



Planning Your Book Fair



Mrs. Nelson's Book Fair Planning Packet



Guidelines for a Successful Book Fair



Book Fair Company

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 Certificates	
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. 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 and/or through email.
- Continue developing theme and decorations.
- Circulate a sign-up sheet at a PTA/PTSA meeting for volunteers.
- Develop plans for your teacher/library wish list.
- Prepare press releases, posters, flyers, banners and decorations.
- Give us your reading lists if you would like us to select those titles from our stock.
- 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 and on your marquee.
- Display banners 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.
- Send a press release to local newspapers.

One Month
Ahead

- Send 1st and 2nd publicity flyer home with students (1 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 3 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.
- 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.
- Call or fax to request restock titles (see Restocking on p.7).
- Keep fair neat.
- Train volunteers.
- Send home one last notice about the book fair.

Remaining
Book Fair Days

- 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 3 volunteers help pack up fair (about 1 hour).
- Clean up facility, return tables, take down decorations, etc.
- Schedule next year's fair.

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 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. Some schools use cafeteria tables which work very well, while others acquire their tables from the district office or borrow them from other schools. 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 bookmarks. 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 4 volunteers 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.
- 1 volunteer to be responsible for money handling.
- 1 volunteer to keep track of your restock needs (see Restocking on p.7).
- 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 and the back-to-school packet.
- Recruit volunteers from your entire parent population. Include parents from all grades.

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 (see the enclosed Local Authors & Illustrators handout).
- Schedule classroom previews on the first day of the fair.

- 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.
- Allow children to start purchasing as soon as the fair is set up.
- Send home copies of Mrs. Nelson's Book List 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.
- 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 Book Store credit to add books to the classrooms and library, or to raise funds.
- At the close of the fair, thank all who participated in the fair and announce the results of the fair in the school newsletter.

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.

Generate Excitement In Your Community

- Send a press release to your local newspapers.
- Announce the book fair on your school's marquee.
- Hang Mrs. Nelson's banner(s) in prominent area(s) on the school grounds.
- Solicit area businesses for donations to purchase classroom or library books (see sample letter).
- 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 (provided by us) 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 Board

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 List Donation boards and forms 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.

Teacher and Librarian Gift Certificates

Parents and sponsoring organizations may wish to purchase Gift Certificates 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 Certificates 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 Certificates must be redeemed before the end of your fair and cannot be carried over for use at your next book fair.

Book Lists & Special Requests

Mrs. Nelson's carries a broad selection of titles that are commonly requested by teachers and librarians. If there are specific titles you want at your fair (teacher/librarian requests or assigned reading lists), it is likely that Mrs. Nelson's has most of these titles in stock. Please let us know in advance to ensure these titles are packed in your fair. Special requests for books that require us to purchase beyond our inventory, must be guaranteed purchases—you must pre-sell the books or purchase them with your book credit at the end of the fair. Please allow us **8 weeks** prior to your fair for ordering special requests.

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 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

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.
 - Use the wish list boards 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.

Restocking

The amount of your sales will determine if and how often your book fair is restocked. If you sales warrant restocking, your book fair coordinator 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.

Things You Will Need

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



- A cash box with start-up money (\$100 per register is recommended). Be sure to have lots of coin, including at least \$5.00 in pennies.
- At least two adding machines or calculators with receipt tape.
- Paper clips and rubber bands for organizing money.
- Coin wrappers.
- Name tags, sign-in/out sheets and written instructions for your volunteers.
- Tablecloths to cover tables. (optional)
- Power Strip & Extension cord
- Pens & Pencils



We provide cash registers, bags, charge card scanners, book fair banners, category signs, backing for student wish lists, and gift certificates to sell.



Banking

We accept cash, personal checks, Visa, Mastercard, Discover, and Mrs. Nelson's gift certificates (see the enclosed handout: Money Handling Guidelines). We do not accept Mrs. Nelson's Scrip Certificates—they can only be spent at Mrs. Nelson's Toy and Book Shop.

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 the signature **and phone number** of people using credit cards and checks.

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. To minimize errors and ensure security, have a second volunteer double count the money. (Don't forget to separate out enough start-up money for the following day's sales.) Keep all of your coin until the last day—you may need it during the week. Keep the money in a safe place on campus.

We will pick up your book fair receipts when we restock your fair and/or when we take down your book fair. At that time, we will recount your receipts with you and verify the amount by signing at the bottom of the Daily Sales Summary.

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. We change about 30% of our book selection in September, and again in February, 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. Four 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

Your Book Fair Earnings

Approximately four weeks after the close of your fair, Mrs. Nelson's Book Fair Company will send you a Book Fair Sales Summary including the earnings payment option that you choose.

Earnings Options

The First Option:

Take all of your book fair earnings as a cash settlement. You will receive a check for 20% of your net sales.

The Second Option:

Take all of your book fair earnings in book credit. By doing this, you will receive 30% of your net sales for purchasing books that are in our inventory. You will not only have access to all the books in your Book Fair but also the thousands of books and toys available at Mrs. Nelson's Toy & Book Shop. The advantage of this is the books are available for immediate fulfillment.

The Third Option*:

Keep your cash settlement on file with Mrs. Nelson's Book Fair or convert your book credit into cash. By doing this, you will have the ability to order books that are not in our inventory. You will also be able to order library binding, paperback protection products (Kapco) and processing from Mrs. Nelson's Book Company. When you are ready to order **you'll receive up to a 20% discount on all books purchased.** You can spend all of your money at once, or order several times until your earnings are depleted. You will also have access to our knowledgeable team of sales reps who can assist with your purchase by making recommended book lists and showing sample books and catalogs based on your specific needs.

A Combination of the Three Options:

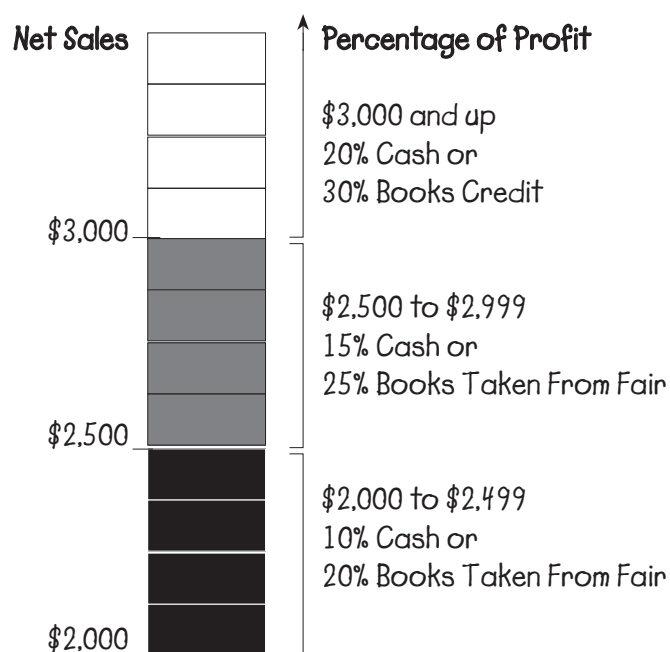
Take your book fair earnings and split them between the first, second and third option. You can take a portion of your funds as a cash settlement at 20% of your net sales, purchase books in stock at 30% of your net sales and keep the remainder on file to be used with Mrs. Nelson's Book Company at 20% of your net sales and receive a 20% discount on all books purchased.

***NOTE:** When Book Fair earnings are used to purchase books from Mrs. Nelson's Book Company there is a \$300 minimum order. (This minimum only applies to book fair earnings.) Processing and binding are not discounted. All orders receive free freight.

Some suggestions for using your book fair profits include:

- Enrich your school's library with new books.
- Sponsor a read-a-thon or summer reading program, using books as rewards.
- Choose books to be given to the students throughout the year on their birthdays.
- Acquire class sets of books for classroom use.
- Invite an author or illustrator to come to your school.
- Allow the teachers and librarian to shop on the last day of the book fair or at Mrs. Nelson's Toy and Book Shop.
- Give a 20% discount during your fair.

What You Are Earning



Other Benefits Offered to Book Fair Schools

■ Mrs. Nelson's Book Company

Mrs. Nelson's Book Company is dedicated to selling books especially for schools, libraries and classrooms. In addition to being able to provide library bound books to the schools that need them, Mrs. Nelson's book company also offers rebinding, library processing, and reinforced binding for paperbacks that will be in circulation. AND...Mrs. Nelson's Book Company discounts all sales to schools and libraries.

■ Mrs. Nelson's Book Fair Company's Annual Warehouse Sale

For four days in June, 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.

■ Class Set Discounts

If you are a Mrs. Nelson's Book Fair school, you may order class sets any time during the year and get a 20% discount on your purchase. Contact Mrs. Nelson's Book Fair Company for more information.

■ Author and/or Illustrator School Programs

■ Chairpersons Training Workshop

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

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 lnelson@mrsnelsons.com.

GOOD LUCK AND HAVE FUN!

Judy Nelson

President

