



## Battle of the Books Title Selection Policy

The Battle of the Books program was created in 1974 as a way to introduce students to a variety of genres and writing styles. Over the years, the composition of the list has changed, but the goal of making life-long readers has stayed the same.

Currently, the list is divided into three broad categories: fiction, nonfiction, and picture books. The latter category may include fiction or nonfiction books.

How are books chosen for inclusion on the Battle of the Books list?

Over the course of a year, staff from Bartlett, Poplar Creek, and Gail Borden Public Libraries read many possible titles. The Battle of the Books administrative team meets in February to choose titles for the next school year's season. At least two of the three participating libraries must agree upon a title for it to be included on the list.

The BOB administrative team chooses books written for students in grades 4-6, or they are written for younger children but of interest to upper elementary students.

Selected titles fall into one of these categories:

1. They have won an award from an American Library Association-connected organization (the awards administered by the Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC), Coretta Scott King Awards, etc.) or another well-known children's literature award.
2. They received 2 or more starred reviews from the children's literature reviewing sources we use (School Library Journal, Booklist, Horn Book, Bulletin for the Center of Children's Books, and Publisher's Weekly).
3. They are on a year-end Best List from the above journals (which means they likely also received a starred review in that journal), a major library system (New York Public Library, Chicago Public Library, etc.) or a reputable national media outlet (the New York Times, NPR, etc.).

4. They are on a Best List from a reputable children's literature blogger, like Betsy Bird from *A Fuse #8 Production*.
5. They are newly-published books that are about topics of local interest. An example of this is the book *Dinosaur Named Sue* due to the tie-in with Chicago's Field Museum of Natural History.

When creating each season's list of books, the administrative team chooses approximately half of the fiction titles from titles published in the preceding year; we want to introduce kids to new titles and new authors. The remaining slots on the fiction list are legacy titles from previous years. This saves the public and school libraries money; these titles may already be in the library collections and/or they may be available as paperback editions. We chose 16 titles for both non-fiction and picture book categories, focusing mostly on newly published works. We might include 2-4 legacy titles in each of those categories.

We strive to ensure that each year's list offers participants a variety of high-quality reading experiences, including some they might not otherwise have encountered. We include a range of genres (i.e. fantasy, science fiction, historical fiction, etc.). We choose nonfiction that covers a wide range of informational topics. We include titles that depict characters with different racial and ethnic identities, socio-economic statuses, abilities, and family dynamics, so that readers can enjoy both "windows" to others' experiences and "mirrors" that reflect their own experiences. We also try to include books at a variety of reading levels to match the range of skills found in 4th-6th grade students.

While we hope that each child will find many titles on the list that they enjoy, we do not expect that each child will read every book on the list.