



## Reading and Wellbeing: A Reflective Reading Guide

Reading fiction can support our wellbeing, but particularly when we engage deeply with the books that we read, and reflect on our reading experiences. This guide is designed for readers, and book groups, to reflect upon and discuss the different ways in which reading can support their wellbeing.

### Positive emotions

Our own life experiences shape our reading of fiction, and fiction books can elicit emotions either directly through the characters and events depicted in the story, or indirectly, as it leads us to recall personal memories and their associated emotions. In addition, even sad narratives can elicit emotions which readers report to be positive.

### Questions for reflection:

1. Can you think of a recent book you read, or an all-time favourite book, and how you felt when reading it, or after reading it? What was it about the book that elicited these emotions?
2. Reflect upon your favourite genres, why you are drawn to these and the emotions you experience when reading them.
3. Reflect upon or discuss whether extending your reading experiences to different genres could widen the emotions experienced by reading.

### Connection

Fiction books often portray the social world we live in. Readers often report feeling connected to fictional characters (for example, those with shared experiences), but also more connected to those around them, as they develop an enriched understanding of others and/or talk with others about books they have read.



# Reading and Wellbeing



## Questions for reflection:

1. Can you think of a book where you felt a sense of connection with a character, story, setting or author? Why was that and how did it make you feel?
2. Have fiction books helped you to understand others better, or feel more connected to other people in your life?
3. If you are part of a book group, in what way do you feel you benefit from talking about books with others? Are there ways to extend these benefits?

## Personal growth

Reading fiction offers many opportunities for personal growth, for example, it improves language and literacy skills, and our knowledge and understanding of the world, ourselves, and others. Reading fiction can help us to see things from others' perspectives and has been associated with empathy and wellbeing. It can also help readers during difficult times.

## Questions for reflection:

1. Can you reflect upon the different ways in which reading fiction currently supports your own personal growth?
2. Can you reflect upon the role that fiction books have played in supporting personal growth across your lifetime?
3. Consider and discuss how being part of a book group, and hearing others' perspectives of the same book, can support personal growth.

*Find out more about the Reading and Wellbeing project here:*



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