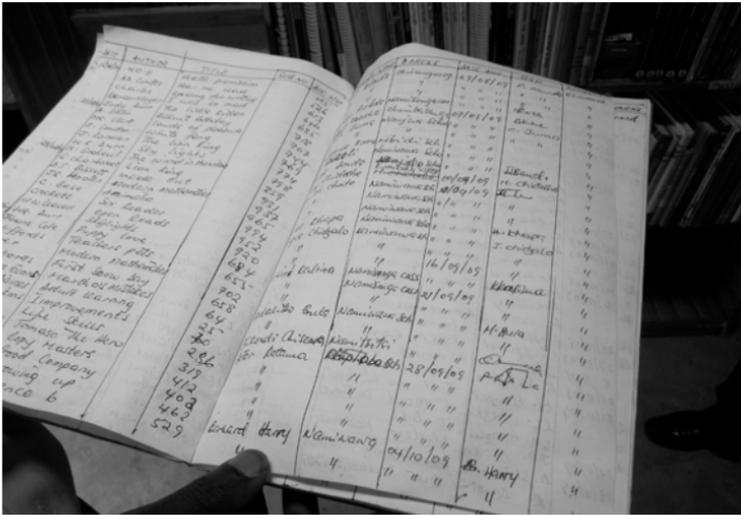


Figure 11.5. A lending register (Malawi).

2) Lending using book tickets

This is an excellent borrowing system for a secondary school or community library, especially if you expect readers to be borrowing one or more books each week.

Book pockets and book tickets

Every book needs a book pocket and a book ticket. The book pocket can be made of strong paper, and you can make it at the same time as you make the library's nameplate. Alternatively, you can buy book pockets from

library suppliers or you can use a letter-sized envelope cut in half.

If you are making separate book pockets, then glue them at the front of the book on the title page. You do not need a lot of glue to stick them into the book – just paste the glue on a thin 25 mm (1 inch) strip at the top of each book pocket. Some people like to glue them on the inside back cover; there is no right or wrong way, but make sure you are consistent. Look back at chapter 6, and figure 6.3, for more details about making and sticking book pockets.

Next, you need to make a book ticket from strong card. The ticket should be tall enough to be seen when it is inside the book pocket: a recommended size is 6 x 10 cm (2 x 4 inches). A good way to obtain free paper or card is to ask print companies (printers) if you can have any paper offcuts. Most will be happy to help.

On each book ticket, write the title of the book, its classification code or number, and its accession number. All this should not take up more than 5 cm (2 inches) of the book ticket, so that there is plenty of space left for recording borrowings. Next rule two columns. One will be for the borrower's name and the other for the date the book is due back (see figure 11.5). Finally, put the book ticket into its book pocket.

Making a date return tray

When someone borrows a book under the book ticket system, they do not take the ticket away with the book. This means that you have to make or find a narrow issue box, or date return tray in which to store book tickets from books that are being borrowed. You can see such a box in figure 11.6. You will need to make a card for each day of the month from 1 through to 31 and also a card for each month from January to December to go in the box or tray. Make these cards using stiff coloured paper. They should be a little taller than the book tickets.

How to borrow books under the book ticket system

When someone borrows a book, the librarian will ask the borrower to write his or her name in the appropriate column on the book ticket. Be sure to have them write their complete name so they will not be confused with someone else with a similar name.

The borrower does this, and then gives the book ticket to the librarian, who files it in the date return tray with the card for the date that it is due back. The cards for all the books due back on the same day should be filed alphabetically by the title of the book (if it is fiction) or in numerical sequence (or colour) according to its classification code (if it is an information book).

Returned books

When someone returns a book, the librarian must look to see what date was last stamped on the return date label. Then, looking at the title of the book, he or she must look for the book's individual book ticket in the section of the issue box or date return tray that contains the book tickets, arranged in order, for books due back on that day – for example, in the May section, under 5, if the borrower's book is due to be returned on 5 May.

The advantages with this method are that it is very quick when people want to borrow books and it is very easy to see which books have been returned late, and by whom. The book ticket system takes time to set up, because you must make a nameplate with a book pocket, a book ticket for every information (non-fiction) and fiction title in the library (except reference books), and cards for the issue box, so it is recommended that you encourage the library monitors, volunteers, or library club members to help you.

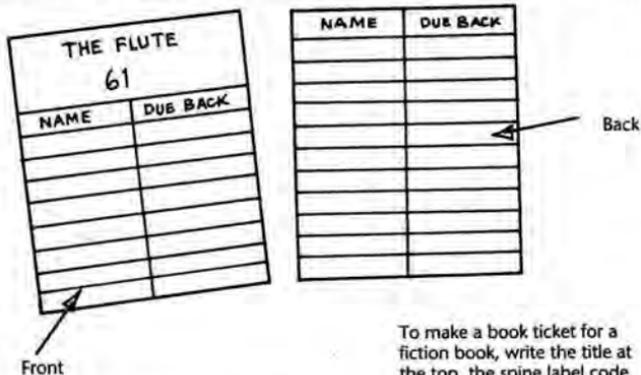
You can now open your library doors and lend books!

Weekly routine

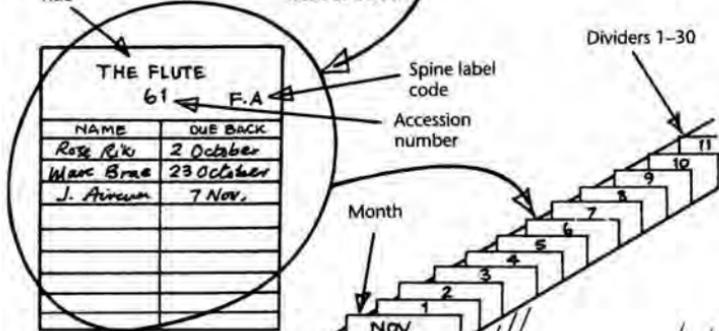
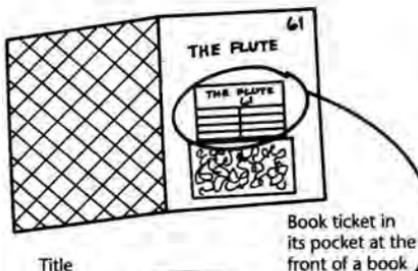


Check which readers have borrowed books that have passed their return date. Ask library monitors to remind readers to return their books.

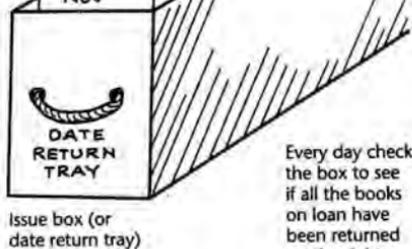
This is what the FRONT and BACK of a book ticket look like when it has been ruled up.



To make a book ticket for a fiction book, write the title at the top, the spine label code and accession number. For an information book, write the title, classification number and the accession number. Then rule two columns, one for the borrower's name, and the other for the date the book is due back. Rule these columns on the back of the card too.



When a student borrows a book, they will write their name in the column and you (or a library monitor) will stamp the date. Give the student the book telling them to bring it back in seven days. Then file the book ticket in your issue box which has dividers for every day of the year.



Every day check the box to see if all the books on loan have been returned on the right day.

Figure 11.6. The book ticket system of recording books lent by the library.