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Choosing Books for Children

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CHOOSING BOOKS FOR CHILDREN

Trends and Guidelines

AWARDS

○ Major Awards by ALA

■ Caldecott

- Illustrator of picture book

■ Newbery

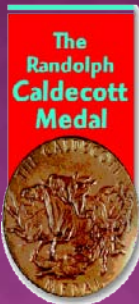
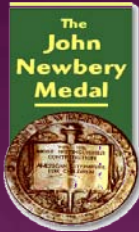
- Author of fiction or Non-fiction chapter book (Grades 4-8)

■ Michael Printz

- Adolescent fiction

■ Theodor Seuss Geisel Award

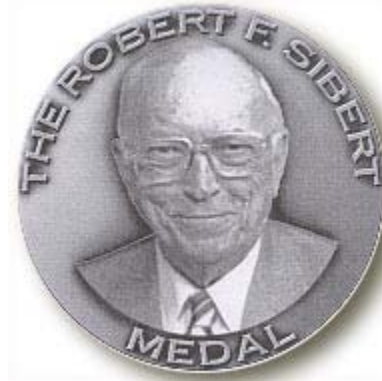
- Easy reading book



AWARDS

○ Non-fiction

- Richard Sibert Award
- Orbis Pictus



○ Cultural

- Pura Belpre
 - Hispanic
- Coretta Scott King
 - African-American



AWARDS

◉ Genre

- Historical fiction
 - Scott O'Dell
- Poetry
 - NCTE
 - Lee Bennett Hopkins
- Mystery
 - Edgar Award
- Christian fiction
 - Christy Award



AWARDS

- State Awards
 - Every state but Mississippi
 - Virginia
 - Jefferson Cup
- Named for people
 - Batchelder Award
 - Translation
 - Laura Ingalls Wilder
 - Lifetime American
 - Hans Christian Andersen
 - Lifetime - Non-American



AWARDS

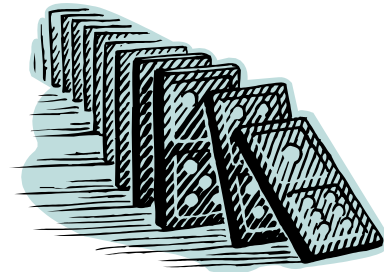
○ Miscellaneous

- Pheonix Award
 - Reprint of older title
- Boston Globe - Hornbook
 - Reputable Children's Award in all categories
- IRA Teachers Choice
 - International Reading Association
- Parent's Choice
- New York Times Bestseller



AWARDS

- Result of Newbery Award
 - Newbery oldest and most prestigious
 - Guaranteed initial and residual sales
- Tends to follow social trends
- Great influence on other awards
- Domino Effect
 - Title wins Newbery or other top award and others follow.
 - Many of the awards are given by ALA



STANDARDS FOR AWARDS

- Exceptional literary quality
- Exceptional illustrations
- Historically good quality though sometimes they made mistakes
 - *Ex: Secret of the Andes vs Charlotte's Web*
- Recent Years - questionable quality
 - *Ex: The Higher Power of Lucky* (banned by librarians)
 - *Missing May*
- Contemporary bright spots
 - *A Single Shard*
 - *The Tale of Despereaux*



CURRENT TRENDS - NEGATIVE

- ◉ 4D's of adolescent literature
 - Divorce, Death, Dismemberment, and Drugs (*Ann Tobias - children's book agent*)
 - Depression - lack of hope (Schwedt / DeLong)
- ◉ Focus inward rather than outward toward others and society
- ◉ Absence of parental or positive adult influence or characters
 - Adults portrayed negatively or are absent altogether
 - Large number of problems but lack of solutions



CURRENT TRENDS - NEGATIVE

- Casual attitude toward sexual themes
- Influx of occult and paranormal themes
 - Have dominated the adolescent field for a number of years
 - *Harry Potter* and *The Graveyard Book* signal mainstreaming of these themes in books for children

CURRENT TRENDS - NEGATIVE

- Why does it matter????
 - Lasting influence of stories
 - *Story Proof: the science behind the startling power of story* - by Kendall Haven
 - Power of story - Story lives in the imagination.
 - Powerful motivator
 - Effects of story are lasting.
 - Jesus used story - must have thought they were important

GUIDELINES FOR CHOOSING

◉ Biblical Guidelines on Occult Elements

- Ghostly figures - Hebrews 9:27
 - It is appointed unto men once to die

- Wizards and Witches - Leviticus 19:31
 - Regard not them that have familiar spirits, neither seek after wizards to be defiled by them; I am the Lord your God

- I John 4:1 Test the Spirits

GUIDELINES FOR CHOOSING

- Biblical Guidelines on Occult Elements
 - “Good witches, ghosts, or wizards” - Isaiah 5:20
 - Woe to them who call evil good, and good evil, who put darkness for light, and light for darkness
- If occult elements are present choose books where evil is portrayed as evil and righteous causes win.

GUIDELINES FOR CHOOSING

◉ Problem Novels

- Choose books that have hope / that offer solutions to problems presented that coincide with a Christian worldview
 - Phil. 4:8 “Whatsoever things are honest....”
- Choose books where positive character choices are portrayed as having good results
 - (*The Lion the Witch and the Wardrobe* vs. *The Chocolate War*)

GUIDELINES FOR CHOOSING

⦿ Problem Novels

- Choose books where children have good relationships with at least one adult character

⦿ Barbara Feinberg - great insight

- "Reflections on the 'Problem Novel' - *American Educator* Winter 2004-2005
- *Welcome to Lizard Motel*

BRIGHT SPOTS - NON-FICTION

- ◎ Steve Jenkins

- *The Top of the World*
- *What do you do with a tail like this?*

- ◎ Jim Murphy

- *The Great Fire - The Blizzard*

- ◎ Robert Sabuda

- *America the Beautiful*

BRIGHT SPOTS - PICTURE BOOKS

- ◉ Mo Willems
 - *Knuffle Bunny*
- ◉ Jacqueline Woodson
 - *Show Way*
- ◉ Brian Selznick
 - *Invention of Hugo Cabret*
- ◉ Poetry
 - Joyce Sidman - *Song of the Water Boatman and other Pond Poems*

BRIGHT SPOTS - CHAPTER BOOKS

YOUNGER & MIDDLE

- ◉ Kate DiCamillo
 - *Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane*
- ◉ Sharon Creech
 - *Granny Torelli Makes Soup*

- ◉ Pam Munoz Ryan
 - *Becoming Naomi Leon*
- ◉ Patricia Reilly Giff
 - *Pictures of Hollis Woods*

BRIGHT SPOTS - CHAPTER BOOKS OLDER

- ◉ Paul Fleischman
 - *Seedfolks*
- ◉ Dear America series
 - *Dreams in the Golden Country*
- ◉ Bauer, Joan
 - *Hope Was Here*

Recommended Authors

Picture Books

Jan Brett
Eve Bunting
Lois Ehlert
Mem Fox
Johnny Gruelle
Kevin Henkes
Eric Hill
Russell Hoban
Steve Jenkins
Ezra Jack Keats
Arnold Lobel
Patricia Polacco
William Steig
Jane Yolen

Chapter Books

Eve Bunting
Andrew Clements
Kate DiCamillo
Jean Craighead George

Marguerite Henry
Lois Lenski
Jean Little

Patricia MacLachlan
Linda Sue Park
Katherine Paterson
Diane Stanley
William Steig
Jane Yolen

Upper Level Chapter and Adolescent

Joan Bauer
Russell Freedman
Brian Jacques
C. S. Lewis
David Macaulay
Jim Murphy
Jane Yolen

Recommended Titles

Picture Books

Stewart, Sarah	<i>The Friend + The Gardener</i>
Polacco, Patricia	<i>Mrs. Katz and Tush</i>
Henkes, Kevin	<i>Owen</i>
Weitzman, Jacqueline Preiss	<i>You Can Take a Balloon into the Museum of Fine Arts</i>

Chapter Books

Mains, David and Karen	<i>Tales of the Resistance</i> + series (Christian allegory)
Fleischman, Paul	<i>Seed folks</i> (Multicultural)
McAllister, M.I.	<i>Urchin of the Riding Stars</i> (Animal fantasy)
Flanagan, John	Ranger Series (Fantasy)

Adolescent

Rivers, Francine	<i>The Last Sin Eater</i> (Christian historical fiction)
Smith, Charles	<i>Rimshots: Basketball Pix, Rolls, and Rhythms</i> + other sports poetry
Larson, Kirby	<i>Hattie Big Sky</i> (Historical fiction - pioneering)
Bauer, Joan	<i>Hope Was Here</i> (Contemporary)
Phillips, Michael & Pella, Judith	<i>Journals of Corrie Belle Hollister</i> series (Christian pioneer – Family - Growing up)

Classics

Burnford, Sheila	<i>Incredible Journey</i> (Animal adventure)
Streatfield, Noel	<i>Theatre Shoes</i> (and other shoe stories)
Porter, Gene Stratton	<i>Freckles and Girl of the Limberlost</i> (Conservation and family relations)
Moody, Ralph	<i>Little Britches</i> (Pioneer and family)
Hunt, Irene	<i>Up a Road Slowly</i> (Girl growing up)