Elementary Battle of the Books List
2020-2021

Battle of the Books began as a program for middle school students, grades 6-8. The program has expanded to include the elementary and high school levels. Students at participating schools read books from a list established by the state Battle of the Books committees and then compete in quiz-bowl-style tournaments to test their knowledge of these books.

Teaching Resources Center, Joyner Library
A Selective Annotated Bibliography

Titles in the Teaching Resources Center are cataloged with Dewey call numbers and are preceded by Curric. Please ask someone at the Teaching Resources Service Desk if you need any assistance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Level</th>
<th>Title Information</th>
<th>Call Number</th>
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When twelve-year-old Della Kelly finds her mother furiously digging black seeds from a watermelon in the middle of the night and talking to people who aren't there, Della worries that it's happening again--that the sickness that put her mama in the hospital four years ago is back. That her mama is going to be hospitalized for months like she was last time. With her daddy struggling to save the farm and her mama in denial about what's happening, it's up to Della to heal her mama for good. And she knows just how she'll do it: with a jar of the Bee Lady's magic honey, which has mended the wounds and woes of Maryville, North Carolina, for generations. But when the Bee Lady says that the solution might have less to do with fixing Mama's brain and more to do with healing her own heart, Della must learn that love means accepting her mama just as she is.

As Duane, a polar bear, explores his new home he makes friends with the wide variety of creatures he encounters, despite their varied personalities.


Soft Rain, a nine-year-old Cherokee girl, is forced to relocate, along with her family, from North Carolina to the West.


Book-loving Kenny the rabbit has few friends in his farming community, so when one, bookstore owner George, is sent to kill another, gentle dragon Grahame, Kenny must find a way to prevent their battle while satisfying the dragon-crazed townspeople.


Twelve-year-old Kyle gets to stay overnight in the new town library, designed by his hero (the famous gamemaker Luigi Lemoncello), with other students but finds that come morning he must work with friends to solve puzzles in order to escape.


In a future where the Population Police enforce the law limiting a family to only two children, Luke has lived all his twelve years in isolation and fear on his family's farm, until another "third" convinces him that the government is wrong.


In 1935, when her mother gets a job housekeeping for a woman who does not like children, eleven-year-old Turtle is sent to stay with relatives she has never met in far away Key West, Florida.


Minli, an adventurous girl from a poor village, buys a magical goldfish, and then joins a dragon who cannot fly on a quest to find the Old Man of the Moon in hopes of bringing life to Fruitless Mountain and freshness to Jade River.


A lightning strike made Lucy, twelve, a math genius but, after years of homeschooling, her grandmother enrolls her in middle school and she learns that life is more than numbers.


Willa lives on the upper West Side of Manhattan with her divorced father and her younger brother and attends fifth grade with her best friend Ruby, and she likes things to be a certain way, because it makes life manageable even with her Sensory Processing Disorder; she certainly does not like surprises, and her father has just thrown her a big one: he has been dating Ruby’s mother, and suddenly Willa’s life seems to be spiraling out of her control--and part of the trouble is that she cannot even explain why she thinks this is a horrible idea, when everyone else thinks that it is wonderful.


A story about a girl who, with the help of the dog of her dreams, discovers that family doesn’t always have to be related--they are simply people who love you for who you are.


After being forced to give up his pet fox Pax, a young boy named Peter decides to leave home and get his best friend back.


Thirteen-year-old Sam Castine is at summer camp while his mother is in rehab, but when the camp is evacuated ahead of a fast moving wildfire, he makes the mistake of going back for
his phone, and finds himself left behind, disoriented, and running for his life, together with a girl, Delphy, from a different camp--finding an old jeep keeps them going, but in the wilds of Maine, there are only logging roads and the deadly crown fire is everywhere.


Eight-year-old Steve Satlow is thrilled when Jackie Robinson moves into his Jewish neighborhood in Brooklyn in 1948, although many of his neighbors are not. When Steve actually meets his hero he is even more excited -- and worried that a misunderstanding over a Christmas tree could damage his new friendship.


When the Smithfork family moves into a lavish Manhattan apartment building, they discover clues to a decades-old mystery hidden behind the walls of their new home.

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