

New Mexico Battle of the Books Rules, Regulations, and Policies

(revised February 2015)

I. Participation

A. Participants

To be eligible to participate in the State Battle of the Books, students must meet the following criteria:

- Be in grade 4 through 8 (or in 9th grade in a middle school or junior high).
- Read 10 or more of the 20 books on the appropriate list.
- Be sponsored by a sponsoring institution (see below).

Students in 4th and 5th grade participate in the Elementary Division.

Students in 6th grade at an elementary school participate in the Elementary Division.

Students in 6th grade at a middle school or junior high participate in the Middle School Division.

Homeschooled students in 6th grade follow the school district in which they reside.

Students in 7th and 8th grade participate in the Middle School Division.

Students in 9th grade at a middle school or junior high participate in the Middle School Division.

Students in 9th grade at a high school are not eligible to participate.

Homeschooled students in 9th grade follow the school district in which they reside.

B. Sponsoring Institutions

All schools and libraries in New Mexico are invited to serve as sponsoring institutions and send participants to the State Battle of the Books. An adult representative of the sponsoring institution must accompany the group to the State Battle.

A sponsoring institution that serves one age group may send up to seven participants in the appropriate division to the State Battle. For example, an elementary school serving 4th and 5th (and perhaps 6th) grade students may register one group in the Elementary Division. A middle school serving 7th and 8th (and perhaps 6th or 9th) grade students may register one group in the Middle School Division.

A sponsoring institution that serves participants in both divisions may send a group of up to seven participants in each division. For example, a public library that serves all ages may register one group in the Elementary Division and another group in the Middle School Division. Similarly, a school that serves a 4th/5th grade through 8th/9th grade population may register two groups, one in each division.

The sponsoring institution is expected to provide one or more adult volunteers to serve as Readers and Timers at the State Battle. The request for adult volunteers will be included on the registration form.

C. Battle Teams

The members of a group from a sponsoring institution do not compete as a team. Rather, participants are assigned to provisional Battle teams in the appropriate division. These Battle teams consist of members of different communities and schools. Members of the organizing committee randomly assign registered participants to the Battle teams.

D. Registration

Information about registration will be posted on the New Mexico Battle of the Books web site.

II. Battle Organization

A. Sign In

On Battle day, each group's adult representative checks in at the registration table and picks up the packet for the group. Individual participants do not need to check in at the registration table.

Included in the group's packet will be a list of team and room assignments. The adult representative should give each participant his/her team assignment.

Participants should wait until opening announcements have ended before going to the Battle rooms.

B. Balancing the Battle Teams

Members of the organizing committee randomly assign registered participants to the provisional Battle teams ahead of time. On Battle day, depending on actual attendance, some changes may be made to team assignments in order to have balanced teams.

C. Battle Schedule

Each Battle team will participate in four Battle rounds. Prior to the day of the Battle, members of the organizing committee prepare a schedule and randomly pair each Battle team with a different opposing team from the same division for each of the four rounds.

D. Control Center

Members of the organizing committee staff the Control Center. Duties include making last-minute team assignment changes in order to balance teams, providing substitute questions as needed, settling any challenges that are raised, and tabulating points from all four rounds to declare the winners.

A complete set of the Battle books for both divisions shall be on hand at the Control Center.

E. Scoring and Awards

After each round, the score sheets are delivered to the Control Center where they are tallied again and scores are recorded. Scores are totaled at the end of the fourth round. The team with the highest cumulative score is the winner. First, second, and third place teams are recognized in each division.

Default: Any team that does not appear for a round will automatically default to the opposing team. Points will be awarded to the team that is present as if that team had correctly answered all questions, (that is, 84 points). No "stolen" points will be awarded.

F. Officials

Each round should have two officials, the Reader and the Timer. Both the Reader and the Timer should clearly understand the process, procedures, and rules of the rounds of play. Instructions are provided to volunteers prior to the day of the Battle and again on the day of the Battle.

G. Audience

Family members and friends are welcome to watch the Battle rounds as space permits. Young children who cannot remain still and quiet for 45 minutes shall not be permitted in the audience. To insure fairness to all players, silence should be maintained for the duration of each Battle round, and all applause should be held until the Reader states that the round has concluded. No one from the audience may coach any team or team member or provide answers. Challenges are not to be prompted by audience members. Any audience member who violates these rules will be asked to leave the room. No food or drink except water is allowed in the rooms.

III. Rules of the Battle Rounds

A. Battle Questions

For each division, unique questions are written for each of the four rounds. Every effort is made to balance the difficulty of these questions so that each team will have an opportunity to succeed. In each division, in any given round, the 24 questions asked are the same regardless of the team pairings. (For example, Teams E1 and E2 battling in Room #22 are receiving the same questions as Teams E3 and E4 battling in Room # 23).

B. Scoring

Five points are awarded for the correct title. Two points are awarded for the correct author. Author points are only awarded if the title has been correctly identified. Stolen points are recorded in the shaded portion of the score sheet.

C. Reader and Timer Roles and Responsibilities

The Reader has the questions and answers for the round. The Reader reads the questions, listens to the answers, and determines whether the response is correct. The Reader may consult with the Timer before announcing the answer to be correct or incorrect.

The Timer has a stopwatch (or timepiece with a second hand), the score sheet for the round, and a pencil. The Timer keeps time and records the score. The Timer also listens to the answers and may consult with the Reader if necessary.

Both officials should have a copy of the Battle rules and a list of the titles and authors for each division.

A Reader or Timer may not officiate in the same room in which his or her own child is participating in a Battle round. He/she should notify the Control Center if that situation arises.

D. Preliminaries

Before the first round, teams should get acquainted and select their Team Captains. Teams are encouraged to rotate the Team Captain position as they move from round to round, however, this is not a requirement.

Before each round, the Reader or Timer will use a coin toss to determine which team receives the first question. The Timer will then record the team numbers on the score sheet.

E. Who Gives the Answer and How Do Other Team Members Participate?

The Team Captain is the only team member allowed to give answers and call for a challenge if necessary, but he/she is expected to consult with other team members before answering. Should any team member other than the Team Captain provide an answer, the officials will ignore the response and continue to wait for the Team Captain's response. Only the Team Captain's response will be considered for judgment.

- The Team Captain may give the team's answer as soon as the team has reached consensus and before "TIME" has been called.
- If the Team Captain has begun his/her answer before or simultaneously with the calling of "TIME", the Team Captain will be allowed to complete his/her answer.
- If the Team Captain begins to give the answer but becomes unsure of part of the response, the Team Captain may readdress his/her team members for clarification as long as "TIME" has not yet been called. The Team Captain may then complete the answer as long as he/she begins speaking before "TIME" is called. Team members may not prompt the Team Captain after "TIME" has been called. Example: if the Team Captain begins his/her answer with "Charlotte's Web by..." and can't remember the author's name, he/she may readdress the team to gather the additional information.

III. Rules of the Battle Rounds, continued

F. Form of Answers

Each question is in the form “In which book...?” so that each answer is in the form “*Title* by Author.”

- A title is considered correct even if mispronounced, as long as the officials can discern it. That may mean that an incorrect article in the title may be used or an answer may be slightly off (such as Zekmet the Stone Cutter instead of Zekmet the Stone Carver).
- If the main title is given but the subtitle omitted, the answer will still be deemed correct. For example, if Meet Josephina: An American Girl was the complete title, simply Meet Josephina would still be acceptable.
- The author’s name should be given as it appears on the Battle of the Books list. Giving only the last name of the author is acceptable.
- An author’s name is considered correct even if mispronounced, as long as the officials can discern it.

G. Reader Error

Should the Reader misread or mispronounce a part of a question, the Reader may correct him/herself and continue. If the Reader mistakenly gives the answer to the question, a new question will be substituted. The substitute question will be provided by the Control Center.

H. Access to Book Lists (Titles and Authors)

During a round, participants may not have access to the current year’s book lists in any form. This means that participants’ and audience members’ T-shirts may not feature any of the current year’s books as a part of the design on either the front or the back of the shirt.

I. Cell Phones and Electronic Devices

Participants may not have cell phones or other electronic devices with them during a Battle round. Such devices should be turned off and may be held by an audience member or left with the Reader and Timer for safekeeping. Audience members should turn their cell phones off or to silent mode. Before making or answering a call, an audience member should leave the Battle room.

J. Audience Interference

Should an audience member disclose an answer, the question will be eliminated and another question substituted. The substitute question will be provided by the Control Center. The offending audience member will be excused from the room for the duration of the round.

III. Rules of the Battle Rounds, continued

K. Procedure for a Battle Round

Each team is given a chance to answer 12 questions and might have an opportunity to “steal” additional points. The team that receives the first question will receive all odd numbered questions, and the other team will receive all even numbered questions. If a team misses its question and the opposing team steals the points, the opposing team still receives the next question as originally intended.

The Captain of the team receiving a question has 30 seconds to begin answering after the question has been asked twice. The Captain of a team attempting to “steal” points has 10 seconds to begin answering after the question has been repeated once. The Captain of a team that wants to challenge an incorrect title has 5 seconds to declare “CHALLENGE.”

Before beginning to read a question, the Reader should verify that the Timer is ready.

At the end of the round, the Timer tallies the points and announces the final score for that round.

Step 1. Reading the question, listening to the answer, and timing

The Reader reads the question twice, directing it to the appropriate team and speaking carefully, slowly, and loudly enough for all of the participants on both teams to hear. Then he/she listens for the answer. After the question has been read twice, the Timer begins timing, while also listening for the answer. After 20 seconds have passed, the timer announces "10 seconds remain" as a warning. After 30 seconds have passed, the Timer says "TIME" loudly and clearly.

Step 2. Ruling on the answer

If both the title and author are correct, go to step 3a.

If the title is correct but the author is incorrect, go to step 3b.

If the title is incorrect, go to step 3c.

Step 3a. Title and author both correct

The Reader states, "That is correct."

The Timer records 5 points for the correct title and 2 points for the correct author.

When the Timer is ready, the Reader moves on to the next question (back to step 1).

Step 3b. Title correct but author incorrect

The Reader states, "The title is correct but the author is incorrect."

The Timer records 5 points for the correct title and prepares to time the “steal.”

The opponents are given the opportunity to “steal” the author points (step 3b-1).

Step 3b-1. Stealing Author Points

The Reader addresses the opposing team and reads the question one time.

After the question has been read, the Timer begins timing.

After 10 seconds have passed, the Timer calls "TIME".

If the opposing Team Captain gives the correct author before or simultaneously with the calling of "TIME", the Reader states, “That is correct.” and the Timer records 2 “stolen” points for the opposing team. When the Timer is ready, the Reader moves on to the next question.

If the opposing Team Captain gives an incorrect author, the Reader states, “That is incorrect.” The Timer does not record any points. The Reader reveals the correct author and, when the Timer is ready, moves on to the next question (back to step 1).

III. Rules of the Battle Rounds, continued

K. Procedure for a Battle Round, continued

Step 3c. Title is incorrect (author correct or incorrect)

Reminder: if the title is incorrect, the officials ignore the author. Author points are not awarded if the incorrect title has been given.

The Reader states, "I'm sorry, that is incorrect. We will wait 5 seconds before asking the other team this question".

The Timer tracks the time and allows 5 seconds to pass before calling "TIME."

If the Team Captain who gave the incorrect title says "CHALLENGE" within the 5-second time period, the officials pause the round to deal with the challenge as described in Section L below.

If the Team Captain does not issue a challenge, the opposing team now has a chance to "steal" both the title and the author points (step 3c-1).

Step 3c-1. Stealing Title and Author Points

The Reader addresses the opposing team and reads the question one time.

After the question has been read, the Timer begins timing.

After 10 seconds have passed, the Timer calls "TIME".

If the opposing Team Captain gives the correct title and author before or simultaneously with the calling of "TIME", the Reader states, "That is correct." and the Timer records a total of 7 "stolen" points for the opposing team. When the Timer is ready, the Reader moves on to the next question (back to step 1).

If the Team Captain gives the correct title but an incorrect author, the Reader states, "The title is correct, but the author is incorrect." The Timer records 5 "stolen" points for the opposing team. The Reader reveals the correct author and, when the Timer is ready, moves on to the next question (back to step 1).

If the Team Captain gives an incorrect title (and either a correct or incorrect author), the Reader states, "That is incorrect. We will wait 5 seconds before proceeding.

The Timer tracks the time and allows 5 seconds to pass before calling "TIME."

If the Team Captain who gave the incorrect title says "CHALLENGE" within the 5-second time period, the officials pause the round to deal with the challenge as described in Section L below.

If the Team Captain does not issue a challenge, the Reader reveals the correct answer and the Timer records no "stolen" points (even if the author was correct). When the Timer is ready, the Reader moves on to the next question (back to step 1).

III. Rules of the Battle Rounds, continued

L. Challenges

Questions are written to minimize the possibility of more than one title being a correct response and therefore to minimize the need for challenges. Nevertheless, a challenge may be made by a team that has significant cause to do so.

If the Reader has declared a title incorrect but the team feels strongly that their answer is nevertheless correct, the team may challenge the decision.

- Only the Team Captain may declare a challenge.
- The Team Captain must state "CHALLENGE" during the 5-second pause that is provided after the Reader announces that the response was incorrect.
- A Team Captain may only issue a challenge with "cause." In other words, the Team Captain must provide a brief explanation of why his/her team feels that its answer is correct. If necessary he/she may consult with team members to clarify the rationale after the challenge has been called, but the Team Captain must be the one to communicate the rationale to the Reader and Timer.
- A Team Captain can only make a challenge to a question directed to his/her own team.

Other team members and audience members may not call for a challenge.

- If any team member other than the Captain calls "CHALLENGE", the challenge will be ignored unless the Captain calls "CHALLENGE" before "TIME" is called.
- If any member of the audience calls "CHALLENGE", the challenge will not be allowed.

After the Reader and Timer have deemed a challenge to be with cause, the challenge is sent on a challenge form or called in to the Control Center, where a decision will be made.

Play ceases until a decision is received, and no discussion is permitted in the room while awaiting the reply. Upon receiving the decision from the Control Center, the Reader shares it with the teams and the audience. The decision is final.

- If the challenge was accepted, the points are awarded to the team that issued the challenge, and the round continues.
- If the challenge was denied, play continues. If the team that issued the challenge was the original team to receive the question, the opponents may now try to steal the points. If the team that issued the challenge was attempting to steal the points, the Reader moves on to the next question.
- If the ruling was indeterminate, a new question will be sent and addressed to the team that issued the challenge. Note: If the team that issued the challenge was trying to "steal" points and then fails to answer the substituted question correctly, the opposing team will not be offered the chance to steal points for the substituted question.

M. Challenging the Author

Teams are not allowed to challenge the ruling on an author. If the Reader and/or Timer have any reason to suspect that an incorrect author was given in the answer key, they may consult their list of the current year's titles and authors and correct the answer key, if necessary.

Decisions made by the Readers, Timers, and the Control Center are final.