

North Country Library System / Youth Services Department



TOOL-KIT

Book Battle Committee

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Getting Started...

1. What are “Book Battles”?

Book Battle programs are competitions similar to jeopardy or whiz quiz games but questions come from a controlled list of books that participants read in preparation for the matches. Book Battle programs are a great way to get boys to read, but girls enjoy them just as much.

2. How does it work?

Teams are made up of 4 students from grades 4-6. The reading levels are very close in these grades and book titles can be added to one list that would be in range and interest of all participants. Team members can be from the same grade or mixed grades, classes, scout troop, home school group, etc. All team members should be active participants and be aware that they are signed up on a team. Individual libraries may regulate this in their own way; for example, by requiring signatures, in-person registration, or by some other method. Six or more teams per library is an optimum number, but as few as four teams will work. Once a team has been formed and “officially” registers at the library changes cannot be made.

3. Who makes sure the team members are reading?

A parent or other adult can serve as “team coach”, but it is up to the kids to make sure that they read the books on the list. A coaching guide is included in this packet. An adult contact person is required for scheduling purposes, though that person may choose to what extent they wish to act as a coach for the team. A team captain is also necessary for each team. Only one person can give the answers during the actual match. The team can confer with each other, but it is the captain that gives the answer. Teams may decide to split up the reading lists instead of everyone reading all the titles. It will be very important that all team members show up for all the matches if they choose to do this.

4. Is it too late to start planning?

A general time-line is included in the “Book Battle Tool-Kit.” In general, promotion begins in the fall, is intensified during the winter, and the local battles and Regional Tournament take place in late spring.

5. How are books selected for the book list?

Books are chosen by the committee members during late summer. Considerations when selecting titles for the list include reading level, popularity, awards received, cross gender interest, promotion of excellent titles that may not be well known, the number of available copies of each title in the NCLS catalog, titles that frequently appear on Accelerated Reader or other reading lists, and availability of in-print or paperback copies.

6. Will there be enough copies of the titles to go around?

Libraries are encouraged to add the books on the list to their collections, as they should reflect popular or classic titles, as well as great books in general. Donated

copies may be made available to libraries that need them, and books will be available through ILL.

7. How are the actual Book Battles structured?

- On match day you will need a judge, score keeper, time keeper, and a person to read the questions. (This person may be the same as the judge)
- Each match lasts approximately 30 minutes and contains 20 questions (10 per team).
- A coin toss determines which team goes first
- Each team has 20 seconds per question.
- Questions are all in the same format - *In what book.....?*
- Answers are always in the form of the title and author of the book. [Title (5 pts.); Author's full name (3 pts.)] A maximum of 8 points per question is possible.
 - If an answer or only part of an answer (i.e. title only or author only) cannot be furnished by a team, the other team may answer and get the remaining points for that question.
 - A running score is not necessary, though the time-keeper may tell teams the score half-way through the match.
 - For more information on the way battles are structured, see the Rules of Play.

8. How many questions will we need for the matches?

Each match will contain 20 questions, and questions should not be repeated in other matches if possible. It is therefore important to write as many questions as possible for both the local matches and the Regional Tournament. When preparing to write questions, the books on the list are divided among the committee members. Each person will prepare at least 15 questions for each book, including at least five harder questions to be used at the Regional Tournament. Libraries with fewer teams may not need all the questions available for the individual matches. For more information see "Writing Questions - Guidelines."

9. What about prizes?


In the past, all participating team members received t-shirts, pencils, bookmarks, and plastic library bags which were provided by NCLS. The prizes provided by NCLS are not guaranteed from year to year, but depend on what grants and funding are available. Each participating library can determine additional local prizes, such as gift cards to bookstores (e.g. per team member: \$25 for 1st place, \$15 for 2nd place, \$10 for 3rd place). Friends groups may be willing to supply the money for these prizes.

10. What about prizes for the Regional Tournament?

Libraries competing against each other in the Regional Tournament will be competing for the Book Battle Champions trophy. The winning library will get to display this trophy in their home library until the next regional meet is held. Each member of the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place teams will receive a medal on a ribbon. All participants in the Regional Tournament will receive a gift bag with prizes donated by the participating libraries.



Battle of the Books Timeline

August	Meet with all interested member libraries Discuss changes in format/ rules/ etc. Develop Book Battle book list
September	Review time line Adjust book list/Release official list Review format of matches, rules, etc.
October	Send letters to teachers, parents, home school groups with new book list Order additional copies of Book Battle titles as needed Get letter of commitment from participating member libraries
November/ December	Promote book list as needed to schools, youth organizations, teachers Write questions
January	Visit school classes to promote the Book Battle Put sample “teaser” questions in library and distribute to participating class room teachers Send out flyers to youth groups Order prizes and t-shirts Put up posters in library
February/March	Teams register and sign-up (choose team names/ adult contact person) Set Dates for competitions Recruit volunteers to help out on “Battle” days Team members read books Coaches meet with teams Edit questions and release final question document to libraries in preparation for local battles
April/May	Local Book Battles held
May/June	Regional tournament held




BATTLE OF THE BOOKS TEAM RULES

1. Any combination of four 4th-6th graders may make themselves into a team by signing up at the library. Students who sign up for a team must really want to be on that team and should not be signed up by their friends without their permission.
2. No substitutions or additions can be made to a team once it has been formed and registered.
3. Each team must have an adult coach/contact person. This may be a parent, teacher, or another adult that is able to coordinate between the team and the library.
4. You may not be on more than one team.
5. One team member must be appointed the captain/spokesperson. The captain is the one who will speak the team's answers to the judge in each game.
6. You must choose a name for your team.
7. ***You must register your team at your local library during the designated registration period to participate in the Battle of the Books.***

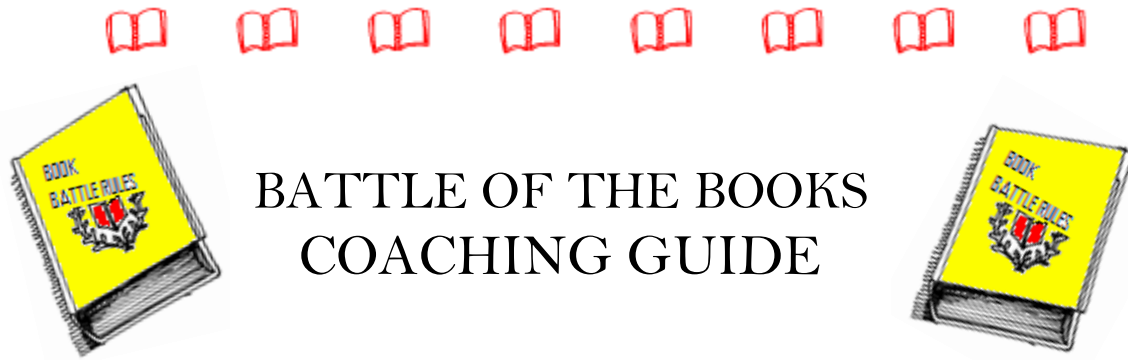



BATTLE OF THE BOOKS

RULES OF PLAY

1. There will be twenty (20) questions to a game. Each question will be read through twice before timing begins and an answer is given. Questions will not be repeated after the timekeeper has started the clock.
2. Each team has twenty (20) seconds to give the correct book title and author. A warning will be given when ten (10) seconds remains.
3. Team members may confer with each other if they wish but only the captain may answer. One (1) point will be subtracted from the team's score for each answer that does not come through the captain.
4. A correct response is composed of two parts, the title and author of the work as written on the official list.
5. The team receives five (5) points for each correct title and three (3) points if they can correctly give the full name of the author, for a possible total of eight (8) points per question. Points will not be given for a partial author's name, such as the last name only. (*Partial points are optional for local matches, but will not be given in the Regional Tournament*)
6. Only one answer may be given in the allotted time period – the first answer spoken aloud by the captain will be the one that is judged.
7. If, at the end of twenty seconds, the team is unable to answer the question, the opposing team has five seconds to give the correct answer. They are allowed only one answer.
8. Initial articles, like "A" and 'The', in titles will be disregarded when determining if a title is given correctly. All other words in the title must be correct.
9. Only team members may challenge a question. If there is a challenge, the judges will consult the page numbers referenced for the question. Team members have until the next question is asked to challenge a question. No challenges will be accepted after that time.

10. At the beginning of each game, the Questioner will offer to read the list of titles and authors so team members may hear the proper pronunciation of each. The pronunciation of the title and author shall be deemed acceptable if it is understood by the Questioner/Judge(s). There may not be a challenge on pronunciation.
11. If a team member is absent the remaining players may choose to either play with the members available or forfeit the game. No additional players may be added.
12. The audience may not coach members of the teams or talk while the battle is going on. Audience members breaking this rule will be asked to leave the room.
13. Teams waiting to compete in matches may not watch matches in session. *(This rule is optional in local matches, but is in effect during the Regional Tournament)*
14. Cell phones must be turned off or set to vibrate.
15. All books, title lists, and other material related to the program must be put out of sight in the room in which the book battles take place.
16. All team members must remain in their seats at all times.



BATTLE OF THE BOOKS COACHING GUIDE

1. Make sure that each team member understands which books on the reading list he or she is expected to read. Coaches are also encouraged to read the books too! Talk about the books with team members - What did they like or dislike about each book? Why?
2. Meet with the team regularly to offer encouragement, check on reading progress, foster team cohesiveness, and help team members learn author's names and facts from books.
3. Act as communicating link between the library, team members, and parents with all information regarding the Battle of the Books. Please keep the library informed of any problems or changes.
4. Make sure your team demonstrates sportsmanlike behavior during the battle.
5. Make sure your team members and their families understand the rules and expectations the day of the Battle.

Methods of building team spirit:

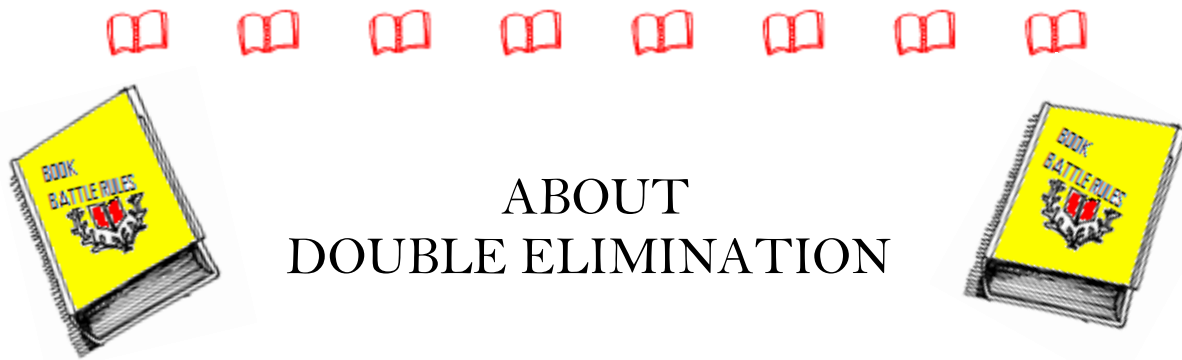
1. Decorate team t-shirts.
2. Have your team wear the same color or item of clothing to the Battle.
3. Make a banner to display at your table during the Battle.

Methods of preparing for the Battle:

1. Decide who will read each book. You will probably want more than one person to read each title. All team members don't have to read all titles, but encourage them to read as many as they can.
2. Decide how often you will meet to discuss the books.
3. Hold "mock" battles based on the books.
4. Have kids make up some of their own practice questions to quiz each other during the meetings.

Methods of encouraging and rewarding team participants:

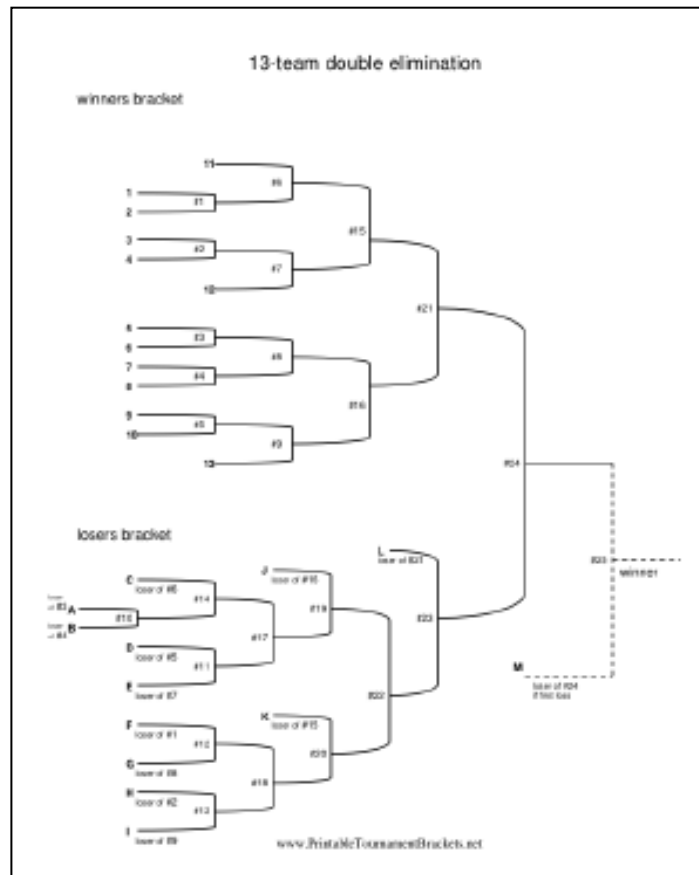
1. Give words of praise and encouragement.
2. Serve snacks at the meetings.
3. Play a game before your meetings.
4. Have a pizza party or ice cream outing at the completion of the Battle.
5. Keep it fun and make happy memories!



ABOUT DOUBLE ELIMINATION

The Regional tournament follows a double elimination format. Double elimination allows each team to have a second chance even if they lose once, and can be used at local battles too. The format can be confusing if you're new to it, so the easiest way to keep track of teams is to use one of the many free printable double elimination brackets available online.

Some good sites for bracket templates are "Print Your Brackets" (<http://www.printyourbrackets.com/index.html>) and Printable Tournament Brackets (<http://www.printabletournamentbrackets.net/>)





GUIDELINES FOR WRITING QUESTIONS FOR THE BATTLE OF THE BOOKS

Please follow these instructions as they will help standardize the compiling and editing of the questions. Please submit 15 questions for each book you have selected. At least 5 of these should be difficult questions.

1. All questions must begin with the phrase “In what book...” Please type this out for each question.
2. Write out the answer for each question in the form of “*Title* by Author”.
3. List the page number(s) that the answer appears on (or the chapter number if the book is not paged) after the answer. For answers that appear throughout the book, please write the first page number it appears on and then “and throughout”. This is important if we need to check an answer or make changes to it.
4. Please write the question, answer, and page numbers on separate lines.
5. Try to use non-specific words rather than the names of main characters. For example, “a character”, “a girl”, or “someone” instead of names. Use non-specific words for other very obvious objects, animals, etc.
6. However, be careful not to make a question so general that it could apply to several books, such as “*In what book does a character have to deal with many difficult problems?*”
7. Put quotation marks around direct quotes from the book. Only use direct quotes if there are enough clues within the quote to guess the correct book.
8. Do not choose obscure facts or references to base a question on. Kids should not have to remember every detail of the books to answer the questions correctly. Difficult questions still contain some clue as to what the answer could be.
9. Submit your questions in a Word file, or within the body of an email message.
10. Please do not use other colors than black and do not underline/highlight/italicize anything (except the title).
11. Please proof read before you send in your questions!
12. In the subject line of your e-mail, please say “Battle Questions – Title of the book”.

Email completed questions to:
Charlotte Garofalo goulib@ncls.org

Sample Question/Format:

In what book is the main character's best friend named Frita?
The Liberation of Gabriel King
by K.L. Going
p. 1

More information about Battle of the books is available on the NCLS Youth Services webpage at <http://ncls.northcountrylibraries.org/node/11>

If you are interested in participating in the Battle of the Books, please log in to the NCLS website (new users will need to create an account) and complete the interest form.

We can include as many libraries as are interested. Prizes for local “Battles” will be the responsibility of the hosting library. Details are explained in the Book Battle toolkit. If you have additional questions please contact Emily Owen, NCLS Youth Services Consultant at 782-5540 or ewen@ncls.org