Programming ideas for your Summer Reading Club

Activities and special SRC events attract children to the library. Plan activities that will appeal to children who are not regular library users as well as activities that will enrich the background of children who regularly attend and who are already avid readers. Special SRC themed activities will make your library an enticing and popular place to visit during the summer holidays.

In addition to theme-related activities, think of ways you can expand the annual SRC programming theme to highlight the entire range of your library collection. Encourage children to look at author biographies, historical artefacts, and collections from your non-fiction collections.

The following ideas are provided as a starting point in the planning of your SRC program or activities.

Some ideas will be perfect for your library—and some may seem unfeasible. Develop the ideas you like to incorporate into your program. You decide how much you can do in your library based on your resources, your space, and your community.

Programming ideas (passive)

- When signing new readers up, say: ‘Welcome to the Australian Summer Reading Club.’
- At the beginning of Summer Reading Club programs and activities, ask participants to turn to the person next to them and tell their neighbour what book they’re reading. Invite one person to share his or her book recommendation in front of the audience and give that person a book as a prize.
- Have a summer reading cheer that you do at the beginning of children’s programs and activities.
- Set up a ‘SRC Readers Recommend…’ table in the library where children and teens can place books they’ve read and recommend for others, and from where they can select a recommended book. Invite your young library patrons to write a note to go with the book explaining why they recommend it.
- Create a Reading Corner filled with SRC theme related books.
- Decorate your library in connection with the annual SRC programming theme.
- Set up wall displays of questions about books that align to the SRC theme.
- Create I-SPY cabinets filled with theme related items.
- Living Bulletin boards: kids who read five books get to write their name on a die cut.
- Living Bulletin boards: teens write and post book reviews for others to read.
- Hang mirrors in the teen area for teens to write on with paint pens, creating a communal book list and review area.
Programming ideas (active)

- Host a weekly SRC Book Club. Discussions don’t have to focus on one book: participants could each talk about and recommend a different book they’ve read, or they could read books of their choice relating to the annual programming theme.
- Initiate a summer book buddies program where younger children read to older kids.
- Offer craft making activities associated with the SRC annual theme.
- Have an SRC Read-in (like a Drive-in): invite children or teens to bring beach chairs and towels and read in the library.
- Host a Bookswap: a program where teens exchange books they’ve already read.
- Create a Hidden Book contest which can run for several weeks during the height of the summer reading program: each day a gift-wrapped book is hidden in the stacks of the children’s/YA areas. The first child to find the book receives a prize and has their name displayed in the library. Prize winners could pick a lucky dip SRC Merchandise prize or have their names entered into a bigger, end of program prize draw.
- Create a themed scavenger hunt. Hide clues throughout the library relating to the annual programming theme. Hand children an activity sheet to write their answers on. All completed answer sheets could be entered into a prize draw. Create a few alternate scavenger hunt routes.
- Host an art program for teens whereby participants design new book jackets for tatty books and write their own book description and recommendation on the jacket.

Programming ideas (online)

- Add links to the Summer Reading Club themed/Club site to your library homepage and pages for children and teens. There are prizes associated with participation in most of the online activities.
- Familiarise yourself with the guest authors featured on the Summer Reading Club themed/Club website. Add their books to your display. You might offer rewards to children who borrow titles from the featured celebrity authors.
- Familiarise yourself with the content and activities on the Summer Reading Club themed/Club website and encourage your children and teens to participate in the online competitions.
- Encourage children and teens to post their book raves to the Summer Reading Club themed/Club site and to post reviews about the activities happening in your library on the What’s Happening in Your Library blog.

The SRC is a collaborative program. SRC participants’ Australia-wide will benefit from the collective programming experience of libraries across Australia. Your programming ideas are welcomed.

Please send your ideas to: summerreadingclub@slq.qld.gov.au

This material is Guide #6 in a series comprising the Summer Reading Club Programming Guide: Get Ready, Get Set and Go which is available for download from the SRC Program website.