

## Battle of the Books Club Tip Sheet

The following ideas are intended to help you get a club started. Feel free to adapt to fit your school and the personalities of you and your students!

### Get kids interested:

- Create posters with the book covers and an explanation of what the club is all about to put up around the school.
- Make announcements about the club and create a sign-up sheet.
- Have all the titles in a special section that is easy for them to get to.
- Have lists of the titles available for all new members to have.
- Booktalk some of the titles to create buzz.
- Emphasize the competitive aspect of the club - this will grab certain students!
- Ask teachers to recommend their big readers or nominate students for the club. You could even send out invites to make it kind of an honor to join.

### Keep kids interested:

- Offer incentives for the first person to complete two books, four books, ten books or all of the books, etc. Suggestions: starbucks gift cards, a free book, amazon or Barnes and Noble gift cards, an e-reader, candy, etc.. Don't be afraid to ask local businesses to donate prizes - many are more than willing to help out! Or, consider doing a fundraiser for your club - sell concessions at a school event, sell chocolates, sell candy-grams for a holiday, etc. to raise money to buy prizes.
- Have treats associated with one of the books at each meeting to eat while you discuss. Make food, and they will come! If you don't like to bake or cook, don't worry, pre-made is just fine, too. Or bring ingredients and have them assemble their own snacks! Or, don't worry about tying it to the books, just have cheese and crackers, fruit-by-the-foot, etc. You could even have team members take turns and bring in snacks related to the book they are reading.
- Maybe design a battle tshirt for your group.

### Running the meetings:

- There are many ways to hold your meetings. The first thing you have to decide is how often and when it would be best to meet. Suggestion: meet every two weeks or so in the beginning, until kids have a couple books under their belt and through first semester. Second semester, as the battle gets closer, meet once a week.

- The second decision is whether you want them all to read the same book at the same time, or whether they can choose and read at random. There are benefits and drawbacks to both of these strategies. The benefits of them all reading the same title is that discussions are easier, and they can all work on practice questions, etc. at the same time. The drawbacks are that you have to have a lot of copies of each book and kids read at different paces, so eventually they will be separate. The advantages to having them read different titles are that they can choose based on their interests, you need fewer copies of each book, and the likelihood of all of the books being read by at least one member is greater (so you'll have practice questions for all of them). The disadvantages? Discussions may be harder, so they will have to share about each of their titles, and some books may not be read at all if no one is interested.
- For the first few meetings, have kids make flash cards with the titles and authors so they can begin memorizing them.
- Make a chart to track the students' reading to keep track of the books they have read. Give incentives as they reach milestones. Even small incentives like a bag of gummy worms or custom bookmarks are usually well-received! Book themed items like coffee mugs, lanyards, etc. are inexpensive but go over well, too!
- Once students have read a couple of books, start having them write practice questions. I have them each write 10 questions from each book they have read. This helps prove they've read the books, and also gets a pool of questions ready for them to quiz themselves and each other. I print all of the questions out and make a study folder for each person and a master folder for myself. Then I print an extra copy and cut the questions into strips that go into a big container for quizzing purposes. The questions should be in this format: "In which book ..." The answer should be included, and would be answered with the title and author. I have them put the page where they got the question, as well. Sample question:
  - In which book does a character move away from her father's house to live with her mother's extended family?  
 --- *Apple in the Middle* by Dawn Quigley
- At each meeting, everyone shares what they are reading to get them excited about the other titles. Play games, like heads up, where you write something from a book each person has read on a sticky note and they have to put it on their forehead without looking at it. They can ask questions of the others, or the

others can offer clues until they guess what's on their head. The kids like this one, and it is super entertaining for the group leader - bonus!! You could also play charades, pictionary, ask general book talk questions, etc. to make it fun. If you choose to have a treat, enjoy that at each meeting, as well.

- Right before winter break, it is a good idea to evaluate how many people are getting close to reading at least 10 books to compete in the battle in April. It's a good time to encourage those who are little behind to do some extra reading during their time off. Remind them that they can't compete unless they get to ten or beyond.
- After winter break, at each meeting, begin to quiz each other about the books by drawing strips from the container and seeing who can answer the questions. Encourage them to study their folders so that everyone at least has an idea of what the books they haven't read yet are about. Of course, they will be better at answering the questions for the books they have read, but context and hearing the questions and answers for the other books will help in the battle, too.
- Depending on how much time you have available, it is often a good idea to meet every week as the battle approaches. About 6 weeks prior to the battle might be a good time to start this. Quiz, quiz, quiz! The more questions you have for each book, the better.
- Do a mock battle to practice.

### At the Battle:

- I recommend spending some time watching each of your members battle groups. Group leaders/sponsors don't really have a lot to do during the battle itself. You could also volunteer to help read or time at the other level (if you have an elementary group, you might be a reader/timer for middle school or vice versa).
- Be ready to celebrate, regardless of whether each of your students were on a winning team. Suggestions: make little goodie bags for them to have at the end (they can't eat or drink during the battles); decorate your team's table while they are battling; take pictures of your team by the battle banner or with an author between battles or at the end; usually, there are snacks being sold, so have them bring money of their own, or shop for them yourself; shop the booksellers to get books from the next year's list, etc.
- Some venues will have food, and some won't, so maybe go out for a meal after the battle is over, or stop for breakfast prior to the battle.

### After the Battle:

- Meet to discuss pluses and minuses. Celebrate and vent, give out certificates, give out your own prizes, etc. These can be silly or serious: Who was the team “know-it-all”? Who read the most books? Who was always in a good mood? Who read everything, but never remembered anything they read? Who finished all the books the fastest? Who was the procrastinator? Who just came for the food/prizes? Who was the most competitive? etc. Be sure to put a positive spin on everything! Winning teams will get prizes at the battle, but it's always nice to do a little extra because not all of your readers will have been on a winning team, and that doesn't necessarily mean they didn't know their stuff!!
- Make sure they all have a list for the next year's battle so they can start reading. Maybe give them each a copy of one of the books. Give out final incentives, if that is something you were doing. Encourage them to recruit for next year's team, if they are returning.
- Be sure to have a send off for those that are moving up to the next level or for those who will be going to high school where there is no battle. Maybe coordinate with the high school to get a group of those kids to come back and help with the next year's battle - the site coordinator always needs runners, people to help with setup and cleanup, etc. They could also help coach younger team members or come do a talk to generate interest, create a mock virtual battle for next year's team, manage a social media account for you, etc.

\*\* Note: at the battle, the students will be split up and put into random teams. This is to prevent a school's group from splitting the books up and having each member just become an expert on one or two titles when everyone is supposed to have read at least 10. The more books they have read, the better the team they get put on will perform!

## Themed Snack Suggestions by Title for 2022 Battle

\*\*1 found most of these on Pinterest!

***A High Five for Glenn Burke:*** baseball candy kabobs; any rainbow themed cookie or cupcake; rainbow fruit kabobs; fruit loops, skittles ("taste the rainbow")

***New Kid:*** Chinese food: slow cooker pepper steak or general tso's chicken; bagels or black and white cookies to represent NY specialties

***The Crossroads:*** Guatemalan coconut bread, Arroz con leche, Champurrada cookies

***The Girl Who Could Fly:*** Angel wings pastries, lemon angel wing cookies, chicken wings

***Class Action:*** Ghirardelli chocolate, spaghetti carbonara, tuna salad (with relish, hard-boiled eggs, and celery), fish and chips

***The Remarkable Journey of Coyote Sunrise:*** school bus twinkies, coyote cookies, coyote droppings (caramelized cheetos), sunrise popsicles (Big Stick popsicles, if you can find them)

***The Last Last-Day-of-Summer:*** ice cream, ice cream sandwiches, robot snacks (lots to pick from!)

***Winterhouse:*** Sparkling cider, pie, puzzle piece cookies or brownies, "missing pieces" bag of Reeses Pieces

***Streetcar to Justice:*** Farina (cream of wheat) pudding, Farina cake, apple snowballs (all recipes from the 1850's), streetcar sugar cookies

***Song for a Whale:*** whale bananas, whale cupcakes or cookies, whale crackers (the ones like goldfish crackers)

***A World Below:*** Bat pudding cups, bat cookies or brownies, granola bars, trail mix

***Funny, You Don't Look Autistic:*** Fresh fruits and veggies, a selection of snacks for kids with sensory food aversions or sensory processing disorders (there are a bunch if you search using that phrasing)

***Words on Fire:*** Lithuanian Kugelis, Lituanian bacon rolls, Lithuanian lazy cake cookies

***Bloom:*** Canadian maple syrup pie, Poutine, Venus fly trap apple bites, maple candies, flavored waters

***The Distance Between Me and the Cherry Tree:*** cherry pie bites, cherry pie bars, cherry smoothie

***Apple in the Middle:*** Apple shaped cupcakes, apple cookies, apples (red delicious)

***Race to the Sun:*** Navajo blue corn cookies, Navajo tacos, fry bread, frito pie

***I, Cosmo:*** dog bone shaped sugar cookies or rice krispie treats, peanut butter frozen yogurt pops, breadstick bones, puppy chow, scooby snacks graham crackers, toilet water (blue juice), pups in a blanket (mini pigs in a blanket or mini corn dogs)

***Nightbooks:*** pumpkin pie oatmeal raisin cookies, hot tea or hot chocolate, witch finger pretzel rods, witch brooms (mini reeses with a pretzel stick OR cheese stick cut in 3 pieces, each piece is peeled a little and has a pretzel stick), candy eyeballs

***Echo Mountain:*** Hoover stew, chipped beef on toast, zucchini crazy cake (Depression Era recipes), campfire snack mix, mountain cookies, swedish fish, teddy grahams

## Non-book-specific Reading Treats

"Chocolate books": fruit-by-the-foot wrapped around a mini chocolate bar

"Bookworms": gummi worms

"Read s'more" bags: baggies with marshmallows, chocolate and graham crackers

"Pop into a good book": baggies with popcorn

"Donut stop reading!": regular mini donuts

Scrabble tiles: baggies with alphabet cookies or crackers.

Book Page Treat Bags: sew or glue two pages cut out of discarded books into a pocket and fill with little candies or treats

Due Date Pockets: use an old fashioned due date slip holder as a candy bar pocket

Book Boxes: Wrap mini cereal boxes with a printout of book covers and fill with treats

S'more Books: use graham crackers, chocolate frosting and a square marshmallow to make a book shaped treat

Book Sandwiches: Cut stacks of lunch meats and cheeses into little rectangles, then wrap with a rectangle of flour tortilla to make it look like a little book

Book Cupcakes: cut shapes out of discarded book pages and glue/tape them to toothpicks - stick into top of a store-bought cupcake

Open Books: tape two Hershey's nuggets candy bars side by side on a piece of construction paper, cover the top with paper or page from a book to make it look like an open book

"I was 'mint' to read this book!" treat: wrap a small pack of tic tacs with cardstock to make it look like a book

Poptart books: decorate a white frosted Poptart to look like a page from a book

"Reading is Sweet" treats: baggies filled with sweet treats

"I'm bananas about books": frozen banana treats or kabobs

"Fall into a good book": fall themed treats from the store!

"'Tis the season for reading": any seasonal treats, fruits or food items

"I ❤️ Books": Cut strawberries in half and connect the two halves with a toothpick to look like a heart; cut out meats, cheeses, little sandwiches, cookies or brownies with heart cookie cutters.

"I'm a reading STAR!": starburst candies

"Books are the apple of my eye!": snack size apples

"Orange you glad you read this book?": mandarin oranges or orange slices

Keep those "peepers" healthy so you can read more books!: carrot sticks, baby carrots or peeps marshmallows

## Game Ideas for Meetings

**Heads-Up:** Write a topic, character name, setting, object etc. from the books on sticky notes. When kids come in, stick them on their foreheads. Kids take turns asking questions or giving clues, until each person can guess what is on their own head.

**Charades:** Write things from the books on slips of paper. Kids take turns pulling a slip of paper from a jar and have to act it out, while other members guess what it is and what book it's from.

**Pictionary:** Write things from the books on slips of paper. Kids take turns pulling a slip of paper from a jar, then draw it while others guess what it is and what book it's from.

**Forbidden Words:** On a slip of paper, write things related to the books. Underneath that, write synonyms or other words that they cannot use (ex: character's names). Players draw a slip and must give clues to make the other players say the main word, but they cannot say any of the forbidden words while giving the clues.

**Book Talk Prompts:** have generic book club questions on slips of paper. Members take turns pulling out a question and answering them. (ex: what has your favorite part of \_\_\_\_\_ been?, Which character do you identify with and why?, If you could change one thing about \_\_\_\_\_ book/character, what would it be?, Make a text-to-world, text-to-self, or text-to-text connection, etc.)

**Minute-to-win-it games:** See which player can list the most titles from the battle list in one minute, or which can name the most characters from the books, or the most facts from one book, etc.

**ABC Game:** Have students write the alphabet down the side of a paper. Set a timer, and have them fill in something from the book(s) for each letter of the alphabet. This can be done individually or in pairs/teams.

**Guess Who?:** Put items in a paper bag that relate to a certain character or a particular book. Students take items out of the bag one at a time to see how many clues it takes before they guess who or what book is being represented by the items.

**Memory Matching:** Make cards that have pictures of items from the books on them (two cards per item). Turn all cards upside down, and students try to match them. As they match them, they must say what book it's from.

**Crosswords/Word Searches:** Use online generators to make crossword puzzles and word searches related to the books. Students can do them for fun, or they can race to see who can finish first.

**Kahoot or Gimkit Games:** with trivia from the books. Students can even make these.