INTRODUCTION

Battle of the Books is a fun activity, intended to encourage students to read, to remember trivia about books, and to share their interest and enthusiasm about reading and about books with their schoolmates. It is a given that Battle of the Books does involve competition, as each team is trying to answer correctly more questions than the other teams. However, we must also emphasize, that every person involved in the competition should exhibit good sportspersonship (e.g., congratulate and thank the other teams, avoid verbal or physical put-downs, refrain from over-exuberant celebration, help with set-up and/or clean-up, etc.). Even though higher level thinking skills are not emphasized, the benefits gained from participating in Battle of the Books go well beyond simple memorization of game-show trivia about books to include, among other benefits, appreciation of books, literature and reading; working cooperatively with a group; and having fun in a competitive atmosphere.

RULES OF COMPETITION

These rules and guidelines were discussed and agreed upon at our Middle School Book Selection meeting of May 16, 2000. Modifications of some of the rules, for example in scoring and length of competition, may be made at the school level competition, but these are the ones that will be followed at the District competition. Many of these rules and guidelines are based on the practices that we have developed in our schools over the past four years, while others are taken from or are modified from those discussed in the book The Battle of the Books by Joanne Kelly (Teachers Idea Press, 1990), p. 4-7.

Organization of Teams

1. Teams are comprised of 2-4 self-selected students. All students on a team are in the same grade.

2. Team members are responsible for figuring out strategies to make sure all books are read, and how they can memorize and keep track of authors, titles and relevant trivia in the books.

3. "Coaching" or "drilling" of teams or individual students by adults, mentors, previous participants, etc. is not permissible.

4. One or two organizational meetings are permitted to make sure that all students who wish to participate understand what Battle of the Books is and how it functions, and for teammates to check in with each other.

5. Each school which has elected to participate in the District competition shall hold a school-wide competition to determine which team from each grade level shall represent the school at the District competition.
Rules of Competition

1. Good sportspersonship and a spirit of fun and enjoyment should be exhibited by all team members.

2. Each team sits at its own table, assigned at random for each grade level. Tables are separated enough so that team members can quietly discuss books among themselves without being overheard by the other players.

3. Each team is seated at a cleared table on which the name of the school is displayed. Students may have a drink and snack, but no good luck charms, mascots, etc. on the table.

4. Teams are not allowed to bring notes, crib sheets, hints on a palm, etc. to the competition, nor are they allowed to write notes to each other during the competition. Obviously, the books themselves should be out of sight of all teams during the questioning.

5. Teams are encouraged to discuss quietly their answers among themselves and appoint one individual to give the team's consensus answer. If any team member blurts out an answer before a consensus has been reached, the scorekeeper is obligated to take that answer as the team's answer.

Scoring

1. In order to score, the team addressed must give the correct title of the book. With the exception of the initial "A," "An," or "The," each word of the title must be given and in the correct order. Five points are scored for giving the correct title of the book.

2. After a team has given the correct title, it may score three additional points by correctly identifying the author of the book. The author's last name should be correctly pronounced, or may be correctly spelled if pronunciation is difficult. A team must have the last name correct, but may choose not to give a first name. If the team gives the correct last name but an incorrect first name, or vice versa, no points will be awarded.

3. The team to which a question is addressed has 30 seconds in which to give both the title and the author of the book. [If extraneous noise (lawn mower, PA announcements, etc.) interferes with the team hearing the question the questioner may decide to repeat that question or ask a different question.]

4. The team to which the question is addressed may ask to have the question repeated, but they must give both the correct title and the author within the 30 second time limit.

5. If, at the end of 30 seconds, a team is unable to answer a question correctly, the next team is allowed the opportunity to give the title and author after having the question repeated.
6. The opposing team does not receive points for giving the author without giving the correct title.

7. Any question will be asked only of two teams. If both teams are unable to answer the question correctly, the next team in numerical table order is asked a new question.

**Length of Competition**

1. Each team will be asked an equal number of questions in a game, usually one question per round. A game consists of 12-15 rounds of questions, depending on time available. [Note: At the school session the coordinator may decide to play for a pre-determined time period rather than a number of rounds. Also Note: At the District competition, the game consists of 15 rounds.]

2. During a round each team is given the opportunity to answer a question, beginning with Table 1, proceeding to Table 2, and then to all tables in numerical order.

3. At the end of 10 rounds, team scores will be tallied. If one team has more points than each of the other teams, that team is declared the winner and the game is over.

4. If two or more teams are tied for the lead, those teams which are tied for the lead will play an additional game consisting of five rounds of questions. [To avoid interruption of play, usually the other teams remain seated at their tables, but do not participate in the questioning.]

5. If at the end of those additional 5 rounds, teams are still tied for the lead, another game of 5 more rounds of questions will be asked.

6. If there is still a tie, the game will be decided by sudden death questions in the manner of the Spelling Bee sudden death: If Team A answers the questions correctly and Team B misses, Team A must answer an additional question correctly. If Team A does not answer that question correctly, Team B is still in the game. If at the end of ten rounds, two teams are still tied, they will share first place.

7. Announcement of the first place team, and appropriate recognition, will be given at the end of the game for each grade level.