



LOW HANGING FRUIT

Start the Insanity: March Madness for Young Readers

By Allison Floyd

In the spirit of college basketball's March Madness, but with less dribbling and more words, the Idaho Battle of the Books (IBOB) is, in the organizers' own words, "...a statewide voluntary reading motivation and comprehension program open to all Idaho students in grades 3-12, regardless of ability," in other words, "Like sports, but with books." (<http://idahobattleofthebooks.org/>).

Not participating in a regional tournament this month? No worries – your classroom can get in on the action this March. The IBOB website has everything you need, from the 2018-19 Official Handbook, to this season's book roster (divided into Elementary and Middle/Junior High titles), plus resources and downloads. Even if you haven't officially registered your team, your classes can still take part in the fun, using the IBOB framework to launch your own book competitions.

If you decide to go rogue and choose your own roster of contenders for your book battle, NoveList Plus K-8, a readers' advisory database available via LiLi.org, is an excellent resource. Browse books by popular award winners and pit, for example, Parents' Choice award winners against Golden Kite award winners, in the Ages 0-8 category, or Agatha Awards winners against Edgar Allan Poe Awards winners in the Teens category—just for example! There are many possibilities.



Another source of inspiration can be found in *School Library Journal's* pioneering Battle of the Kids' Books program: <http://blogs.slj.com/battleofthebooks/>. While the sun set on the final battle in 2017, the battles of yore just might provide the spark that ignites your own program.

For further enlightenment and inspiration, have a listen to the recording of the Battle of the Books edition of the Idaho Commission for Libraries' Info2Go! series: <https://libraries.idaho.gov/event/info2go-battle-of-the-books/>.

However you carry it out in your classroom, staging a book battle is a fun, creative way to engage readers, reluctant and otherwise, with the written word—and each other!



LINKS TO MORE LEARNING



Get information to participate in next year's IBOB regional tournaments

Still have question on how to participate after visiting the website? Check in with your school librarian, s/he might have information, if not, send questions to idahobattleofthebooks@gmail.com.

Making the case to start a team

IBOB promotes a fun way to support the Idaho Core Standards in reading, speaking and listening, and collaboration across all grades. <http://www.sde.idaho.gov/academic/shared/ela-literacy/booklets/ELA-Literacy-Standards.pdf>

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS



Start an IBOB team!

It's easy! Buy the books (1 hardcover and 2-3 paperbacks, depending on the size of school are recommended). Each year's list is a combination of older and newer titles, so some are probably in the collection already.

Promote the program and tell students they can form teams and read the books. Students are generally free to organize teams and responsibilities for reading and practice as they see fit.

Buy the questions for \$25 - they arrive in early January.

Read the rules and procedures and let the battles begin.—usually at lunchtime.

Register team(s) who will be battling at a regional tournament and bring home a championship trophy to display in the library or that trophy case next to the office—you know the one—and take your place in school history.

DIGITAL TOOLS



NoveList Plus K-8

Use this fun readers' advisory database geared toward the K-8 crowd to learn more about this year's IBOB contenders, and to find great read-alikes by title, author, and series. It's also searchable by age group and reading level.

Find NoveList Plus K-8 and other great tools for educators at: <http://lili.org/dbs/category/18>



