

# CANADIAN INDEPENDENT BOOKSTORE DAY

April 27, 2024



## ACTIVITY IDEAS FOR BOOKSELLERS

# ACTIVITY IDEAS

**There are so many ways to celebrate CIBD with your community!**

Booksellers may wish to host special activities to celebrate CIBD 2024, so we've put together a list of ideas to support the planning process.

Activities can be simple or complex depending on your capacity and resources. We encourage you to adapt these ideas to suit your unique clientele and business goals and take inspiration from fellow booksellers.

## In-Store Activities

**Provide a slate or whiteboard to customers.** Encourage them to write the name of their favourite author/illustrator or the title of their future autobiography. Post photos on socials.

**Hang butcher paper on your window and provide customers with markers.** Ask them to note the reasons why they love indie bookstores.

**Run a "Pay it Forward" program.** Invite customers to purchase a \$5 gift card and share a book recommendation for the next customer. Allow it to "snowball" (i.e., if the next person does not accept but adds \$5 for a total of \$10). Track how many customers opt-in and share the final tally on social media.



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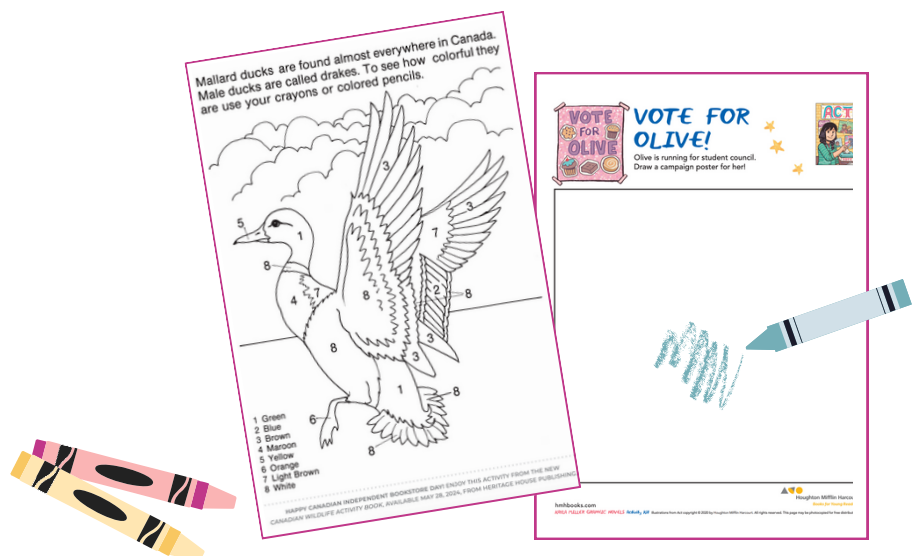
**Create a prize pack that customers who visit the shop or purchase books will be entered to win.** Solicit donations from neighbouring businesses for the prize pack to encourage community engagement.

**Invite a local writer or illustrator to visit your store to give a reading and sign books.** Consider live streaming to your socials.

**Invite a local writer or illustrator to work in your display window!** Set up a space for them to work throughout the day and invite customers to stop by, wave hello, and post photos on socials.

**Create a “spin-to-win” prize wheel.** Use the giveaway items alongside your own prizes (e.g., discounts, reward points, donations to charities, free books, merchandise) as prize options. Use a **physical** or a **virtual** wheel.

**Create an activity station for young readers.** Print off activity pages such as **these special preview pages** from the *Canadian Wildlife Activity Book* (Heritage House, May 2024) or **these activity sheets** inspired by Kayla Miller’s bestselling Click series (HarperCollins Canada).



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## Purchase Activities

**Promote the CIBD 2024 Contest for Book Lovers!** Encourage all customers who purchase books on April 27 to enter (books by Canadian authors and/or illustrators are worth double the entry).

**Offer individually wrapped treats and/or tea bags with every purchase for customers to enjoy with their new books.**

**Provide discounts on specific books, genres, or non-book items throughout the day on April 27.**

**Provide a special bonus for purchases made on April 27.** For example, give out \$5 gift cards/credits for all purchases over \$50 (to be spent on next visit) or double customer loyalty points (if you have an existing program or want to introduce one).

**Offer a “matchmaker” program.** With every book purchased, give customers the option to buy another book at a discounted rate—*if* they let you choose the book. Select a title that will complement their tastes.

**Set up “blind dates” with books.** Wrap mystery titles in brown paper and write brief, funny descriptions of the plot or main characters. Sell the books for a flat rate to adventurous customers.

**Create themed “book bags.”** Utilize reusable bags and include 2-3 books and/or non-book items for a rounded price (e.g., \$45 for the “Explorer Book Bag” containing a book about local trails or a travelogue, a Field Notes notebook, and a travel mug).

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## Online Activities

**Host “Stump the Bookseller” online.** Participants describe a book using the title, plot, or cover and you guess the book they are looking for.

**Invite submissions to a social media photo contest.** For example: “Your book nook,” “Your best shelfie,” or “Last indie bookstore purchase”). Have readers tag you in their posts; determine a winner (or winners) and award store credit or a prize pack of books.

**Host “Name That Book” on social media.** Select a well-known book, write clues about the plot, characters, or author, and post 1 clue per hour until someone guesses correctly. Award a prize to the first person who guesses it correctly (or draw from all correct answers).

**Have a virtual scavenger hunt on your website!** Scatter clues on your pages that lead to a code word (or simply hide the word). Provide a discount to everyone who finds the code word or enter all successful seekers into a draw.

**Host book trivia via Zoom, your socials, or an online platform.** Give away a gift certificate to the top winner(s).



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## Display Suggestions

CIBA will provide digital promotional materials that can be printed for use on your website, on social media, or in-store. They will be available on the Member Portal after March 11.

Booksellers may want to create additional relevant displays. For example:

- Promote CIBD using a sidewalk chalkboard sign
- Create a special window display featuring discounted titles and/or books by local creators who have done events at your store
- Create a schedule of your CIBD events and activities
- Balloons, balloons, balloons!
- Use this opportunity to thank your customers and community



**Reminder: CIBA wants to help you promote your activities!**

Email your plans to **Kayla Calder** and use **#CIBD2024** so we can find your posts and boost the signal.

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## Acting Local: A Case Study

**Another way to create buzz: work with your colleagues and peers in the indie bookselling community to celebrate the big day!**

In 2023, six independent bookstores in Ottawa, ON came together to create **a city-wide book crawl over the weekend of CIBD**. By shopping at participating stores, readers could win gift certificates to all six stores or smaller prizes including books, swag, and more.

The initiative was entirely coordinated by the participating stores, and was a great success. One store reported sales 3x higher than their average weekend sales over the three months prior!

Interested in doing something similar? Visit our **[Member Directory](#)** to find fellow indies within driving distance to you!

## THE OTTAWA INDIE BOOKSTORE CRAWL **APRIL 28-30**

**WIN \$150**  
to spend at  
Ottawa Indie  
Bookstores!

Brought to you by Ottawa's  
Independent Bookstores.



*Image via The Spaniel's Tale Bookstore*