



Details at your school library

Join the battle!

A district reading competition for Grades 3-7

Battle of the Books Handbook

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History

What Is the Battle of the Books?

The Battle of the Books is a Kamloops-Thompson Reading Motivation program. The goals of the program are to encourage and to recognize students who enjoy reading and to broaden reading interests.

A list of books is chosen for grades three and four, grade five, and grades six and seven. Students read and discuss the books, quiz each other, and finally compete in teams to correctly answer questions. The questions all begin with *"In what book..."* and the answer is always the title of the book.

New books are selected each year by a teacher-librarian committee, using selection criteria outlined in this handbook. The list is carefully created ensuring students engage with a broad range of books, reading levels and genres.

This popular district-wide program provides opportunities to foster literacy, academic competition, and to enhance an interest in reading!

What is the History of the Battle of the Books?

In the spring of 1987, Faith Bailey introduced the Alaskan Reading Motivation program to the teacher-librarians with the idea of adapting it to meet their needs.

In the fall of 1987, a group of teacher-librarians reorganized the program to incorporate Canadian content and to develop a district model.

The first official district battle was held at Parkcrest Elementary School on April 13, 1988. Eighteen elementary schools from the district participated. The Kamloops-Thompson Battle of the Books has grown to have as many as thirty elementary schools in the program.



What is the Battle of the Books – Reboot?

The Battle of the Books – Reboot is a reading motivation program that aims to encourage and recognize Secondary students who enjoy reading and provide them with an opportunity to broaden their reading interests, and to continue on with Battle of Books from elementary school.

A list of books is chosen by a committee of teachers and teacher-librarians. Students are provided with the list; they read the books, and then discuss them. In different years, teams have participated in a number of creative activities as either part of the Battle day, or leading up to it. These have included making a book trailer, designing a bookmark to be used for next year's Battle or designing a costume for the Trashion Show. Teams sew or make a clothing item that is determined by the committee each year and is related to one of the books.

On the day of the competition, students participate in a design challenge, display their previously designed items (the trailers, bookmarks, and Trashion Show), and participate in rounds of questions in the style of Jeopardy.

What is the History of Battle of the Books – Reboot?

The Battle of the Books – Reboot was inspired by the elementary school model that is popular in School District No. 73. It was devised in 2018 by a group of secondary teacher-librarians including Aleasha Kachel, Cecile McVittie, Dianne Bell, Kristy Dolha, and Trisha Rimmer, with the support of district coordinators Andrea Wallin and Tricia Persad. The concept was to extend Battle of the Books into the secondary grades in a way that met the needs of teens. In selecting books, the committee is committed to providing quality books with Canadian, Indigenous, LGBTQIA+ content and diverse protagonists, in multiple formats such as graphic novels, and in a range of genres.

The first Battle of the Books – Reboot was held at South Kamloops Secondary in June of 2019 with four schools participating. Our hope is to expand to include all the high schools in the district.



Organization

The Battle of the Books is funded by School District No. 73 and is delivered by the Kamloops School District Teacher-Librarians' committee.

The committee structure is as follows:

The **Executive Committee** (LSA president, Committee Chair, and District Librarian) shall:

- provides oversight as needed

The **Committee Chair** shall:

- email pertinent information to each participating school
- set up an orientation meeting with new teacher-librarians and teachers
- liaison with Library/Computer Technician
- set up a google doc for new title suggestions
- schedule a meeting for those interested in compiling new title lists
- distribute recommended title lists to schools to review before confirming 'lists' and sending to bookstores and public libraries
- request volunteers to make questions and set a deadline
- set up Battle schedules for Zone and District
- secure and distribute prizes and awards
- request volunteers to choose questions for Zone and District
- read Zone and District questions before sending to hosts
- send out Zone and District questions to hosts
- invite school board and school trustees to District Battle
- contact media to attend District Battle
- order title cards from the HGEC Graphics Department for participating schools
- host District Battle

The **Computer Technician** shall:

- maintain Battle of the Books website
- generate the Battle survey and adds it to the website
- update the '*Book opinion tally*' list from the survey results and update and maintain the '*year's last used*' list of Battle books and discontinued book list
- collate questions purchased by other districts
- add old / new questions to website for new titles
- maintain masterfile of questions for Battle books
- maintain Battle list serve

The **District Librarian** shall:

- add Zone/District Battle dates (determined by Kamloops Teacher-Librarians) to the district calendar
- book rooms for District Battle
- manage district budget for Battle program
- add reviews of all current battle titles to website
- maintain list of Battle reviews for past and present titles
- book the set-up crew for District Battle
- oversee set-up crew
- receive medals / trophies for Battle
- prepare slides for District Battle
- send out plaques for District trophies to winning schools

Criteria for Selecting Titles for the Official Book List

Number of Books:

- 3/4 12 titles
- 5 12 titles
- 6/7 12 titles

Grade level / Reading level:

- Select books that are either grade level or above grade level.

Interest Level:

- Select quality, engaging titles.
- Attempt to have books that will interest all readers.
- Have a variety of genres.
- Consider a variety of subject areas, plots, settings, and styles.

Quality of Books:

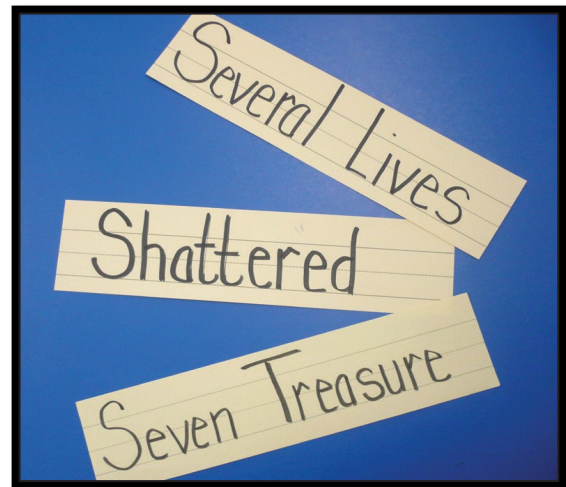
- Select well reviewed titles that are popular and will “*stand the test of time*”.
- Books recommended to the committee must previously have been read by the Teacher-Librarian.
- Select books that have been reviewed by Focused Education Resources or SD73 Novel Review Team

Old and New Titles:

- New titles should not exceed number of available volunteers to write questions.

Availability of Books:

- Books should currently be available in paperback format if possible due to budgets.
- Select 15 titles in the event that some are not available.



What to Know About Questions

After the book list is finalized, questions are assigned to individuals to prepare. Questions must be typed on the template provided on the website which is then emailed to the Library/Computer Technician. Questions are to be submitted by the deadline.

Guidelines for Making Questions:

1. Each question must begin with *"In what book"*.
2. Refer to the punctuation guide accompanying the template.
3. Questions must incorporate a quote. Avoid questions that are too short or too long.
4. Do not use proper nouns such as names of characters and places.
5. Do not use words from the title.
6. Avoid obvious questions.

Number of Questions:

- You will make a minimum of 52 questions from each novel.
 - Practice – 16 questions.
 - School – 16 questions.
 - Zone – 10 questions.
 - District – 10 questions.

Proofing:

- When you finish the questions proofread for correctness and clarity.
- Check for repetitive questions.
- Have a second person read the questions before submitting.

Selection of Questions for Categories:

- The degree of difficulty should increase from the practice level to the district level.
- After composing the 52 questions select the hardest questions for the district and end with the easiest for practice.

Distribution of Questions:

- Battle questions can be downloaded from the website once they have all been compiled.
- Passwords will be provided by the Battle Chair.



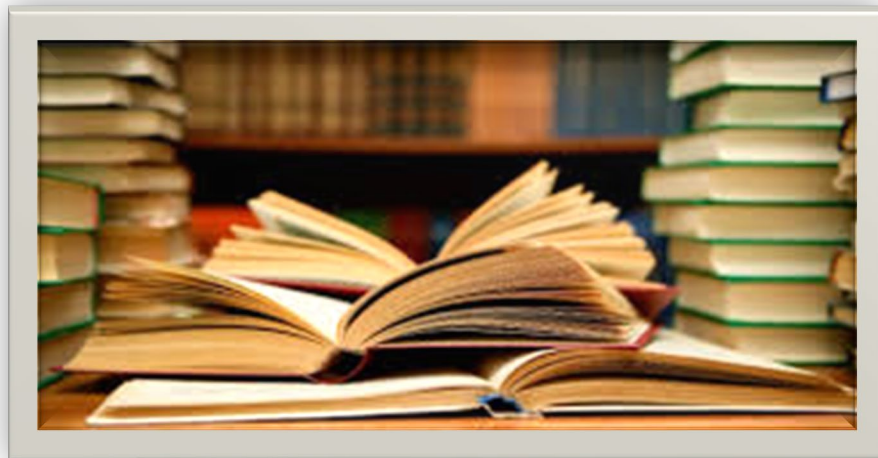
Question Sheet Examples

Strong Questions:

1. In what book does a character sit *“back on his knees and end his prayers by turning his head right, and then left, recognizing the angels who recorded his good and bad deeds”*?
2. In what book can a character not imagine *“a world where she would run next door and he wouldn’t be there”*?
3. In what book does *“an electronic siren make them all jump, and a red swirling light came on a few hundred meters to their left”*?
4. In what book is a memory described as *“reaching into a pocket for something that should be there but isn’t. Only that something isn’t keys or a phone; it’s your whole life”*?
5. In what book does the character want the reader to *“picture the entire contents of a house crammed into a tiny four-by-four space”*?
6. In what book is it understood that *“We don’t actually talk about it. It’s just understood that I wait outside while she runs in to do the data transfer”*?

Weak Questions:

1. In what book are adults described as *“smart alecks”*?
2. In what book does a character say, *“It’s time to give up”*?
3. In what book does the main character have *“an artist’s eye”*?
4. In what book does a character say, *“You’re all ashamed of me”*?
5. In what book would you read about, *“his soul being healed”*?



Timeline for Schools

September / October

- Register with the Chair to receive Battle emails
- Confirm Zone and District dates for staff planning
- Review handbook
- Sign up to do questions if needed
- Staff and student orientation
- Display battle books and run off bookmarks
- Give book talks to promote the program
- Put a notice in the school newsletter
- Students begin reading

November

- Submit questions for new titles by due date
- Begin submitting new titles for next year
- Email Chair to register your school. This ensures you will receive titles cards to use with your teams.
- Students READ!

December

- Register for Battle of the Books
- Download questions from the Battle website
- Continue to submit new titles for next year
- Students READ!

January

- Title cards will arrive
- Begin meeting with students to practice questions
- Student survey opens
- Submit new titles for next year
- Students READ!



February

- Students continue to practice with questions
- Student surveys continue
- Offer to host a Zone battle
- Submit new titles for next year
- Students READ!

March

- Practise battles
- Identify teams
- Teams practice
- Student survey continues
- Return District trophies to Henry Grube Education Centre by month end
- Submit new titles for next year
- Students READ!



April

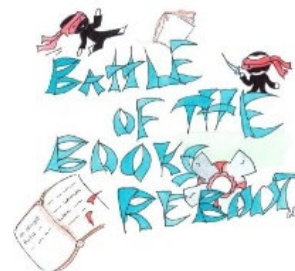
- Continue survey
- Zone and District Battles
- Submit new titles for next year
- Student surveys due soon. Note deadline

May

- If interested attend meeting to choose titles for next year
- Sign up to do questions

June

- Order new titles
- Inform students of the new titles so they can start reading over the summer. Books will be available at the TNRD libraries
- Teachers take home books for your summer reading
- Prepare questions if you have been assigned a book



Procedures

Communication

To facilitate a flow of information, each school participating in Battle of the Books should select a contact. If the contact is not a teacher-librarian it is important that the school contact send their email address to the Battle Chair who will ensure they are included in the Battle of the Books email list.

How to Process and Circulate Books

If you will be using multiple copies of newly received books, 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:

- BB24 (where 24 indicates the year the book was used)
- Put colour coded tags on spines using different colours for each grade level
- Set aside a special shelf for Battle of the Books' material
- If participants have a difficult time getting a hold of the books as you near School and Zone battles, you may wish to limit books to Battle participants only or set up a hold system if needed

How to Organize Your Program

A wide variety of ideas have been submitted for promoting the program and motivating students to read. These are suggestions to get started:

- provide group orientations for students, staff, and parents
- prepare book talks using Battle books
- provide bookmarks of each levels' official book list
- have bookmark contests with the students
- make visible displays for bulletin boards publicizing the program
- include Battle of the Books information in school newsletters and bulletin boards / note that Battle books are available at the public libraries
- encourage teachers to read books or portions of books aloud to students
- hold contests to redesign book covers, 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
- share slide show of book trailers, if available

This list is only limited by your own creativity and time. Do not forget to save a copy of everything you do for next year.



There are many ways to organize a Battle of the Books Program and each is valid and appropriate if it works for you. Throughout the district there are programs that operate:

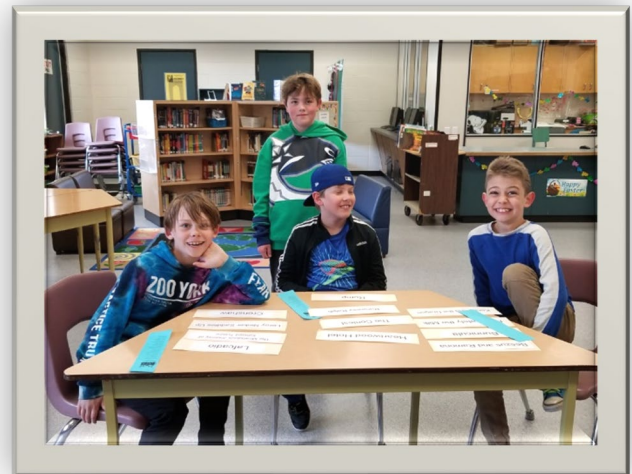
- during lunch hour
- as an after-school activity
- as part of your school day
- during silent reading time
- via weekly meetings during library time

Once questions are available on the Battle of the Books website, download them and begin practices. You may wish to choose your team before Spring Break so they can prepare accordingly by rereading certain titles. Have students use the bookmarks when discussing the questions. Practice having team members hold up the title card until they hear the “thank-you” signal to return it to the table. Once the winning school team has been determined the school questions can be used in preparation for Zone Battle. At NO time can zone or district questions be given to any students.

There is no right way to determine which students (maximum of 3) will represent your school. Students are very conscious of what is fair though, so please think through your procedures carefully. Here are some possibilities:

- Select the top 3 students based on some type of competition (hold a spelling bee type battle with the last three contestants remaining the designated champions or give a test of 24 questions (2 questions per a book) and take the top 3 scores.
- Make all teams randomly, pulling names from a hat.
- Have students select their own teams.

A variety of possibilities exist for rewarding participation and achievement in the program. These possibilities will be limited only by your budget and imagination. You should plan ahead as to what rewards you will provide to winners and readers. You may wish to display the prizes or certificates you will be awarding. If you have a year end Book Fair perhaps award the team members a gift certificate to spend at the fair. As students complete the reading of individual titles you may wish to give them a voucher that can be submitted for a book prize draw. Perhaps a book or poster taken from a previous Book Fair could be used as a prize. Official certificates for the school team can be obtained from the Battle Chair for the year end school assembly.



Battles

What to Prepare for Your Zone / District Battles

1. Bring a banner for the table to identify your school.
2. Have a set of title cards. (These are the answer cards that the participating team will be using). These cards will be provided by SD73.
3. Practice with your teams. Have teams practice with the title cards. The card will be raised when they hear "*Answers please*". The card must remain up until they hear "*Thank you*".
4. School team shirts should be made available for use at the Zone and District Battles. Have students wear their medals to the District Battle.

Holding a Zone Battle

For the battle you should have the following on hand:

- extra bookmarks
- packet of questions, which will be provided by each teacher-librarian who is choosing the questions
- a copy of the RULES (memorize these)
- score sheets with schools listed alphabetically (an example is inserted)
- clipboards and plenty of sharp pencils for the scorekeepers
- speaker and microphone
- stopwatch
- helpers (teacher-librarians, battle contacts, audience members...)
- opening music available through Henry Grube

Open the battles with a Land Acknowledgment.

You should allow 40 minutes for a battle. If possible, read through the questions that you will be using PRIOR TO BATTLES, as the extra time that you take can prevent problems.

You should make certain that all scorekeepers, timekeepers, and question readers have a good understanding of the procedures so that no unfortunate errors are made during the competition. Have a minimum of 4 scorekeepers. If there is a discrepancy in the score there must be a consensus before the scores are announced.

Email the Battle Chair with the names of the winning schools. Ask winning schools if they are willing to select District Battle questions for one of the grade levels. Email information to the Battle Chair.



Receiving Awards

Once the winners have been determined all participants remain at their tables while the winning 2 teams come to the front to receive the awards. The remaining participants shall remain seated until ALL participation ribbons have been distributed to the contestants.

At the Zone level, individual medals are awarded to the top 2 winning team members of each grade level. Participation ribbons are given to all remaining members of the other teams.

At the District Battle small keeper trophies are presented to each member of the winning team of each grade level. A large trophy is also awarded to each of these teams. This trophy is kept by the winning schools for one year. It is the responsibility of winning teams to return the trophy to the Henry Grube Education Centre for the District battles for the following year. All the other participants receive a District participation ribbon.



Battle Rules

1. Each team will consist of a maximum of 3 players. Designate a team member(s) to raise the answer card.
2. All teams answer the same 30 questions.
3. Teams have 25 seconds to confer before answering a question.
4. Timing will begin as soon as the question has been asked for the first time.
5. The question is repeated within the 25 second time allotment.
6. The timekeeper will announce when 5 seconds remain.
7. When 25 seconds are up the timekeeper will announce, "*Answers please*". The designated team member will immediately raise the title card. The card must remain up until all points are awarded. A "*thank-you*" will be given once points have been awarded to indicate to teams that the title card may be returned to the table.
8. A half time score will be announced after 15 questions. After 30 questions the final score will be announced, and a winner declared. Scorekeepers must confer before announcing half time and final scores.
9. In the event of a tie, 5 more questions will be given to the tied teams. Teams must respond within 15 seconds to tie breaker question. If, after the round of 5 questions, a winner is NOT determined, SUDDEN DEATH questions will be presented to the whole team.



Conclusion

Battle of the Books is a successful annual reading motivation program, with often over twenty-five SD73 elementary schools participating. Students enjoy reading the diverse selection of books throughout the year and look forward to participating in the cumulating events, the Zone and District battles, in the spring.

Thank you SD73 teacher-librarians for providing leadership in helping to coordinate Battle of the Books and spreading the joy of reading district-wide.

Let the games begin!



SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 73
(Kamloops - Thompson)

Score Sheets

Score Sheet – 1 – 15

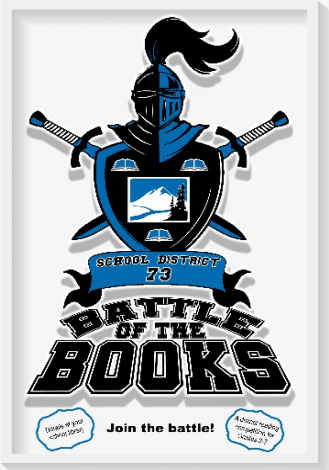
Score Sheet – 18 – 30

Score Sheet – Tie Breaker

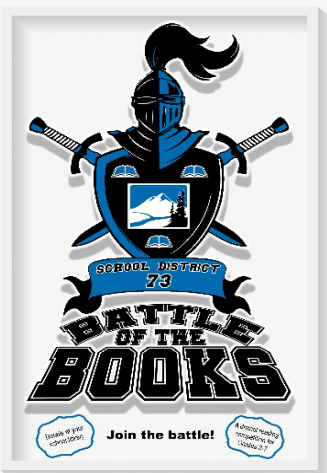
Score Sheet – Sudden Death



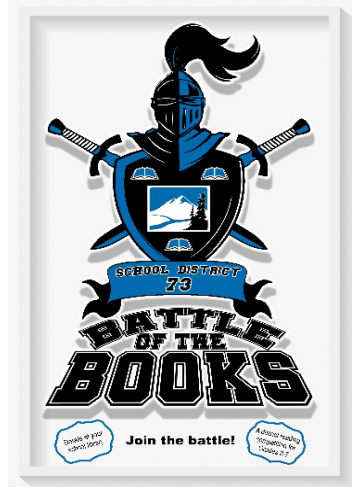
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