Battle of the Books 2024 Frequently Asked Questions

LOGISTICS

What is the date, location, and time of this year’s battle?

- This year’s Battle of the Books is Friday, April 19.
- Coaches and teams can begin arriving at (time). The event begins at 7 pm and runs until approximately 10 pm.
- It will be held at Merriweather Post Pavilion.

Can anyone attend? Is it free?

There is no cost to attend. Spectators are welcome to sit on the lawn (covered seating in the pavilion is limited to participating students, coaches, and assistant coaches.

Where can I park?

MPP will provide parking in nearby parking lots and garages; coaches will receive more information at the March 19 logistics meeting. ADA parking access will be available throughout lots and upon request.

Is there access to restrooms and accommodation for accessibility needs?

Yes

Will all teams compete in the same place at the same time? Are there pre-assigned seats?

All teams will compete in the same place at the same time. The BOB team will assign seats to each team.

What happens if it rains?

While the pavilion is covered, dress for the weather (e.g., cold, rain, wind).

TEAMS (STUDENTS AND COACHES)

What if a student needs an accommodation?
If any type of accommodations are needed, email bob@hclibrary.org by February 5.

Will coaches swap teams or sit with their home team? How many coaches can sit with each team?

Coaches will sit with their home team. One coach will be seated per team. Assistant coaches may wish to sign up to volunteer in other capacities at the event and also help gather their home team on site before the event begins.

Who can participate?

Teams of Howard County fifth graders who attend the same school. The competition is open to all 5th grade students that attend public, private, or home schools in Howard County.

What constitutes a team?

A team is comprised of five students and an adult coach (at least 18 years old). When registering, the online form requires the registration of three to five students. If a team loses a member before the actual Battle, remaining members may still participate; however, teams must have at least three members to participate on the day of the Battle.

Does a homeschool team all have to participate in the same co-op or tutorial or can they be from a mix of unaffiliated/co-ops/tutorials?

They should represent one co-op. If a co-op wants to put individuals from other Howard County home school associations that is okay.

Does a homeschooler have to reside in Howard County in order to participate, or is it enough that they attend a co-op/tutorial in Howard County?

They only have to attend a co-op/tutorial in HoCo. BOB is only open to students who attend HoCo associations, not students that are virtually attending some other organization or attending a co-op in another county.

For homeschoolers, what constitutes a 5th grader? Is there a birthday range? Do they need to be being reviewed as a 5th grader? Do they need to be doing 5th grade-level work?
A fifth grader is someone that would be attending/accepted as a 5th grader if they were in a public/private school.

**Who can be a coach?**

Any adult over 18 years of age, such as a parent, volunteer, older sibling, scout leader, or teacher may be a coach. An individual may only coach one team. A team may opt to have an assistant coach as a stand-in, in case the coach is unable to perform their mentoring duties the night of the battle. The coach or another designated adult MUST attend ONE of the mandatory coaches meetings held in the fall prior to the event. In addition, the coach or other designated adult must also attend ONE of the Battle’s logistics meetings in the spring.

The spring logistics meeting for the 2024 competition is March 19 virtually via Zoom.

**COSTUMES**

*What type of team costumes are permissible?*

Team shirts, spirit wear and/or costumes are encouraged; however, costumes must comply with all requirements listed in HCPSS Policy 9210: Student Dress Code. Please see the Coach’s Handbook for more information. If a costume/prop/sign is not in compliance, it will not be permitted to the event.

*May the name of any of the characters or book titles be on costumes?*

No book titles, character names, or authors are allowed on costumes, signs, team members, or coaches.

*Are school names allowed on costumes?*

Yes.

*Is there a need for costumes?*

We strongly encourage teams to wear costumes. One of the awards announced during the event is for Best Team Costume.
Do we have to get approval for a logo or T-shirt design?
No.

POSTERS

When are posters due?
Poster are due no later than April 5. No exceptions. Submissions will open after the March 19 Mandatory Logistics Meeting and the Dropbox link will be available on the BOB website.

Is there a required file format for Dropbox?
Yes. Please name your document using your section number followed by team name (Ex: “203 Book Lovers”) upload a JPEG or PNG file only. Follow prompts for uploading.

What should team posters include?
Team posters should represent your team’s name, its members, and e thematic. NO book titles, authors, or cover art are permitted on team posters for the event and slides. Such posters will not be included in the parade.

Can we put our pictures on the Jamboard or Google Slide?
Yes.

Do we need to bring our poster or upload only?
Please upload digital or physical posters to the Dropbox link on the BOB page to be shown on screen at event. Physical posters are not required or used by judges at the event.

What are the dimensions for a physical poster?
Standard project poster board 24” x 36” size. Please take a photo and upload a JPEG or PNG file to our Dropbox – follow prompts.
PROCEDURES AND RULES

How long does the event last? Is there an intermission?

Battle of the Books begins at 7 pm and ends around 10 pm. The event is broken into four rounds, with one intermission after round two.

How do we know if parents of our team members did not sign the photo release?

You will be contacted if release forms are not received. But if you are not sure email bob@hclibrary.org.

Is there a collection of practice questions that coaches can use in mock battles?

We do not have a collection of practice questions. Ask your students to write their own practice questions for their teammates.

How much time will be allowed for the answering of the 2 questions?

30 seconds.

Will all the options for answers be the correct title and author (i.e., no incorrect options will be provided - slightly wrong title or author name)?

Correct.

To clarify, the questions come from the content of the book. Will any questions from covers?

It’s possible. Every part of the book is fair game for questions.

Will the answers be announced after each question?

Yes.

BOOKS

Are the teams allowed to keep the book and author names with them?

No. An answer key will be provided to teams.
How are books chosen?

A committee of librarians from Howard County Library System and the Howard County Public School System discuss and determine the title list for each year. The target number of books per list is 10-12 titles. Reading levels of titles reflect on, above, and below grade level of participants. In its entirety, the list should represent a broad and diverse range of topics, writing styles, settings, genres, characters, authors, and classifications. Most books need to be available in paperback with no more than two titles in hardback. Books may not reappear on the list. Award winning books such as Caldecott, Newbery, and ALA Notables are all excellent sources for potential list candidates.

Where will I obtain the Battle books?

Each team is provided with a set of books, courtesy of the Battle sponsors. A limited number of copies of the books are available to borrow at HCLS branches. Battle books are subject to the same borrowing period (three weeks) as other library materials. If possible, books will be available in audio format, although some Battle questions will address visual details in the books, such as illustrations and photographs. Remember, all questions will come from the specific editions given to the teams; see the Coach’s Handbook for ISBNs.

Don’t see your question here? Email bob@hclibrary.org.