Think it would be hard to start your own book club? Think again! All you need is a little bit of organization and some friends who are as excited about the books they read as you are.

**HERE ARE A FEW TIPS TO GET YOU STARTED:**

The best way to find people to be in your book club is to ask your friends. Think of all the people you know who like to read, and ask them to join. If you still don’t feel like you have enough people, ask each of your friends to bring someone else. You can usually get a good discussion going with 6–8 people, but any number that is comfortable for you will work. If you’re having trouble finding enough cool people to form your book club, check with your school, local library, or bookstore to see if there’s a group that you can join.

Figure out when and where you want to meet.

Some groups meet once a month, some meet every other month. You could get together at someone’s house, in a park, on the beach, at your school’s library, or a local coffee shop. Decide how you will choose books, and how the discussions will be run. Decide which book club meetings you want to lead the discussion, or maybe you would rather just get together and talk about the books you are reading. If you get stuck, you can often find discussion questions online (try the publisher’s website) or at your local library and talk about the books you are reading. If you get stuck, you can often find discussion questions online (try the publisher’s website) or at your local library.

For more discussion guides to get your group going, visit www.penguin.com/teachersandlibrarians

The most important thing to remember is that there’s no right or wrong way to have a book club. Do what you’re comfortable with and always have fun, and your group will be a success!
Anthony, also known as “Antsy,” is fascinated by “The Schwa Effect”—the fact you barely know one ever noticed him. He wonders if he has tempted fate by playing God. Fans of The Schwa Was Here, winner of the Boston Globe–Horn Book Award for Fiction, “Antsy’s favorite characters.” Neal says. “And when I came up with the idea of trading time I had, I knew Antsy had to tell the story.” Neal lives in Southern California with his four children. To learn more about him and his books visit him at www.storyman.com

A NOTE FROM AUTHOR NEAL SHUSTERMAN

“The Schwa Was Here was the perfect vehicle for me to incorporate the idea of trading time like stocks, I knew Antsy had to tell the story.” Neal Shusterman

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

NEAL SHUSTERMAN’s novels have been honored with awards from the American Library Association and the International Reading Association, as well as numerous state award committees. His novels span many genres, from humor to suspense thrillers to science fiction. Antsy Does Time is a companion to The Schwa Was Here, winner of the Boston Globe–Horn Book Award for Fiction. “Antsy’s favorite characters,” Neal says. “And when I came up with the idea of trading time he asked, I knew Antsy had to tell the story.” Neal lives in Southern California with his four children. To learn more about him and his books visit him at www.storyman.com

ABOUT ANTSY DOES TIME

“‘It was a dumb idea, but one of those dumb ideas that accidentally turns out to be brilliant—which, I’ve come to realize, is much more than being dumb. My name’s Antsy Bonano—but you probably already know that—and unless you got, like, memory issues, you’ll remember the kid named the Schwa, who I told you about last time. Well, unless you got, like, memory issues, you’ll remember the Schwa, but one thing’s for sure: no one ever noticed him. Antsy and the Schwa’s quest for notoriety is not to be missed.

Fueled by friendship and sympathy, Antsy Bonano signs a month of his life over to his “dying’” classmate Gunnar Ümlaut. Soon everyone at school follows suit, giving new meaning to the idea of “living on borrowed time.” But does Gunnar really have six months to live, or is news of his imminent death greatly exaggerated? When a family member suffers a heart attack after donating two months to Gunnar, Antsy wonders if he has tempted fate by playing God. Fans of “The Schwa” will welcome favorite and new characters in this whole new tale, which is as touchingly poignant as it is darkly comical.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR ANTSY DOES TIME

• Why does Antsy and his friends go into the city to see the runaway Roadkill! Raccoon ballont? How does Antsy feel once he is actually there? Does everyone else in the crowd share his emotions? The author moves back and forth between humorous moments, and serious moments. Why do you think he does this? What does it achieve?

• What originally inspired Antsy to give a month of his own life to Gunnar? What does this arrangement mean to each of the boys? Does Antsy’s motivation change as more people get involved? What do the other characters think about what he is doing? Why do you think the entire school is so enthusiastic about the time-raising campaign? Do they really pitch in just to help Gunnar? How does Antsy feel about the involvement of various others?

• What secret is Gunnar keeping about his condition, and why? How does it make Antsy feel?

• During the course of the story, both Antsy and Gunnar feel distanced from their respective fathers. How does each boy deal with this feeling of estrangement? How is the problem resolved in Antsy’s case? In Gunnar’s? Are the boys satisfied with these solutions?

• What does Kjersten hope to gain from her relationship with Antsy? How does he feel about these expectations? How does their relationship change over time?

• Discuss Antsy’s relationship with Lexie. Is it a good idea for each of them to date other people? Does Antsy ever date other people?

• How does Gunnar’s family deal with his illness, and his obsession with dying? Is this healthy for Gunnar? Do you feel that Gunnar and Kjersten are bad people for letting the school campaign get so big? At one point, Antsy says that there are three types of people in this world—those who ignore trouble, those who repel trouble, and those who try to fix trouble. Which type of person is he? Is he successful at solving problems? Which kind of person are you?

• How does Antsy react to what happens to his father on the night of the rally? How is it different from the way he feels when Gunnar first tells him he’s dying? Does he feel responsible for his father’s illness? Why does Mrs. Ümlaut’s statement, “Either he will live, or he will die,” make Antsy feel better?

• Why is Antsy’s family so intimidated by Aunt Mona? Why do you think she acts this way? Is she similar to any of the other characters in the book? Do you have an “Aunt Mona” in your family?

• Why does Gunnar make up fake quotations? Does this habit relate to other things he does in the story? Why is his parting quotation so memorable for Antsy?

• What role does Skater Dude play in the story? Why does Antsy listen to him? What makes him able to see the other characters so clearly?

• Antsy’s mother, his father, Mr. Ümlaut, Kjersten, and Gunnar all have their own ways of dealing with stress. Describe each of their methods. Are any of them healthy? What can we learn from each of them?

• Discuss the ending of the book, and what happens to the Ümlauts. Why do you think the author chose to end the story this way? Why do you think Antsy was willing to give away 22 months of his life? What does that decision say about him?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR THE SCHWA WAS HERE

• Why is it so easy for Antsy to get into Gunnar’s head? Does Antsy feel like he has a right to go into Gunnar’s mind or is he violating his privacy?

• How does Antsy interpret things about the Schwa, from how he got his name, to what really happened with his mom. I’ll spill everything. Unless, of course, “the Schwa Effect” wipes him out of my brain before I’m done . . .”

• What is your favorite character? Why do you like that character?

• What do you think the author chose to end the story this way? Why do you think Antsy was willing to give away 22 months of his life? What does that decision say about him?

• What is the significance of the name “The Schwa”? Is it significant in any other way?

• “They say a lot of things about the Schwa, but one thing’s for sure, no one ever noticed him. Except me.”