

## 15. Library Checklists and Routines

### Why have checklists?

A checklist is a list of essential tasks. Setting up a library involves a number of tasks and it can be easy to forget to do them all or to do them in the recommended order. A checklist helps to remind you what you need to do to set up a library and in what order to do it.

### Why have routines?

A routine is a task you do regularly. Establishing a set of library routines will help you and your helpers to remember to do all the essential tasks in the library, such as putting books back on shelves and checking all books are returned by the specified date. The librarian; library monitors, volunteers, and club members; staff; and the library committee should all be involved with library routines. Some of these tasks will need to be performed daily, some weekly, some monthly, and some every few months or at the end of every term. Routines ensure that the library is well organised and well maintained.

### How to set up checklists for your library

First you must plan what you need to do, step-by-step. Make sure your plan is logical and that it involves your readers. Then write down lists of tasks in the order in which they need to be done. Model checklists are given below.

#### *Before opening the library*



- Organise a library committee and decide on library rules, opening times, staffing, and the amount of help you need from library monitors.
- Decide on the method of lending books (see chapter 11).
- Prepare the library room, make the bookshelves, and organise equipment and stationery (see chapter 3).

- Check that the library is secure.
- Get to know the different types of library stock and parts of a book. If you already have a library, remove damaged or inappropriate stock (see chapter 4).
- Make an accession register. Glue the nameplate and, depending on your lending method, a return date label inside all books (see chapter 6).
- Divide books into fiction and information (non-fiction). Give all fiction books a spine label. Divide information books into subject areas. Give each information book a spine label (see chapters 7 and 9).
- Make library catalogues. This will include a shelf list and title catalogue (see chapter 8).
- Put books on shelves. Information books are arranged by subject. Fiction books are arranged in alphabetical order by the author's last name or by reading level (see chapter 9).
- Make shelf guides so that books can be found easily. Put up a subject index and posters on the walls to make the library more attractive and to remind readers of any rules about using or borrowing books (see chapter 13).
- Make sure that your lending system is fully operational, so that records can be kept of who has borrowed which books (see chapter 11).

### ***Opening the library***

- In a school library, give tours to all students and teachers when your library first opens, and to all new students and teachers thereafter.
- Remember to explain
  - \_ The parts of the book (see chapter 4)
  - \_ How to care for books
  - \_ Where to find information and fiction books
  - \_ Any rules, especially about borrowing books

### ***Daily routine***

- Ensure the library is open at the times you have told everyone.
- Beginning of day: change the date stamp.
- Let readers borrow books.
- Put returned books back on the shelves (set aside any damaged books).
- Dust the shelves and sweep the floor.
- End of day: Lock up money, lockable cupboards, and the door.

### ***Weekly routine***

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

### ***Monthly routine***

- Change displays.
- Organise competitions or library games.
- If you have ordered books, check when they will arrive at the library. When they arrive, follow the new books routine below.
- Tally the month's visitors and books checked out (see chapter 18).
- Plan a meeting of the library committee.
- Check on the library finances and plan fundraising, if appropriate (see chapter 17).
- Order more books and other stock (see chapter 16).

### ***New books routine***

- Add every new book to the accession register and give it an accession number (see chapter 6).
- Glue in the nameplate (see chapter 6).
- Decide if the book is fiction or information (non-fiction).

#### *Fiction books (see chapter 9)*

- Decide where the book should be filed in the fiction section. Sort books into skill levels if you are setting up a library at a primary school or a classroom library.
- Mark the spine of the book with an 'F' for 'fiction' and the first letter of the author's last name.
- Make a shelf list card and a title card for the new book.
- Tell readers about the new book.
- Put the book on the shelves.

#### *Information (non-fiction) books (see chapter 7)*

- Decide what subject each book is about.
- Classify it in the appropriate section.
- Mark the spine of the book with a classification label.
- Make a shelf list card and a title card for the new book.
- Tell readers about the new book and make a display.
- Put the book on the shelves.

### ***Damaged books routine***



Books may be damaged while they are on loan. If you see any books with torn covers, spines that need to be glued, or loose pages, put them on one side and repair them when you have time (see chapter 12). If you cannot make repairs, the book should be withdrawn from the library stock.

***End-of-term routine (do twice each year in community libraries)***

- Clean the library very well. Use insect sprays.
- Ask for all books to be returned to the library. At the end of each year, you should organise a stocktake (see chapter 8).
- Make a list of missing books and try to find them. If you cannot find a book, it should be withdrawn from stock. This means crossing it out of the accession register and removing it from the shelf list and title catalogue.
- Check your books to see if they are all appropriate. Any out-of-date or damaged books should be removed from the library.
- Thank library monitors, volunteers, and club members for their help.
- Remember to ask if anyone has any ideas on how to make the library even better.



*Figure 15.1. A librarian helps a student read aloud (Lesotho).*