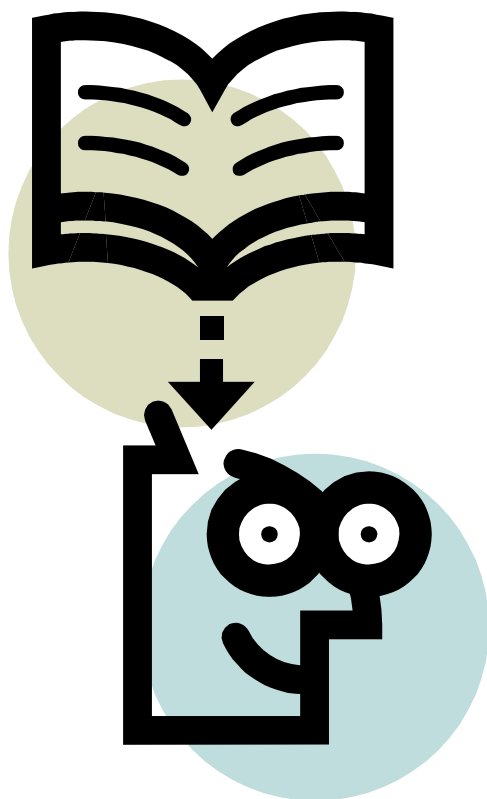


# Pitt County Schools **Elementary** Battle of the Books Manual



Sponsored by:  
Pitt County Schools  
Media and Technology Department  
Revised March 2010



## **Purpose:**

The purpose of the Elementary Battle of the Books is to encourage reading and expose students of all ability levels to quality literature representing a variety of genres and viewpoints. The game format is intended to create interest and excitement. Overall, the program helps students improve reading skills, mature in their choices of reading materials, and acquire a broader base of knowledge. Students and coaches should remember that the intent is to READ, not necessarily to win.

## **Format**

The format of the competition is a quiz bowl style question and answer session. Each competitor will be asked a question related to a specific book on the list and will need to respond with the correct title and author of the book.

## **Eligibility for Participation:**

All guidelines must be met to participate in our Battle of the Books program. The participating schools must be:

1. A public school within the Pitt County Schools district and recognized by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction with students in grades 4-5 for the current year of participation.
2. A school with a cataloged collection of information resources, a designated space as the media center on the site of the school, a materials budget and open a minimum of 20 hours per week.
3. A school employing a licensed, on-site School Library Media Coordinator.
4. School Library Media Coordinator is a NCSLMA member.

## **General Guidelines:**

1. All students participating must be in grades 4 or 5, attending a Pitt County school for which they are enrolled for the current year.
2. Each team must have at least one on-site primary Battle of the Books (BOB) coach who is a licensed School Library Media Coordinator. Co-coaches may include teachers, other staff, and volunteers.

3. Teams will consist of a maximum of 12 members. There is no minimum number. Team rosters must be finalized two weeks prior to the competition date.
4. Six students will compete per round. Substitutions may only be made between rounds. It is up to the individual schools to determine how students for the teams are selected.
5. Unsportsmanlike behavior may result in a team being disqualified. In the event of a situation that is not specifically addressed in the BOB rules, THE DECISION OF THE JUDGES IS FINAL.
6. The district sponsors have the authority to rule on any extenuating circumstances.

## **School Level Responsibilities:**

**Teams will compete at their own expense (book purchases, lunch, substitute teachers, transportation).**

### **Media Center coverage:**

Each school is responsible for supplying media coverage, if necessary, on the date of the competition. Media centers may be covered by assistants or closed for the day. If a school elects to hire a substitute teacher for the media center, the school is responsible for paying the sub.

### **Coaches:**

1. The on-site media coordinator will be the contact and primary coach. A designee may assist with teams.
2. Provide books for the students to read.
3. Organize school programs (during lunch, club periods, after school, during designated reading classes, etc)
4. Provide coaching sessions.
5. Select team members
6. Read the books.
7. Assist with practice question preparation.
8. Stay informed through district organizational meetings and correspondence.
9. Send team names and other requested information to the system level organizers by stated deadlines.
- 10. Model good sportsmanship.**

### **Participants:**

1. Must be a student in grades 4-5 in a Pitt County School district school.
2. Read books and prepare for competition.
3. Practice teamwork and good sportsmanship.
4. Attend practice sessions.

### **Organizers:**

1. Select date, time, and place for competition
2. Obtain officials: judges, timekeepers, scorekeepers, moderators, and ushers.
3. Secure questions from the State Elementary BOB Committee.
4. Meet, as needed, with coaches prior to competition to review rules, and organize participants.

5. Meet with officials prior to competition to review rules and procedures.
6. Provide any requested materials and facilitate all aspects of the event (programs, name tags, scheduling rounds, certificates, invitations, and other contest materials)
7. Ensure that each judge has access to assigned books and questions during the competition.
8. Organizers include district Media and Technology staff and school level media coordinators who volunteer to serve as coordinators and contacts.

## **Contest Procedures:**

**No student officials are permitted.**

1. Judges (3)
  - a. Monitor behavior of competing teams.
  - b. Supervise team rotation (one designated judge).
  - c. Validate all answers.
  - d. Make decisions regarding challenges to procedures, questions, answers, or time. Judges will confer before reaching a decision.
2. Moderator (1)
  - a. Review rules and questions before competition begins.
  - b. State team member's name; read each question; again state team member's name to indicate beginning of time. Moderator may repeat question, if requested.
3. Scorekeepers (2)
  - a. Post score for each team point.
  - b. Post score at each round completion on score chart and/or electronic scoreboard.
4. Timekeepers (2)
  - a. Signal end of 20 seconds if answer has not be initiated by team.
  - b. Signal end of 10 seconds if answer has not be initiated by rebound team.
5. Ushers (2)
  - a. Distribute programs.
  - b. Supervise traffic at door(s).
  - c. Assist with seating.

## **Suggested Materials and Site Considerations:**

### **1. Materials**

- a. Electronic scoreboard
- b. Provide space for team names (2).
- c. Team member name cards (bold, legible print to be easily read at a distance)
- d. Team name card stating the name of the school.
- e. Desk bell (used by the timekeeper to signal the end of the 20 seconds)
- f. Stopwatches (2).
- g. Certificates and awards
- h. PA system
- i. Printed programs
- j. Set of books for the judges.

### **2. Site considerations**

- a. Area large enough to seat the teams, contest officials, and the audience.
- b. Reserved section for the teams and the coaches (optional).
- c. Suggested physical arrangement for the contest.
- d. Other considerations:
  - i. Parking
  - ii. Bathrooms
  - iii. Water fountains
  - iv. Temperature control
  - v. Lighting
  - vi. Acoustics
  - vii. PA system
  - viii. Water by the podium for the moderator
  - ix. Breaks as needed
  - x. Snacks and/or lunch
  - xi. Refreshments for officials (water, mints, etc.)

## Battle of the Books Rules

1. A team will consist of a maximum of 12 members with 6 members allowed to play during a round. There will be no minimum number of players, and substitutions will be allowed between rounds only.
2. A round will consist of 12 questions.
3. The moderator will read each question once and will repeat it once upon the request of the team member assigned the question. (The clock will continue to run while the question is repeated.)
4. The moderator will say the team member's name, state the question, and repeat the team member's name to start the time. Once a team member has been designated to answer the question, 20 seconds will be allowed to start the answer. The questions will be answered by team members in sequential order. **The person answering may get help from his/her teammates within the 20-second time limit, but he/she may not confer until the moderator repeats the team member's name a second time.** Once the answer has begun, no more conferring is allowed and a complete answer must be given.
  - a. If any coach or member of a team confers at an inappropriate time or displays unsportsmanlike conduct, the team will receive a warning from the judges (see Appendix E).
  - b. Additional offenses will result in the offending team forfeiting its opportunity to respond.
  - c. The question will be read again and addressed to the next player in sequence on the opposing team as a rebound question. (Time will be 10 seconds and score for a correct answer will be two points).
5. Two (2) points will be awarded for each correct book title as it appears on the official booklist. Judges will disregard articles such as "a", "an", and "the" at the beginning of all titles. One (1) bonus point will be awarded for the name of the author as it appears on the official booklist. A team cannot earn bonus points for the author's name unless the title has been stated correctly.
6. If a team fails to answer the question correctly within the allotted time, the question will be read again and addressed to the next player in sequence on the opposing team, who will have 10 seconds in which to begin the answer. The second team offered the question cannot confer until the question has been addressed to them or the team will forfeit its opportunity to respond.



Points can only be earned for the title. **The play will resume with the next question being directed to that same player.**

7. Each team will compete in an equal number of rounds during the first two sessions. After the first two sessions are finished, the eight teams with the highest number of cumulative points will advance to the final session. At the start of the final session, all teams' points will be cleared and scoring will start at zero. The team having the highest score at the end of the final session will be declared the WINNER. In the event of a tie, the tie breaker rule will apply.
8. The tiebreaker round will consist of 12 questions. Scoring will start at zero. Rounds will continue until a winner is determined. If more than two teams are tied, each team will play each other, and the team with the highest cumulative score at the end of play will be the winner. (Points are not added to the cumulative scores from the earlier rounds).
9. Conferences between team members and their coaches will be prohibited during rounds. However, conversation will be allowed during the interval between rounds and at scheduled breaks.
10. Challenges (to questions, answers, procedures, or time) will be handled in the following manner:
  - a. A team member/coach will raise his/her hand and call out "TIME" **immediately** following the action to be challenged and before the next question is asked. **Only** team members and designated coaches will be allowed to challenge.
  - b. Coaches can **only** challenge procedural issues (i.e., time, scoring, rotation, etc.) not question content. Participating team members may challenge any aspect of the competition.
  - c. **Participating team members may challenge procedural issues and content of the question directed to their team.**
  - d. **Challenges should not be based solely on pronunciation of title or author.**
  - e. The coordinator will quietly confer with the **team** and report the concern directly to the judges, using the appropriate form. (See Appendix D)
  - f. If a **team** challenges the correct answer that has been provided, the team will be given three minutes to locate verification. Timing should begin when the team is given the book and the judge says, "BEGIN TIME"
    - i. If verification is found, the points will be awarded.

- ii. If verification cannot be found in the allotted 3 minutes, the questions will be redirected to the opposing team and play will be redirected to the opposing team and play will resume.
    - iii. During the verification process, the challenging team may confer. There should be **no talking** by the opposing team.
  - g. Once the judges have reached their decision, the coordinator will relay the form to the moderator who will then announce the challenge and decision to the audience, and the battle will resume.
  - h. **The judges' decision is FINAL.**
- 11.If there is audible prompting from the audience, the question will be disqualified.
  - 12.**There will be no entering or exiting the competition area during a round.**
  - 13.**No books from the current list will be allowed in the competition rooms except the officials' copies.**
  - 14.**All participants are expected to display positive sportsmanship.**
  - 15.No videotaping is allowed.
  - 16.To prevent distractions during the competitions, photographing is permitted before and after the competition, but not during the competition.
  - 17.Cell phones and all electronic devices must be turned off during the competition. To protect the integrity of the competition, team members should not have cell phones or electronic devices at any time during the competition.

# Appendices

## Appendix A: Guidelines for Question Preparation and Use

### Overview for Question Preparation

1. After the booklist is finalized by the State Elementary Battle of the Books Committee, books are assigned to committee members for reading and preparing questions.
2. Questions must be typed in the following format:  
Question : In which book...  
Title:  
Author:  
Page Number:  
Book format: (paperback or hardcover)
3. Questions must be submitted to the committee chair by the indicated date to be edited, duplicated, and distributed.
4. System level competitions will utilize questions provided by the State Elementary Battle of the Books Committee.
5. The quality of questions is most important to good ‘battles’. To maintain the integrity of the questions and the yearly competition, questions will not be distributed following the competition. Likewise, video taping of the competition will not be allowed.
6. Practice questions are not supplied by the State Elementary Battle of the Books Committee and are the responsibility of school coaches.  
Organizers may coordinate sharing of practice questions

### Guidelines for Writing Questions:

1. Begin each question with “In which book...” (IWB)
2. Use present tense, if possible, and correct grammar.
3. **Character names and names of major setting locations cannot be used. Proper names of places remote to the setting can be used. Example, if the main character lives in Georgia but has always wanted to visit Italy, the question could read: “In which book does a character save her money so she can visit Italy?”**
4. Type the title and author as they appear on the official booklist.
5. Type the page number for the answer.
6. Avoid using words from the title.
7. Refrain from obvious questions.
8. Avoid questions that can be answered by more than one title.

9. Review each question to ensure all the criteria have been met (are they clear, concise, and correct)?
10. Do not use information written by people other than the author. Epilogues, prologues, and notes written by the author will be used to write questions.

### Distributing Questions

- The Regional Coordinator or designee will distribute questions to the district sponsors.
- Questions may not be used for practice or any other purpose except the competition.
- The Regional Coordinator or designee will determine the number of rounds to be distributed. The number of rounds sent will be determined by the number of teams competing plus six (6) extra rounds for tiebreakers and to cover other situations.
- The number of rounds is based on the number of teams competing.

## **Appendix B: Criteria for Booklist**

The list of books for the upcoming year should be determined by the State Battle of the Books committee by March. The following criteria will be used in the selection of books:

- Grade level/reading level to be balanced as follows:
  - 25% of the books above reading level
  - 50% of the books on reading level
  - 25% of the books below reading level
- Interest level:
  - a. Consider a variety of plots, settings, and styles.
  - b. Select an equal number of books for boys and girls.
  - c. Consider a variety of subject areas: adventure, animal, fantasy, realistic fiction, science fiction, historical fiction, biography, folk literature, classics, etc.
  - d. Quality – select well-reviewed titles that are popular and will “stand the test of time”.
  - e. Availability – books must be currently available, preferably in paperback.
  - f. Only one book from a series can be included on the reading list in any given year.
- Recommended selection guides for elementary school collections will be used to select titles to be included on the Battle of the Books list, such as Booklist, School Library Journal, etc. Priority will be given to national award winning titles, such as Newbery Award, but will not duplicate award winners that appear on the middle school list.

## **Appendix C: Suggested Use of Practice Questions & Promotional ideas**

1. Type each question on an individual card and file cards by book title.
2. Prepare question packets with a blank card on top for documenting which teams have completed a set.
3. Prepare a Battle of the Books Center to encourage individual use.
4. Have practice rounds pitting boys vs. girls or grades against each other. (depending on the make up of your team)
5. Use 'battle' books for book talks.
6. Make bookmarks using titles from the official booklist.
7. Make displays or bulletin boards publicizing the program.
8. Encourage teachers to read these books, or portions of them, aloud to students.
9. Sponsor contests to design book covers, bookmarks, etc.
10. Create a large display, including title/author lists, participants' names, and spaces to chart each student's reading progress.
11. Prepare trivia games.
12. Publicize.
13. Share successful ideas with others in our county.
14. Other ideas:

## Appendix D: Challenge Form

System Level:\_\_\_ Regional Level: \_\_\_ State Level: \_\_\_

1. Challenging Team:

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2. Challenge:

☐ Question content

☐ Same answer in another book

List book: \_\_\_\_\_

Page number: \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Procedures

\_\_\_\_\_ Time

\_\_\_\_\_ Scoring

\_\_\_\_\_ Rotation

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Judges' Decision:

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## Appendix E: Warning Form

**RULE: If any coach or member of a team confers at an inappropriate time or displays unsportsmanlike conduct, the team will receive a warning from the judges.** Additional offenses will result in the offending team forfeiting its opportunity to respond. Repeated unsportsmanship conduct may result in a team being disqualified at the discretion of the judges and/or district sponsors.

[illegible]

## **Appendix F: Samples of Battle of the Books Questions**

1. In which book does a character “eat like a lion”?

The Wright Brothers at Kitty Hawk

Donald J. Sobol

Page: 12

Paperback

2. In which book does a character hear the familiar sound “snick” as a door is being locked?

Skeleton Man

Joseph Bruchac

Page: 56

Paperback

3. In which book does a character state, “*Being a mother is like trying to hold a wolf by the ears*”?

Walk Two Moons

Sharon Creech

Page: 53

Paperback

4. In which book is an alarm set off just for fun?

Among the Hidden

Margaret Peterson Haddix

Page: 62

## **Appendix G: Challenged Title Guidelines**

### **Suggested Guidelines for a Challenged Battle of the Books Title**

The NCSLMA State Battle of the Books Committee has set high standards and employed exemplary professional procedures in its selection of Battle of the Books titles. Since participation in the program is voluntary, the following guidelines are suggested for handling a challenged title:

- Follow the local unit's policies and procedures for reconsideration of materials.
- If the local unit votes to remove the book, it may be eliminated from the list.
- The school or unit is still eligible to participate in any competition.
- If several units in an educational region eliminate the same title from the list, a
  1. regional decision should be made for retaining or deleting the title for the
  2. regional/cluster competition.
  3. The NCSLMA State Battle of the Books Committee reserves the right to make the final decision for removing any title handled by local reconsideration.