



Book Fair Company

Planning Packet

**Guidelines for a Successful
Book Fair**

Table of Contents

■ Book Fair Time Table.....	1-2
■ Facilities	3
■ Book Fair Committee	3
■ Creating Enthusiasm	4
Themes	
Student and Teacher Enthusiasm	
Parent Enthusiasm	
Community Enthusiasm	
■ Planning.....	5-6
Hours of Operation	
Evening Program	
Book Talk	
Classroom Previews	
Wish Lists	
Teacher and Librarian Gift Cards	
Book Lists and Special Requests	
Educational Toys, Bookmarks or Other Sidelines	
Recommended Books List	
■ Other Important Details	6-8
Security	
Restocking	
Supplies	
Banking	
Set-Up and Take-Down of Fair	
■ Earnings	9
Earnings Chart	
Using Your Earnings	
■ Scheduling Next Year's Fair	9
■ Other Benefits	10
Annual Warehouse Sale	
Class Set Discounts	
Author/Illustrator School Programs	
■ Sample Forms	Appendices

Suggested Book Fair Time Line

- Confirm your book fair dates with **Mrs. Nelson's Book Fair Company**.
- Confirm your dates on the master school calendar.
- Decide on a location and check on facility needs.
- Schedule an author or illustrator for a school program.

One Year
Ahead

- Meet with your planning committee and school staff to plan the fair.
- Assign volunteers to be responsible for money handling and restocking during the fair.
- Choose a theme for publicity and decorations.
- Schedule a book talk for the students.
- Plan a family night program.

4 -6 Months
Ahead

- Announce your book fair in your school newsletter, email, and social media.
- Continue developing theme and decorations.
- Circulate a sign-up sheet at a PTA/PTSA and the general parent population meeting for volunteers.
- Prepare posters, flyers, banners and decorations.
- Tell Mrs. Nelson's of any author/illustrator signing at your fair (so we can order books).

2 -3 Months
Ahead

- Publicity! Announce your upcoming fair in the school newsletter, social media, and on your marquee.
- Display banners outside and posters in classrooms, the cafeteria, the school office or other high-visibility areas around campus.
- Confirm schedule, location, time and program with book talk speaker, author and/or illustrator.
- Begin gathering supplies (calculator, cash box, rubber bands, etc).
- Check on family night details (refreshments, volunteers, etc).
- Prepare the daily work schedule for your volunteers.
- Make name tags for your volunteers.

One Month
Ahead

- Post first and second social media announcements and send publicity flyer home with students (one each week).
- Remind volunteers of their assignments.
- Display murals, banners and posters on classroom doors, office and around campus.

1-3 Weeks
Ahead

- Clear out the facility you'll be using.
- Set up tables and clean if necessary.
- Decorate your facility.
- Gather supplies.
- Post schedules for volunteers, class visits and book talk(s).
- Hold book talk(s) to highlight books for the students.

**Day Before
Set-Up**
*It is VERY important that
these items be completed
PRIOR TO
(not during) delivery.*

- Book fair chairman and at least two other volunteers assist our staff with set-up (about 2 hours).
- Begin class tours of the book fair and selling to students.
- Ask teachers to select their wish books.
- Post social media announcements and send family night flyers home to remind students and parents.

**Set-Up
Day**

- Enjoy the excitement you have created about books and reading!
- Tabulate money daily.
- Keep fair neat.
- Train volunteers.
- Send home one last notice about the book fair.

**Remaining
Book Fair**

- Clear out all IOU's and holds.
- Inform teachers of wish titles not purchased.
- Remind take-down volunteers of their schedule.

**Prior to
Take-Down**

- Calculate final receipts.
- Chairman and at least two volunteers help pack up fair (about 1 hour).
- Clean up facility, return tables, take down decorations, etc.

**Take-Down
Day**

Relax! You and your volunteers have done a great job! Mrs. Nelson's will send you a summary of your sales and earnings. It would be a nice gesture to send thank-you notes to all your volunteers and mention them in the school's social media posts and newsletter along with the results of your fair.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to call us at 909-865-8550.

Facilities

- You will need a **large room** that can be locked when not in use, such as a cafeteria, library, multi-purpose room or even a large classroom. If after-school functions are normally held in the same room as the book fair, the books must be secured or supervised.
- You will also need **tables**. We recommend 6 to 8, 6' by 2 ½' tables (or comparable), which can be set up for the duration of your fair. In addition to the tables for displaying books, you will need a few tables in your check-out area for cashiering and displaying “hands-on” merchandise that needs to be closely supervised, such as impulse items. Allow ample walking room between tables.
- If your school only has a smaller room available, we can customize your book fair to fit that space.

Book Fair Committee

You will need to recruit a dedicated committee of volunteers to assist in planning and running your fair. We suggest the following as ideal:

- A minimum of 2 to 6 people to serve on your planning committee. It's a good idea to include at least one teacher/librarian/principal in the planning process.
- A minimum of three volunteers including yourself to help with set-up and take-down of the fair.
- A minimum of 2 to 4 volunteers to work “on the floor” during selling hours. They will help supervise the children, answer questions and straighten the books. During peak or rush times, such as lunch, after school and parent night, you should have at least 4 volunteers circulating among the books, for security as well as assistance.
- 2 or 3 volunteers to cashier. Try to keep the same people as cashiers throughout the duration of your book fair to ensure that the money is handled properly.
- 2 volunteers to be responsible for end of day money handling.
- As book fair chairman, try to keep yourself free to mingle and assist on the floor. Don't get tied to a register—you need to be available for overall supervision, questions, etc.

Remember, the more volunteers you have to help, the more successful your book fair will be.

Some Suggestions for Finding Volunteers

- Ask room parents and/or teachers to recruit from their classrooms.
- Post sign-up sheets in the school office and at school functions.
- Request volunteers through your school newsletter, social media,

Create Enthusiasm for Your Book Fair

Generate Excitement Among Students & Teachers

Plan events that everyone can participate in:

- Read-a-thon.
- Storytelling program.
- Contests (drawing, writing, jelly bean jar, raffles, etc.).
- Have the students make bookmarks, posters and/or murals to decorate the book fair.
- Schedule a children's book author or illustrator for an assembly (refer to Local Authors & Illustrators handout).
- Schedule classroom previews on the first day of the fair (see page 5).

Create a Theme

Have fun and be creative! You want this to be an exciting week for your students, and an imaginative theme will help. You can use the theme to help promote your fair and to make your decorations more effective. Some successful themes in the past have been:

Blast into Books (Space)
Books Rock
Camp Book Fair
Dig into Books (Pirate/Construction)
Explore New Worlds
Fall Into a Book
Once Upon a Book Fair
Passport to Reading
Plant a Seed: Read
Read Around the World
Reading is Magic
Reading is Out of This World
Reading Rodeo
Ride the Reading Wave (Surf)
Take Me Out to the Book Fair
Wild About Books (Jungle)

Include the theme in all of your publicity and in your communications to teachers, parents, book fair volunteers and students.

- Schedule a book talk. You may have a knowledgeable and enthusiastic staff member, parent or group of students who would like to present the book talk (see page 5).
- Allow children to start purchasing as soon as the fair is set up.
- Send home copies of Mrs. Nelson's Book Lists (available online) detailing your fair dates and hours.

Generate Excitement Among Parents

- Recruit parent volunteers from your entire population.
- Include announcements about the fair in the school newsletter, email, and social media.
- Plan a parent night during the fair and make sure that it is well advertised.
- Send home at least four notices about the fair: a month before the fair, a week before the fair, the day before the fair and during the fair.
- Inform parents about the importance of the book fair to the school—to promote a love of reading, to increase the reading skills of the students, to earn Mrs. Nelson's credit to add books to the classrooms and library, or to raise funds.
- At the close of the fair, thank all who participated and announce the results of the fair in the school newsletter, email, and social media.

Generate Excitement In Your Community

- Post social media announcements and use hashtags.
- Announce the book fair on your school's marquee.
- Hang the Mrs. Nelson's banner in a prominent area on the school grounds.
- Adopt another school in your neighborhood. Have a book drive to collect new or used books for a disadvantaged school, or consider donating a portion of your earnings in book credit.

Planning the Details for Your Book Fair

Book Fair Hours

We suggest that you keep the fair open all day during school hours (for classroom visits), including an hour before and after school. Recess and lunch are also prime shopping hours, so make sure your fair is open at those times.

Evening Programs (*VERY IMPORTANT*)

Plan to have the fair open for at least one evening. It will make your book fair more successful and parents with children in day care will truly appreciate it. The following evening programs have proved to be successful with other schools:

- Family night with an ice cream social, pizza or spaghetti dinner.
- Story time with a favorite teacher, principal, community member or local celebrity reader.
- Family “Read-In”—ask parents to bring blankets to sit on and a favorite book to read.
- A pot-luck or barbecue can add to the fun.

“Book Fair is Coming” Book Talk

A pre-fair or first day book talk contributes greatly to the success of the fair by getting the children excited about specific titles that will be available for purchase. At your request, we will provide a selection of popular books for each grade level for the book talk person to preview. A day or two prior to the fair, or on the first morning of the fair, the book talk person presents a “taster” of these books to the students, class by class, or grade by grade.

Classroom Previews

To familiarize students with the book fair, schedule each classroom for a visit, preferably on the first or second day of the fair. Grades K and 1 will need about 20 minutes in the fair, while 15 minutes should be adequate for the remaining grades. Give the students each a Student Wish List to fill out as they preview the books—this will help their parents talk with them about the books they are interested in. Schedule enough volunteers to be able to assist children in preparing their lists and to put a total with tax included on each list. This

helps parents decide how much money to send for purchases. Make sure that you also give each child a sturdy backing to put under the Wish List while they are filling it out. This helps prevent damage caused by students writing on top of the books.

Teacher & Librarian Wish Post-its

This is a very effective way of selling books and having books donated to your school at the same time. Mrs. Nelson’s will provide Wish Post-its to make this process easier. Your teachers and librarian can select books from the fair that they would like to have purchased for their classrooms or library. As each book is purchased, it should be inscribed, stamped or receive a Mrs. Nelson’s Dedication Bookplate indicating who donated it. Encourage teachers to select books in a wide price range so that all families can afford to contribute.

We do recommend either displaying the books with post-its on a table or leaving them displayed thru out the fair. We also encourage you to pre-sell these books so you do not deplete your book fairs inventory.

Gift Cards

Parents and sponsoring organizations may wish to purchase Gift Cards for teachers or librarians so that they may select books from your fair for their classrooms or library. Mrs. Nelson’s can supply your school with Gift Cards that you may sell. These are sold to donors at face value (no sales tax added) who then present them to the recipients. Please note that Gift Cards should be redeemed before the end of your fair.

Special Requests, Required Reading & Author Events

Mrs. Nelson's carries a broad selection of titles that are commonly requested by teachers and librarians. If there are specific titles you would like at your fair (for teacher/librarian special requests, required reading and author events). Please let us know 6 weeks in advance to ensure these titles are packed in your fair. For special requests not in our inventory, we can order books for you, but these must be guaranteed purchases. For required reading and author events, we can order books for you and these do not need to be guaranteed purchases (unless we don't have enough advance notice to order from our regular suppliers or if the books are from publishers we don't work with). Lastly, we can create preorder forms for any of these requests, to help advertise and promote sales.

Toys and Impulse Items

At your option, we can include toys and impulse items (bookmarks, pens, pencils, erasers, etc.) with your book fair. We realize that while toys can enhance the excitement of the fair and bring in additional revenue, they can also detract from the purchase of books. If you would like only non-book items that are educational and/or science-related let your Mrs. Nelson's coordinator know at least 2 weeks prior to your fair.

Mrs. Nelson's Book List

We have our own book list (available on our website) of about 30 favorite books that will be part of the book fair selection. Send this list home with the children prior to the fair, so they can preview titles with their parents.

Other Important Details

Restocking

The amount of your sales will determine if and how often your book fair is restocked. If your sales warrant restocking, our representative will meet with your volunteer in charge of restock (during the set up) to discuss the process.

All schools are welcome to pre-sell items that you have run out of. Please check with us first, to be sure we can supply them to you, before guaranteeing a pre-sale. Even though a book is at your fair, it could be out of stock at our warehouse.

All schools are welcome to pick up a restock at our warehouse in Pomona.

Banking and Purchase Orders

We accept cash, personal checks, Visa, Mastercard, American Express, and Discover. If your school has a purchase order, please contact your Mrs. Nelson's Book Fair coordinator.

Checks should be made out to: Mrs. Nelson's Book Fair Company. Occasionally, we have checks and charges returned for Non-Sufficient Funds. Your school will be responsible for any that we cannot collect on, including a \$25.00 service charge for each. Be sure to collect signatures on checks and include phone numbers.

At the end of each day, your money handling volunteer will count and tabulate your sales using our Daily Sales Summary to record your figures

from the Square reports. To minimize errors and ensure security, have a second volunteer double count the money. Be sure to set aside your start-up cash after you have pulled your deposit. Place the money in the school's safe at the end of each day.

We will pick up your Daily Sales Summaries at the take down of your book fair. At that time, we will verify the amounts with a representative from your fair.

Security

Please take every precaution to ensure good security. Theft is a potential issue with every book fair.

- Schedule enough volunteers so the books and the children are supervised at all times.
- Volunteers who are working the registers are too busy ringing up sales to keep an eye on the fair; you will need additional volunteers. The more visible adult security, the better.
- Schedule volunteers to work "on the floor" helping children with their book selections, keeping the books neat and watching for students who may be tempted to take a book without paying.
- Discuss with your volunteers the importance of helping the children handle the books with respect and care. Also, stress the importance of being visible and watchful of the children at the fair—it is much better to prevent a theft than have to deal with the problem after it has taken place.
- Have only one entrance/exit to the fair, with one of your volunteers stationed there to greet and supervise the children.
- Allow only as many students to enter the fair as you can comfortably watch at one time. Ask the rest to wait at the door until you are ready for them to enter.
- Collect all backpacks, bags, folders and jackets outside of or just inside the entrance door.
- The Creative Fun cases and tables are the most popular and will need the most attention.
- The ideal location for Creative Fun cases is near

the check-out area, and away from the exit.

- Small impulse items should be placed near the register where they can be watched.
- When classrooms come to visit, give the students an orientation on book fair behavior. Remind them to:
 - Be careful handling the books. They do not belong to the school, and if they are damaged, the school will be charged for them.
 - Put the books away where they found them.
 - Don't hide the books. If a title runs out, they can place an order for that item.
 - Make sure students are using a heavy backing when filling out their wish lists and do not write directly on top of the books.
- You are responsible for any defaced, damaged or stolen goods.
- Make sure that the book fair room is kept locked when the book fair is closed. Discuss this with the principal and the custodian.

Things You Will Need

Here is a list of supplies you will need to provide:



- **Start-up money (\$100 per register is recommended). Be sure to have lots of coin, including at least \$5.00 in pennies.**
- **Paper clips and rubber bands for organizing money.**
- **Name tags, sign-in/out sheets and written instructions for your volunteers.**
- **Tablecloths to cover tables. (optional)**
- **Power strip with at least four outlets and extension cord**
- **Pens and pencils**



We provide Square Point of Sale registers, bags, book fair banner, category signs, and gift cards to sell.

Square and Wi-Fi requirement

We will be providing you with a new Point of Sale (POS) system for use at your upcoming book fair. It will perform many functions that will make your job easier but it requires access to Wi-Fi.

At least a month prior to the arrival of your fair, please make a formal request to school administration for Wi-Fi to be active in the book fair room. "Guest" Wi-Fi will not be sufficiently strong.

Wi-Fi will allow the immediate approval and download of charge card transactions. It will also allow you and your Mrs. Nelson's coordinator to view the items you are selling in real time. For schools that receive a restock during the week (sales of \$6,000 or more), we will know what you've sold and what to pack and deliver to you. If you will not have Wi-Fi capability during the fair, please let us know in advance.

The POS system includes:

- A hand-held scanner
- A chip reader which will accept MasterCard, Visa, Discover and American Express
- An inventory control system that tracks the actual items purchased, along with the price which will be displayed on the screen and on the register receipt.

- Ability for you to view reports of daily sales, detailed by item and quantity, along with a breakdown of transaction information such as number of sales, average sale amount, and dollar amount collected in cash, charges and checks.

After a short training period, you'll find that it's easy to use, efficient and fast.

Scheduling for Next Year

At the close of your fair, we will ask about rescheduling a new fair for the following year. It is important to reschedule early because our calendar can fill up quickly. We will make every attempt to give you the week you request, especially if it is for the same week as your current fair. Mrs. Nelson's can provide your school more than one fair a year, schedule permitting. On average, we change about 30% of our book selection in August, and again in January, so your second fair will look as new and exciting as your first one.

Set-up and Take-down of Your Book Fair

Before we arrive for set-up, you need to prepare the book fair room by setting up, cleaning and covering the tables. clearing counter tops, putting up your decorations and, in general, doing everything necessary so we can start putting out books as soon as we get there. Set-up and take-down generally take about 2 hours, depending upon how prepared you are and the number of volunteers you have to help. Three volunteers is ideal. Prior to packing up the books for take-down, your Mrs. Nelson's representative will give a quick "packing lesson" in order to prevent any damage to the books when they are transported.

Remember... more volunteers = less time



Make the most of what you earn at Mrs. Nelson's Book Fair!

Book Fair Company

HOSTING A BOOK FAIR PROVIDES TANGIBLE BENEFITS TO YOUR SCHOOL:

BOOK CREDIT UP TO **30%**

CASH UP TO **20%** OF NET SALES

YOU CAN EVEN DO A MIX OF EACH – IT'S UP TO YOU!

	AT YOUR FAIR	AFTER YOUR FAIR
Percentage Earned	up to 30%	up to 20%
Earnings Option	Purchase Books	Cash Settlement or Nelson Bucks
Description	Receive 30% of your net sales in credit to buy books at retail price directly from your fair.	After your fair, you can receive 20% of the fair's net sales in cash or choose Nelson Bucks and purchase books at impressive wholesale discounts.

NELSON BUCKS INCREASE YOUR BUYING POWER!

Choose Nelson Bucks and we will store your earnings in your Mrs. Nelson's account, giving you access to the best book prices in the industry

Shop the annual sales at our book fair warehouse in Pomona*

- **DECEMBER HOLIDAY SALE** – cool discounts of **20% OFF** retail prices
- **JUNE SUMMER SALE** – sizzling savings of **40-70% OFF** retail prices

Purchase books online at Mrs. Nelson's low wholesale prices**

- Special order titles online at www.mrsnelsons.com and receive **22-30% OFF** retail prices
- Access to library publishers like Capstone, Abdo, and Rosen
- Popular trade titles in a variety of binding types
- Free Shipping

PURCHASE DETAILS

*** Warehouse sale purchases**

Warehouse sales are held in-house at our Pomona warehouse. Purchase orders and personal purchases welcome.

Online purchases

** Our website allows customers access to over 1.2 million titles in a variety of binding types at wholesale discounts of 22-30% off the retail prices. To submit an order, register on our website at www.mrsnelsons.com and then visit our **wholesale** page to begin searching and adding titles to your cart. Please allow 3-4 weeks to process orders. \$300 minimum order. Call us at **800-875-9911** for all the details.

HERE'S HOW TO CALCULATE YOUR BOOK FAIR EARNINGS

ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE SCHOOLS

Net Sales	Earnings
\$3,000 +	NELSON BUCKS – 20% after fair CASH – 20% after the fair BOOK CREDIT – 30% taken from fair
\$2,500 +	NELSON BUCKS – 15% after fair CASH – 15% after the fair BOOK CREDIT – 25% taken from fair
\$2,000 +	CASH – 10% after the fair BOOK CREDIT – 20% taken from fair

PRESCHOOLS AND HIGH SCHOOLS

Net Sales	Earnings
\$2,000 +	NELSON BUCKS – 20% after fair CASH – 20% after the fair BOOK CREDIT – 30% taken from fair
\$1,500 +	CASH – 15% after the fair BOOK CREDIT – 25% taken from fair
\$1,000 +	CASH – 10% after the fair BOOK CREDIT – 20% taken from fair

Other Benefits Offered to Book Fair Schools

■ Mrs. Nelson’s Book Company

Mrs. Nelson’s Book Company is our sister company which was founded in 2005 and provides wholesale discounts on book orders, bindery services, and our exclusive Readerbound editions.

- **Wholesale Ordering**
We offer access to virtually any book in print in a variety of binding types including paperback, hardcover and our reinforced Readerbound editions. Book Fair customers will receive 20-30% off retail prices and can search titles and submit orders online at www.mrsnelsons.com.
- **Bindery Services**
Mrs. Nelson’s operates a bindery that provides textbook rebinding and repairs, print-on-demand for titles that are out of print, and the ability to convert paperbacks into reinforced hardcover editions.
- **Readerbound Books**
Our exclusive Readerbound books are reinforced hardcover editions of popular classics, bestsellers and new releases intended for classroom and library use. Contact us for a catalog or sample copy.
- **Readerbound Books**
Educational customers may order class sets any time during the year and get a 27% discount on your purchase plus free shipping on orders over \$300. Contact Mrs. Nelson’s Book Company or browse titles on our website for more information and pricing.

■ Mrs. Nelson’s Book Fair Company’s Semi Annual Warehouse Sale

For four days in June, we are open to the public and all book fair overstock is marked at 40%-70% off the regular price. You, your book fair volunteers, school staff and parents are welcome to attend this sale. We’ll email a notice or you may check our website www.mrsnelsons.com for the dates and times.

■ Mrs. Nelson’s Book Fair Company’s Holiday Warehouse Sale

For two days in December, we are open to the public and all book fair overstock is marked at 20% off the regular price. You, your book fair volunteers, school staff and parents are welcome to attend this sale. We’ll email a notice or you may check our website www.mrsnelsons.com for the dates and times.

■ Author and/or Illustrator School Programs

Mrs. Nelson’s Book Fair partners with local authors/illustrators who are available to present at schools. An extensive list is available on our website. If you would like to have an author/illustrator during your fair, your Mrs. Nelson’s Book Fair coordinator can assist you.

■ Chairpersons Training Workshop

Mrs. Nelson's BookFair Company holds an annual training workshop for current and prospective Chairpersons and anyone interested in learning more about our book fairs.

■ Educators' Night

Mrs. Nelson's Book Fair Company holds periodic events for school educators featuring book talks and introducing local authors and/or illustrators.

Congratulations!

By reading and implementing the suggestions in this packet, you have taken the first steps to ensure a successful fair. Remember, the better organized you are, the more successful your fair will be. Your efforts to plan and promote your book fair will not only benefit your school, but will also help increase the love of books and reading among your teachers, parents and students.

Anytime you need support, or have questions or concerns you can reach us by phone at (909)865-8550, on the web at www.mrsnelsons.com, or by email at mrsnelsonsbookfair@mrsnelsons.com.

GOOD LUCK AND HAVE FUN!



President