



About me:

- Kate Merrell, Bilingual Services librarian and Homework Center coordinator at Lafayette Public Library
- Background: chemistry teacher and science museum, plus a variety of library experience
- Now I combine several of those experiences in my current position.

- Worked with students that had language-based learning disabilities, I also taught individual LA tutorials, including help choosing good reading choices.
- Started in shelving in Fort Collins while in high school. I have worked every public desk in three library systems since then.

Why talk about books you've never read?



- Time constraints
- Lack of personal interest
- Bring love to less-noticed titles
- Lots of copycats!

- None of us can read all the new titles in a year, much less any older ones.
 - You may hate a book that is perfect for someone else. It's hard to sell a book you suffered through.
 - Have suggestions for when the current best-seller isn't on the shelf and weed fewer items for disuse.
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Getting started - Easy ones

- Bestsellers
- Movies
- "Classics"



If you already know the story, why spend your time?

- It's already being talked about everywhere. Pay attention to what others have to say about it.
- Don't dodge spoilers.
- Watch the previews.
- You can't keep these on the shelf anyway, so look more for readalikes than knowing this one inside and out.

Use other people's reading

- Maximize staff sharing
- Borrow from friends and family
- Mine your customers!



- Formal/informal meeting topic; use as filler for warm-up, transitions, etc. Talk during shared desk time.
- Ask colleagues/friends/family - "What are you/do you like reading?" - Know your experts and use their titles/preferences.
- Ask a customer: "What was your favorite part?", "Why did you like/dislike the book/character/etc.?"

Use technology

- Amazon
- Goodreads
- Novelist



- Novelist has many read-alike lists
- Search engine: "If you like..."
- Amazon's suggested purchases
- Some ILS's offer suggestions.
- Goodreads alone could keep me going for the rest of my natural life.

Judge a book by its cover!

- Use the fly leaf and synopsis
- Publishers are trying to connect to readers!



- Marketers spend time and money trying to get the attention of the right readers for a book.

- Read the last chapter first if you're trying to get a feel for the tone, or if the ending may affect your enjoyment.

Caveats

- Be honest about what you know (and don't)
- Books you have read are always easier



- Try phrases like: "My friend really loved this one," "Your reading habits remind me a lot of my sister/friend/colleague, etc. They thought this one was fun."

- Use your own reading habits to make connections to popular titles.

Questions?

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Activity Instructions:

In small groups or pairs, use the title and summary mock-ups to practice "shelf-talking" a book. Learn a little bit about a book you've never read by grabbing a cover that looks interesting. Or, share how one you already know could be connected to a book that you've never read, but with which you may have some familiarity.
