Science Fiction Book Club Questions

272 questions on 56 cards - the world, the technology, the people, the big idea, the future we fear and the one we hope for, the science, the story, and the conversation.

- 56 cards across 8 sections, from first impressions to next month's pick
- Worldbuilding, technology, character, idea, future, science, story and conversation
- Every question written for this pack - no passage quoted from any book
- Cut the cards apart, or read the pack straight through

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How To Use This Pack

56 cards, 272 questions, one club night

This pack is built the way a club night actually runs. Pick a section, pick a card, and ask its questions in order - or cut the cards apart, deal them round the table, and let each person ask the card they were dealt. You do not need to ask every question: five good answers beat twenty rushed ones, and the best nights end with one question nobody can answer.

The eight sections follow the shape of a science fiction book. Start with the world, then the technology, then the people, then the big idea. The future section is the argument of the night. The science section is for the members who kept a notebook. The story section is for the ending. The last section is for the club itself: rating, recommending, arguing, and choosing what to read next.

One evening, one section: allow about 10 minutes a card and 60-90 minutes for the night; use the Rating Ballot in the last ten minutes.

A note on spoilers: these questions assume everyone has finished the book. If someone has not, ask them to sit out the Twist card and the Ending, Sequel Question and World After the Book cards, and come back when they have finished - the twist is only a twist once.

1. The World

Every science fiction book builds a world. These cards ask how it was built, what it left out, and whether you would want to live in it.

First Impressions

1. What was the first detail that told you this was not our world?
2. How long did it take you to understand where - and when - the story happens?
3. Did the author explain the world, or did you have to work it out as you went?
4. What did you picture first: a place, a machine, or a person?
5. Which single image from the world has stayed with you since you finished?

The Rules of This World

6. What are the three rules this world runs on - and does the book ever break them?
7. Which rule did you accept at once, and which one took you longest to believe?
8. Is there a rule the characters take for granted that shocked you?
9. What happens to someone who breaks the rules here?
10. If you could change one rule of this world, which one would it be - and what would break?

What the World Leaves Out

11. What part of ordinary life does this world never show - eating, sleeping, working, getting old?
12. Is there a whole group of people this world ignores? Who are they, and what would their story be?
13. What does the world not explain that you wish it had?
14. Did the missing pieces feel deliberate, or did they feel like gaps?
15. Which everyday detail from our world would change this world most if it were added?

The Place That Feels Real

16. Which place in the book felt most real to you - and what made it feel real?
17. Was there a place you could draw a map of from memory?
18. Did any place feel like somewhere you have actually been?
19. What does the book do with weather, light and sound - and does it matter?
20. If the book were set in your own town, what would change and what would stay the same?

Maps, Timelines and Histories