

# 2013 Battle of the Books

## Question Writing & Editing

### WRITING QUESTIONS

#### Things to remember when writing questions for MHLS Battle of the Books:

- Write questions using *only* the paperbacks we purchase so the page numbers are correct.
- Each library must submit **at least 18 questions for each title**--more are welcome! Question editors are exempt from writing questions so they can ensure they have read all of the books.
- Questions must be in the proper format (see sample questions below). Question editors may return questions to question writers for corrections if not in proper format.
- Questions must be written so that the answer is always the title and author.
- Please check for proper grammar and spelling before submitting your questions. Make sure the titles and authors are worded and spelled correctly. Please refer to the title/author list posted on the website.
- Try to vary the phrasing so that each question does not begin with, "In which book..."
- Quote questions should begin with the phrase "this is a quote" or "this is a quote from which title:"
- Make the questions vague enough so that there are no clues to the answer within the question. Make the questions specific enough so that only one title is the correct answer. Refrain from using main characters names and places commonly referred to in the book in your questions.
- Keep in mind that the teams are very bright so the questions need to be difficult.
- All questions should be entered into the online form. Please submit all questions for a single book at one time.

#### Examples of good questions for Battle of the Books:

This is a quote from which book? "If I wasn't me, whoever was me would be beating me up. So it's a good thing I'm me."

*Hidden Talents*, David Lubar, page 206

In which book do characters play a game called "Prisoner's Dilemma?"

*Matched*, Allie Condie, page 225

I-75 is an important highway in which book?

*The Watsons Go to Birmingham*, page 131

In which book does a character suggest that a raw beefsteak should be put on a black eye?

*The Magician's Nephew*, C.S. Lewis, page 104

In which book do two characters pretend to be step-siblings?

*Heist Society*, Ally Carter, page 89

#### Examples of inappropriate questions for Battle of the Books:

In what book do they talk about tesseract?

*A Wrinkle in Time*, Madeleine L'Engle, page 29

- Too obvious – tesseract is a theme throughout the book.

A character in this book enjoys running.

*Matched*, Allie Condie, page 113

- Too vague; can be in several books.

In which book does Ky teach Cassia to write?

*Matched*, Allie Condie, page 173

- Names obvious characters in the book.

Kool-Aid tastes like grape medicine. Name that book.

*The Watsons Go to Birmingham*, Christopher Paul Curtis, page 139

- We are no longer using “Name that book” at the end of questions.

In which book do characters travel in a blimp-like craft?

*Airborn*, Kenneth Oppel, most pages

- Way too obvious. The entire book is about these airships.

## **EDITING QUESTIONS**

### **Things to remember when *editing* the questions**

- Identify and delete any duplicate questions.
- All questions should be edited for grammar, spelling and content.
- Make sure questions are clearly written; remember they will be read aloud and need to be concise.
- Check page numbers to verify that is where answer can be found in the paperback used. (Important in case of challenge at Regional Battle)
- Consider whether more than one book could be the correct answer to the question; if so, either rewrite question to make it more specific or discard it.
- Make sure no obvious clues are contained in the question. Example: In this book there is a character named Benedict.
- Make sure all questions contain title, author and *verified* page number where answer can be found.
- Divide the edited questions into Local and Regional questions. Sixty (60) questions should be tagged as regional questions. In the excel document editors should mark regional questions with an “R” in the column labeled “Regional/Local Questions”.

## **TIMELINE**

All questions are due by **May 1!** Please use the [online form](#) to submit questions. Once all of the questions have been received, Amy Thiel (Kinderhook) will distribute them to the question editors for editing. Here is the list of question editors:

- *The Brooklyn Nine* - Christine Pacuk (Saugerties)
- *Burning Up* – Jolie Hamer-Conroy (Poughkeepsie)
- *The Cabinet of Wonders* - Ellen Clancy (Patterson)
- *The Emerald Atlas* – Julianna Muth (Stone Ridge)
- *The Girl is Murder* - Maureen McGrath (Cold Spring)
- *The Graveyard Book* – Kristin Charles-Scaringi (Kingston)
- *Half Brother* - Emily Bennison Chameides (Hudson)
- *Maximum Ride: An Angel Experiment* by James Patterson – Christine Houilhan (Tivoli)

Question editors must edit the questions, select and tag 60 for the regional battle and email them all to Linda Deubert (Coxsackie) by **June 1**. Linda will review all questions again for correct spelling, grammar and content. Once the final list of regional questions has been selected, Linda will distribute the local questions to all libraries by **July 1**.