

THE ARKANSAS DIAMOND PRIMARY READING BOOK AWARD

PROCEDURES FOR COMPILING THE READING LIST AND FOR VOTING TO DETERMINE THE WINNER

(Revised 9/2013)

MEMBERSHIP

The Arkansas Diamond Primary Book Award was originally sponsored by the Arkansas Elementary School Council, an advisory group to the Arkansas Department of Education, and twenty-five other organizations and institutions. The current cooperating groups are: Arkansas Department of Education, University of Central Arkansas, University of Arkansas at Fayetteville, University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff, Arkansas State University, Henderson State University, Arkansas Tech University, Arkansas Council of Teachers of English, Arkansas Association of Elementary School Principals, Arkansas Division of the American Association of University Women, Arkansas Parent Teacher Association, Arkansas Association of Childhood Education International, Arkansas Library Association--Public Library Division, Arkansas State Library, Arkansas Reading Association, Arkansas Association of School Librarians, Hendrix College, Harding University, Arkansas Association of Instructional Media, Arkansas Education Association, University of Arkansas at Little Rock, Ouachita Baptist University, and Arkansas Early Childhood Association. Additionally, five representatives (classroom teachers, reading specialists and /or library media specialists) from five regions of the state and several at-large members will be included.

ADE DIAMOND BOOK AWARD COMMITTEE

Policies and procedures for the award were initially adopted by the Arkansas Elementary School Council's Primary Book Award Committee. It was the responsibility of this committee to establish the selection criteria for the Arkansas Diamond Primary Book Award.

PRIMARY BOOK AWARD READING COMMITTEE

The Primary Book Award Reading Committee is charged with the responsibility of reading and evaluating books to be nominated for the Arkansas Diamond Primary Book Award. Reading Committee members are appointed or selected to a three-year term by cooperating agencies, institutions, or organizations. Re-appointments are made at their discretion.

INITIAL READING LIST COMPILATION The preliminary reading list is developed by the representative of the Arkansas State Library, using standard reviewing sources. Copies are obtained of all available books that have been published two years previous to the time the master list is due and which are appropriate for kindergarten through third grade students. These copies are briefly examined to determine if: (1) the publishing date qualifies, (2) the author and illustrator reside in the continental United States, and (3) the subject matter is appropriate. The Reading Committee members may propose additional titles that meet the criteria. Participating schools are encouraged to suggest titles for consideration which also must meet these criteria. The Chair of the Reading Committee is responsible for securing examination copies of these titles from the publishers. The initial preliminary reading list is limitless and may exceed 200 titles.

The Chair distributes copies of the initial reading list. Books are supplied by the Chairperson of the Diamond Primary Book Award Reading Committee, who has requested sample copies from the publishers, the Arkansas State Library (through sample copies supplied to the State Library), and local public libraries.

Books acquired for reading by the Reading Committee members must be shared and returned for other members to read during the year. A reading list is available to anyone, upon request, from the Chair of the Reading Committee.

TARGET AUDIENCE

Books are selected to be read by kindergarten through third grade students. The Reading Committee tries to select books which the children will read on their own; books whose chief value would be in relation to the formal school curriculum are excluded. Most of the titles selected are fiction, but nonfiction may be considered. Each book is judged as a “whole” considering its writing style, its illustrations, and its overall quality. Series books are usually not included on the preliminary reading list.

It is hoped the children will discuss the books that they have read and as a result will become more thoughtful readers. The list always includes some easy selections as well as some which are more advanced in order to make the reading appealing to all kindergarten through third grade students. No child is expected to read all of the books on the list. Some of the titles will be selected by teachers for reading aloud. Any book to be read aloud by the teacher should be read previously to determine its appropriateness for that particular group.

MEETINGS AND VOTING PROCEDURES OF THE READING COMMITTEE

The Reading Committee meets approximately five times a year to discuss the titles on the list. If a member cannot attend a meeting, he or she may submit votes on books read to the Chairperson prior to the scheduled meeting.

Following the last meeting, the Chairperson of the Reading Committee distributes a ballot of the remaining books on the initial list. Committee members cast a written vote for the books they would like to see placed on the master reading list. A book must receive a majority vote by the committee members before it is placed on the list. Members are not to vote for the books they have not read. After the votes have been tabulated, the Master Reading List is made available principals and school librarians in March by the Department of Education approximately a year prior to student voting. Before the final list is distributed to principals and school librarians, copies of the list are distributed to the Arkansas Diamond Primary Book Award Committee members.

STUDENT READING AND VOTING PROCEDURES

A. Reading Procedure

1. The principal or the librarian receives the master reading list in March or April from the Arkansas Department Education.
2. The Librarian orders books on the reading list.
3. The students must read or hear at least three, but preferably all of the books on the reading list.
4. The teacher or the librarian uses one of the two following plans for reading and reviewing the books:
 - Books can be read over an extended time and thoroughly reviewed with the children at the time of voting...
 - OR
 - Books can be read in a condensed period of time and reviewed with the children before voting.

B. Voting Procedure

1. The ballot is available from the Arkansas Department of Education in March.
2. The ballot is reproduced for student use.
3. The children vote for one favorite book on the ballot.
4. Only K-3 children are eligible to vote for the Diamond Book Award.
5. The voting takes place in March and April.
6. The teacher or librarian tabulates the votes for the school.
7. The teacher or the librarian submits the tabulations to:
Arkansas Department of Education, #4 Capitol Mall, Room 302B, Little Rock, AR 72201-1071
8. The Arkansas State Library and the Arkansas Department of Education announce the winning book in April or May.
9. The principal or the librarian receives the master list for the following year.

SELECTION CRITERIA FOR THE READING COMMITTEE

Books are selected to be enjoyed by kindergarten through third grade students. The Reading Committee strives to select books which students will read for their own pleasure and/or inspiration...not books chiefly related to the formal school curriculum. Each book is judged as a “whole”.

Titles representative of different types of literature are included. Most are fiction, but nonfiction may be considered. The reading level ranges from easy to advanced in order to make reading appealing for all students in grades kindergarten through third.

Charlotte Huck (1993) defines the picture storybook as follows: “The picture story-book conveys its messages through two media, the art of illustrating and the art of writing. In a well-designed book in which the total format reflects the meaning of the story, both the illustrations and the text must bear the burden of narration.”

GUIDELINES MADE BY THE PRIMARY BOOK AWARD COMMITTEE

The following books/authors will be considered:

- (1) Both author and illustrator of the winning book will be invited to the award ceremony. Depending upon their availability and the status of funding, both author and illustrator of the Honor Book may also be invited to the award ceremony.
- (2) Books must have publication dates of two years preceding the year the Master List will be distributed. (For example, 2012 titles will be selected for the Master List distributed during the 2014-2015 school year.)
- (3) Caldecott Award winners may be considered.
- (4) Books with dual authors and illustrators will be considered for the inclusion on the lists. If one author is deceased, the book may still be considered.
- (5) Books which contain photographs as illustrations must have credit given to a single photographer in order to be considered.

- (6) Retellings and adaptations may be considered.

The following books/authors will NOT be considered:

- (1) Authors and illustrators outside the continental United States will not be considered. The authors and illustrators must reside in the United States.
- (2) Collections of folktales will not be considered.
- (3) Books previously published in foreign countries will not be considered.
- (4) Deceased author's books will not be considered, even if the illustrator is alive, and vice versa.
- (5) Books labeled as "easy-to-read" and books with controlled vocabulary will not be considered.
- (6) Concept books without a story line will not be considered.
- (7) Books based on television programs or teleplays will not be considered.
- (8) Books previously published or reissued will not be considered.
- (9) Translations will not be considered.
- (10) Wordless picture books will not be considered.
- (11) Abridgements will not be considered.

THE PRIMARY BOOK AWARD READING COMMITTEE'S DISCUSSION AND VOTING

- There is encouragement of discussion by any committee member of all books on the reading list or other suggested books for the list.
- At any book discussion meeting, votes can be cast and recorded for any book read.
- If a book in discussion only received negative votes and has three negative votes with no positive votes, the book is removed from the list.
- If the book in discussion received a mixture of positive and negative votes, the books remain on the list.
- In reconsideration of a book, a reading committee member who presents a strong defense for or against the book can have it reconsidered when three people are present who have read it. The book may be re-entered to the list by a majority vote of those present.
- Beginning with the December meeting of the Reading Committee, and continuing with the meeting for January and February, books must have at least three more negative votes than positive votes to be removed from the preliminary list.
- Final voting by a written ballot will take place at the February meeting of the Reading Committee. Members unable to be present can send reports to the session on how they wish to vote on specific titles.
- Guidelines for the reading sessions may be reviewed annually if necessary.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE MEMBERS OF THE READING COMMITTEE

1. Members of the committee are invited by the ?. The usual term of membership on the committee is three (3) years. The members must agree to fulfill this responsibility.
2. There is a short timeline between the first meeting of the committee in the fall and the voting which takes place in February. This timeline is essential so that the list may be sent out to the schools in time for the books to be ordered for the children to begin reading in the fall.

Although the Chairperson of the Reading Committee requests sample copies of all of the books from the publishers, the books are not available for readers on the committee before the first meeting. Since the list is distributed in advance of the first meeting, it is suggested that the Reading Committee members try to obtain as many books as possible which are obtained through the school library, public library, Arkansas State Library, or Inter-Library Loan. It is the responsibility of the members of the Reading Committee to try to obtain as many books as possible without relying solely on the publishers samples.

3. In order to vote at the February meeting for books which appear on the final reading list, a member must attend at least two meetings. For a meeting which the committee member is not able to attend, a report of books read and voted should be submitted to the committee chair or to another committee member prior to the meeting.

GUIDELINES FOR EVALUATION PICTURE STORYBOOKS

CONTENT

- How appropriate is the content of the book for its intended age level?
- Is this a book that will appeal to children, or is it really written for adults?
- When and where does it take place? How has the artist portrayed this?
- Are the characters well delineated and developed?
- Are race, gender and other stereotypes avoided?
- How is the theme developed through text and illustration?

ILLUSTRATIONS

- In what ways do the illustrations help to create the meaning of the text?
- Are how the pictures are made an integral part of the text?
- Do the illustrations extend the text in anyway? Do they provide clues to the action in the story?
- Are the pictures accurate and consistent with the text?
- Where the settings call for it, are the illustrations authentic in detail?

MEDIUM AND STYLE OF ILLUSTRATIONS

- What medium has the illustrator chosen to use? Is it appropriate for the mood of the story?
- How has the illustrator used line, shape, and color to extend the story?
- How would you describe the style of the illustrations? Is the style appropriate for the story?
- How has the illustrator varied the style and technique? What techniques seem to create rhythm and movement?
- How has the illustrator created balance in composition?

FORMAT

- Does the size of the book seem appropriate to the content?
- Does the jacket design express the theme of the book?
- In what way does the title page anticipate the story to come?
- Is the type design well chosen for the theme and purpose of the book?
- What is the quality of the paper?

- How durable is the binding?

COMPARISON WITH OTHERS

- How is this work similar to or different from other works by the same author and/or illustrator?
- How is this work similar to or different from other books with the same subject or theme?
- What comments have reviewers made about the book? Do you agree or disagree with them?
- What has the artist said about his or her work?
- Will this book make a contribution to the growing body of children's literature? How lasting do you think it will be?

**Note – These questions are listed to help the reader determine the strengths of the book. Not every question is appropriate for every book.

from: Huck, C., Hepler, S. & Hickman, J. (1993). *Children's literature in the elementary school* (5th ed.). Orlando, FL: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich

ADDITIONAL CRITERIA FOR NON FICTION BOOKS

- Accuracy and Authenticity
 - Is the author qualified to write about this topic? Has the manuscript been checked for authenticity in the field.
 - Are the facts accurate according to other sources?
 - Are all the significant facts included?
 - Do text and illustrations reveal diversity and avoid stereotypes?
 - Are generalizations supported by facts?
 - Do text and illustrations omit anthropomorphism and theological explanations?
- Content and Perspective
 - For what purpose was the book designed?
 - Is the book within the comprehension and interest range of the intended audience?
 - Is the subject adequately covered? Are different viewpoints presented?
 - Does the book lead to an understanding of the scientific method? Does it foster the spirit of inquiry?
 - Does the book show interrelationships? Do science books indicate related social issues?
- Style
 - Is information presented clearly and directly?
 - Is the text appropriate for the intended audience?
 - Does the style create the feeling of reader involvement?
 - Is the language vivid and interesting?
- Organization
 - Is the information structured clearly, with appropriate subtitles?
 - Does the book have reference aids that are clear and easy to use such as a table of contents, index, bibliography, glossary, appendix?
- Illustrations and Format
 - Do illustrations clarify and extend the text or speak plainly for themselves?
 - Are size relationships made clear?
 - Are media suitable for the purposes for which they are used?
 - Are illustrations explained by captions or labels when needed?
 - Does the total format contribute to the clarity and attractiveness of the book?

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