

## BookTok - Making reading trendy

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"Unlike Instagram, we do not have to spend hours coming up with the perfect flatlay, editing a hundred pictures, and thinking of an appropriate caption. BookTok has made book blogging more comfortable, and I like the literary space it has to offer," shared Farhana (@farhana\_reads). She recalls how BookTok helped her become a regular reader as she now tries to do the same for her followers. "Creating a video is totally in my comfort zone, as I can just pick up my phone and talk about a book I really like. It can, however, take some time to post playlists and edited videos," she added.

BookTok is being credited for creating the next wave of reader-author relationships. Bypassing conventional communication channels, these groups communicate and interact with one another directly through the app, exchanging information, suggestions, and book reviews. This community has also been successful in creating new readers, as people get excited about the kind of books they find on this platform. Whether it's introducing older titles to new readers, helping authors find their target audience, or moderating the book debates, BookTok is all set to continue serving its vast audience of booklovers.

While there are many popular genres on BookTok, you would find more videos about young-adult titles, including lots of fantasy and romance recommendations. Since there are so many videos on novels that can make you cry and tug at your heartstrings, books that generate strong emotions are also very popular on TikTok. In fact, part of the group experience is tied to the fact that books with a strong emotional hook are often the ones that go viral. Once people begin reacting to a book, they look for

other people to share the emotion. Finally, it has also led to the emergence of micro genres like dark academia and tropes like enemies to lovers. The algorithm's capacity to identify particular preferences can be shown in its ability to reduce a book to just these particular themes or structures.

Diverse voices are also trending on BookTok, which helps new audiences discover incredible books by a diverse group of authors. What readers love the most about this platform is the fact that they could carve their own niche, and be very specific about the kind of content they are browsing. Whether it is books related to Taylor Swift's latest release or quotes from Colleen Hoover's books, you can find it all. Book bloggers meticulously describe and categorise the books they talk about using familiar tropes, which helps their audience make informed choices. Tropes tend to be plot or character categories that are popular among a certain genre of books and can become synonymous with the genre itself. BookTok allows creators to make entire videos addressing one comment in ways that are harder to do with other social media, attributing to the characteristic specificity.

"I do not think there is one particular format for BookTok. I usually post mini book summaries and share my book hauls. While I see a lot of people interacting with my content, I cannot assure how many of them actually read the books I post about," said Sadman Sadik (@sadmansadik). Talking about the impact on BookTok on changing reading habits, he emphasised on content creators' potential to promote better books and increase sales for those books. "Most of the people have no idea which book to start with. We can definitely help in that aspect, creating a long lasting impact in the same way."

BookTok is for anyone who loves books but most of the most popular content creators are young adults, often between the ages of 15-30. "TikTok in general is a social app more popular among the young demographic. It comes as no surprise that most of us (creators) also fall under this range. However, we do try to diversify our recommendations so we have something for everyone who scrolls through this hashtag," Tabassum Zaman Irin explained (@whatirinreads). Irin mostly posts trope-specific recommendation lists, annotations and book hauls. "One thing that worries me about BookTok is the absence of proper trigger warnings, given that these videos are mostly viewed by young readers. I love how the reading community is expanding due to BookTok but at the same time I am also really worried," she concluded.

Along with providing readers with tried-and-true book recommendations, BookTok is a safe community space on social media. It is a community where book lovers can come together to talk about and share their thoughts on their favourite books—and find new favourites, too. It acts like an unfiltered version of blogging, where it takes minimalist efforts to share something.



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