**HISTORY**

**What is the Battle of the Books?**

Battle of the Books is a reading motivation program.  The goals of the program are to encourage and to recognize students who enjoy reading and to broaden reading interests.

Lists of books are chosen for grades three/four, five, and six/seven.  Students read the books, discuss them, quiz each other on the contents, and then compete in teams of three to correctly answer questions based on the books.  The questions used all begin with “In what book…” so that the answer will always be the title of the book.

New lists of books for each level are compiled each year by a committee of teacher-librarians based on the Criteria of Book Selection (page 3).

An attempt is made to vary the titles chosen as to the type and difficulty so that readers may encounter a broad range of books.

This program may be done on a classroom, school, or district level.  It is popular with students and has provided new opportunities for academic competition.  Battle of the Books has proven itself to be effective in its specified purpose – to stimulate interest in reading!

What is the History of the Battle of the Books?

Faith Bailey introduced the Alaskan Reading Motivation Program to the teacher-librarians in Kamloops with the idea of adapting it to meet their needs.  A group of teacher-librarians reorganized the program to incorporate Canadian content and to develop a district model.

In the spring of 2002, Jennifer Boal introduced the program at Ellison Elementary school in Kelowna.  In 2004 she then presented this program to the district teacher-librarians.  Six Kelowna schools participated in the program that year and the program is now gaining momentum within the district.

**ORGANIZATION**

**Who Organizes the Battle of the Books?**

Battle of the Books is sponsored by the Kamloops School District Teacher-Librarians Association.  Lisa Kurio is the liaison in the Kelowna area.

The Liaison needs to:

\* schedule periodic planning meetings for schools that plan to participate in the program

\* provide a copy of pertinent materials and information to each participating school

\* coordinate the distribution of questions, set up a battle schedule for the district, distribute prizes and awards, collect photos and articles from participating schools

\* collect fees for the District Battle

\* ensure that one of the schools host the District Battle

\* conduct an evaluation of the program and make recommendations for improvement

or change for the following year

**Battle Hosts shall:**

\* invite each participating school to their school and remind them of the time and

materials to bring

\* work on promotion of the program

\* delegate tasks such as:  readers, timekeepers, scorekeepers, and crowd controllers

\* determine prizes and awards

\* determine refreshments and entertainment

**Contact People**

Mrs. Lisa Kurio (Teacher-Librarian Ellison Elem. ,Kelowna) lisa.kurio@sd23.bc.ca

Mrs. Faith Bailey   Kamloops   [fbailey@shaw.ca](mailto:fbailey@shaw.ca)

**Criteria for Selecting Books for the Official Book List**

1. **Number of books:**

3/4  12 (9) titles

5  12 (9) titles

6 12 (9) titles

**2. Grade Level/Reading Level:**

It has been the practice to select books that are either grade level or above.

**3. Interest Level:**

· consider a variety of subject areas, plots, settings and styles

· attempt to have an equal number of books for boys and girls

· consider adventure stories, animal stories, realistic fiction, fantasy, science fiction,

biography, historical fiction, folk literature, classics

· consider maintaining 50% Canadian content

**4. Quality of Books:**

\* select quality, well-reviewed titles that are popular and will “stand the test of time”

\* award winners – Newbery, Young Reader’s Choice, Canadian Council, Ruth Swartz, Canada Library Association Book of the Year Award for Children, Canadian Library Association and Young Adult Book Award

\* books recommended by other teacher-librarians

**5. Books on previous lists:** 50 % have been used in previous years , 50 % are new titles

**6. Availability of books:** \* books should currently be available in paperback format

**Timeline**

**May/June**

-  evaluation of past program

-  get title lists for next year

-  start ordering process

**September**

\* staff orientation (student expectations, student meeting times set)

\* student orientation (rules, reading logs, expectations, minimum books read requirements)

\* distribution of bookmarks

\* book check lists posted

\* students READ

**October**

\* students READ

\* check-in during book exchange periods

**November**

\* students READ

\* check-in during book exchange periods

**December**

\* meet to see if minimum amount of books have been read

\* students READ

**January**

\* students meet once a week (choose groups of 3, discuss books, practice questions)

\* practice and zone questions distributed to each participating school

\* students READ

**February**

\* students continue to practice with questions

\* students READ

**March**

\* practice battles with Zone questions; points recorded

\* students READ

**April**

\* practice battles with Zone questions; points recorded

\* awards, trophies, certificates, hosting preparations

\* Kelowna district championship battle with district questions

**PROCEDURES**

**How to Organize Your Program**

There are as many ways to organize a Battle of the Books program: > during the lunch hour > as an after school activity > as a part of the school day > during designated reading classes > during book exchange/library skills classes

**How to Configure Your Teams**

There is no right way to determine which group of three students will represent your school but here are some possibilities:

\* select the top three students based on some type of competition

\* make all teams up randomly

\* have students select their own teams

**Fee Payment**

The $50 fee payment covers the following:

\* certificates for all participants

\* medallions

\* book gift certificates

\* refreshments

\* gift bags

**Costs Involved**

Each participating school will need copies of the books for students to read (recommendation of 3 copies per book title).  Motivational rewards costs may be considered.

**How to Order Books**

In May of the preceding year, the official booklist should be set.  Some participants have purchased paperbacks through local bookstores at a 20% discount.  Others have ordered directly from the paperback publishers.  In some districts, teacher-librarians can make a bulk order purchase through the district office with some discount.

**How to Process and Circulate Books**

If you will be using multiple copies of newly received paperbacks, or even if you will be using already-processed library materials, you will want to decide how to prepare them, flag them, and mark them as Battle books.

Here are some ideas:

* put on spines or cover a label with BB year
* set aside a special shelf or bins for Battle of the Books
* limit books to Battle participants

**QUESTIONS**

**Question Sheet Example**

**Practice         Grade 6**

1. In what book do two characters sneak off to be nannies to avoid marrying complete strangers?

The Brideship     Weir

2. In what book does it state, “It’s as if our family tree looks like a set of high-voltage wires strung across a field”?

   Joey Pigza Swallowed the Key   Gantos

3. In what book does a character say, “It wasn’t easy… but what we found was that even when the weather was cold, the people were always warm and friendly”?

Run       Walters

4. In what book do you read, “If anyone stands in their way or does something they don’t like, they finish them off, or hide them, or make them forget who they are”?

Midnight for Charlie Bone   Nimmo

5. In what book does a character want to cut her hair off short?

Belle Prater’s Boy     White

6. In what book does a little boy find a length of string which “he tied to the handle of a plastic shopping bag and ran through the dump alongside the wasteland beside the railroad tracks”?

Mud City      Ellis

7. In what book does a school hold an International Night for its November celebration?

The Bell, the Book, and the Spellbinder Strickland

**What to Know About Questions**

All questions should meet the following list of requirements:

1. Begin each sentence with “In what book…”

2. Use the present tense and correct grammar.

3. Below each question type the title, author, and page from where the question was taken.

4. Omit:

a. using the names of the characters

b. using words from the title

c. obvious questions

d. questions that can be answered by more than one title (if possible)

5. Number of Questions:

A minimum of 52 questions should be available from each novel.   The three categories may be:

 a.  Practice Page  - 16 questions

 b.  School/Zone Page - 16 questions

 c.  District Page  - 10 questions

     \* extra questions are for tie-breakers

6. Difficulty:

a. The degree of difficulty should increase from the practice level up through school/zone to the district level.  The 52 questions may be divided into the three categories with the most difficult going into the district category.

**BATTLES**

**Preparation**

**Practice and School battles:**

\* questions

\* copy of the rules

\* a set of title cards to use for answering

\* a stop watch

\* a score sheet when taking points

\* practice for as long as time allows

**Zone/District battles:**

\* as above

\* a banner with the school name boldly printed to cover the front of the table

\* a set of title cards (approx. 7.5 cm x 30 cm) to use for answering

\* school spirit shirts

\* a score sheet marked “half-time” used after 15 questions and a “final” score sheet which allows the two scores to be added together

\* extra questions should you need to delete a few or go on to tie-breakers

\* scorekeeper, timekeeper, any other necessary helpers

\* allow 30 minutes per battle

**Battle Rules**

1. Each team will consist of 3 players.  The same players will begin and end the battle with no substitutions at half time.  Spares are only used as replacements due to illness.

2. All teams will answer the same 30 questions.

3. Teams will have 25 seconds to answer a question.  After 25 seconds the teams will be asked to hold up their answer cards.  One point will be awarded to each team for the correct answer.

4. During all battles the timing will begin as soon as the question has been asked for the first time.

5. The question may be repeated within the 25 second time allotment.

6. The timekeeper may wish to announce when there are 5 seconds remaining.

7. Each team will select a spokesperson to hold up the answer card for the team.  Team members confer before the spokesperson responds, but only the spokesperson will hold up the answer.  Once the spokesperson holds up the title card, it is that title card which will be accepted.

8. A half-time score will be announced after 15 questions have been given to the teams.  After 30 questions, the final score will be announced and a winner declared.

9. In the event of a tie score, 5 more questions will be given to the tied teams.  Teams must respond within 15 seconds to tie-breaker questions.  If, after the round of 5 questions, a winner is NOT determined, SUDDEN DEATH questions will be presented to the whole team.

10. Should a team wish to issue a challenge during a battle, the spokesperson must call for a “TIME OUT” immediately following such an action.  During the time out, the team will meet with its coach to discuss the concern.  The judge (host) assigned to the battle will hear the complaint, confer with the appropriate official and make a decision.  The judge’s decision is FINAL and once stated, the battle will resume.

**PROMOTIONAL IDEAS**

**How to Promote Battle of the Books**

**Suggestions:**

\* show a previous district championship battle on DVD

\* do group orientations for students, staff, and parents

\* do book talks using Battle books

\* use bookmarks from each level’s official booklist

\* make visible displays or bulletin boards publicizing the program

\* include Battle of the Books information in school newsletters

\* encourage teacher to read books or portions of books aloud to students

\* hold contests to redesign book covers, bookmarks, design a school logo for Battle of the Books, prepare the most difficult questions, etc.

\* have students create large posters of book covers to display

\* have a variety of study guides or literature units ready including games, crossword puzzles, “first line” quizzes

\* create a large display including title/author lists, participants’ names, and places to chart each child’s progress

**How the Public Library Can Help**

Students can use the services and materials of the public library in their Battle of the Books preparations.

The public libraries can help in several ways:

\* make books available

\* display Battle of the Books information

\* help advertise the program

**Awards and Prizes**

**School Level Suggestions:**

\* display prizes, medallions, and/or certificates that will be awarded

\* use vouchers for student to enter into a draw for a prize after the completion of each book

**Zone/District Level Suggestions:**

\* medallions for each member of the 3 person team that wins the competition

\* $5 (3rd place), $8 (2nd place), and $10 (1st place) book store gift certificates to each championship team member from participating schools

\* gift bags for each Battle of the Books member

\* certificates for each Battle of the Books member

**APPENDIX**

INCLUDES Samples of:

\* book lists

\* bookmarks

\* checklists

\* a letter to parents to introduce the program

\* a book report

\* vouchers for draws

\* a registration form

\* district championship battle scorekeeping templates

\* a participation certificate