

Battle of the Books

# Coach's Guide

# Introduction

## What Is Battle of the Books?

Battle of the Books (BOTB) is a regional competition in which students work in teams to read and study a set of 10 novels over the course of several months. They will then participate in “Jeopardy-style” tournaments to demonstrate their knowledge of the books, first at the building level, followed by finalists moving on to the district and regional levels.

The primary purpose of BOTB is to foster students’ love of reading by introducing them to books by acclaimed authors. Their participation will help increase reading comprehension and promote academic achievement and teamwork. Through student collaboration, teams will devise a plan for reading, read and “master” each book, and plan for each level of competition. BOTB inherently requires students to utilize the 4 Cs (Collaboration; Connectivity; Creativity; Critical Thinking) as well as 21st Century Learning Skills.

## What Is the Role of a Coach?

The role of the Coach is to facilitate team meetings and support students throughout their preparation for the competitions. As facilitators, Coaches are not required to read all ten books, but instead will become familiar with all books and experts on a few chosen titles, depending on the number of student participants, or team members. Coaches will be responsible for participating in two different types of meetings throughout the competition process.

### Team Meetings (“Reading Check”)

Coaches will meet with their assigned team twice each month with the intent of ensuring that their team members are on track with their reading goals and are comprehending the books. Strategies to use can include: breakout discussions; review/completion of graphic organizers; using online quiz tools. These meetings will be ongoing throughout the year. Please see page 2 for more information.

### Technical Meetings (“Scrimmage”)

Your BOTB Building Leader will meet with representatives from each team to help prepare them for the competitions, and a Coach is asked to assist with one or two of these meetings. The purpose of technical meetings is to give team members opportunities to practice demonstrating their knowledge through “mock battles.” Please see page 5 for more information.

### Competition Time

In addition to their participation in these two types of meetings, a Coach also might consider attending each of the three levels of competition: building, district, and regional, although it is not necessary to do so.

# Sample Timeline

## End of Previous School Year

The Building Leader will be a liaison among the other schools within the district, local public libraries, and OCM BOCES SLS to promote using selected books for summer reading. A brief overview of the competition ("Coming next school year...!") will also be presented to the building.

## Fall/Winter

In mid-September, the Building Leader and Coaches will start to promote the "Battle of the Books" program by having students sign up, and by starting to form teams. Teams can then start reading the books in preparation for the meetings to begin. Team meetings and technical meetings will happen throughout the fall. Students should plan to read at least two books each month to stay on schedule.

## Late Winter/Early Spring

During this time period, teams will begin to compete at the building, district, and regional levels.

# Conducting Your Team Meetings (Reading Check)

## Introducing the Team Contract

Each team member will be expected to sign a contract (see Appendix A, page 7) agreeing to five promises, or expectations for behavior, in order participate in BOTB. The coach should go over the contract with the team to ensure all members fully understand the commitment involved with being a part of BOTB. After all team members have signed this contract, the document should remain in the Coach's possession. Any team member who does not fulfill the agreements of the contract must meet with the Coach and Building Leader to determine the appropriate course of action.

## Setting Meeting Times and Responsibilities

As the Coach, you (in consult with team members) will be responsible for setting team meeting times, which should occur twice each month. Meeting times could be during lunches, free periods, or after school. Each meeting should last around 30 minutes. A regular schedule for team meetings should be developed and agreed upon during your first team meeting. Additionally, team members should volunteer to be the Technical Expert on 2-3 books from the list, depending on the number of members on the team. Technical Experts attend the Technical Meeting for the books on which they are experts. See page 5 for more information on Technical Meetings.

As stated in the contract, team members should finish reading one book every two weeks, thus reading two books per month. They must complete reading the assigned book prior to attending

the associated team meeting. In order to help team members set reading goals and stay organized, they may want to use the Reading Goal Sheet (see Appendix B, page 8) or the Reading Goal Bookmark (see Appendix C, page 10).

## Utilizing Comprehension Tools

In preparation for and/or during your meetings, team members may find that filling out a graphic organizer may be helpful when trying to organize and remember different parts of the book. These graphic organizers can be printed or downloaded on a team member's tablet and imported to and edited with a note-taking app, such as Notability ([gingerlabs.com](http://gingerlabs.com)).

### Plot Diagram

A plot diagram is one kind of graphic organizer that may help your team members when summarizing the important details in a novel. Prior to collaboratively filling out the diagram, please discuss the terms listed on the diagram to ensure that all team members know what each term means. Collaboratively filling out a plot diagram will help team members have a visual representation of the pertinent facts of the novel. (See Appendix D, page 11 for a sample plot diagram.)

### Sentence Summaries

The Sentence Summaries sheet may also be helpful for team members to complete. To complete this sheet, team members write one or two sentences that summarize their reading each day. It should be printed on the reverse side of the Reading Goal Sheet (See Appendix B, page 9).

### Character Chart

Another tool that will guide team members as they read is the Character Chart (see Appendix E, page 12). For the Character Chart, students write down pertinent information about different characters in the book and note any important details related to that character. The Character Chart can be especially helpful for students as they return to the book weeks or months after reading it in order to prepare for competition.

## Discussion Questions to Ask During the Meeting

During your weekly Team Meetings, the Coach can use Scholastic's Literature Circle Task Cards ([tinyurl.com/litdiscussiontaskcards](http://tinyurl.com/litdiscussiontaskcards)) to help facilitate discussion among team members about the book. These task cards are an excellent resource, as they are applicable to a variety of books.

## Creating Kahoot Questions

### What is Kahoot?

Kahoot ([www.kahoot.it](http://www.kahoot.it)) is a free, online tool that allows users to create multiple choice questions that can be projected onto a screen. Players use their own devices as a "buzzer/controller" to answer the multiple choice questions that are projected.

In addition to the browser-based version which can be used for Kahoot creation and game play, an app is available for iOS and Android devices for game play.

Kahoot is a great way for team members to prepare for competition. When team members develop their own questions, they use critical thinking skills to identify important areas of the book and anticipate potential competition questions. These student-developed Kahoot questions are shared amongst teams and can be used during Technical Meetings ("Scrimmages") to help prepare a school for competition.

Your Building Leader may have a Battle of the Books designated Kahoot account, or you may wish to make your own Kahoot account. Please check in with your Building Leader.

### Creating Your Own Kahoot Account

To create an account, go to [www.create.kahoot.it](http://www.create.kahoot.it). You may sign up either via your existing Google or Microsoft account or by creating an account with your email and password.

### Adding Questions to Kahoot

Once you have created your own Kahoot account, you will want to click the purple button on the top right that says, "New K!" This will bring you to a new webpage that lists four different kinds of Kahoots. You will want to design a Quiz. Title the Quiz with the name of the book for which you are designing questions.

Questions can have up to four possible choices for an answer, and can include a picture or video to help prompt those answering. Make sure to remind team members to select the correct answer option before saving each individual question. Additionally, there is a spot to give credit for the resource used to help design the question; we recommend writing down the chapter number and page number.

### Creating Quizlet Flashcards

In addition to creating Kahoot questions, teams may wish to create flashcards. The benefit of using flashcards over using Kahoot is that team members cannot choose from a list of four options for their answer. Instead, they must remember the answer, which is more similar to what they will experience on competition days. Using flashcards would be a good way to practice as competition time draws closer.

One tool that you may find helpful is Quizlet, which can be found at [quizlet.com](http://quizlet.com). Quizlet is another free online tool that allows a user to create a "study set" that can be shared with a class, or, in this case "team." Although the study set is designed to include flashcards with a series of words and definitions, users can make flashcards for any type of information. For example, instead of a word to be defined, a user might write, "Author of [name of book]," and the "definition" could be the

author's name. In addition the browser-based version, an app is available for iOS and Android devices.

Your Building Leader may have created a building account for Quizlet, or you may wish to create your own. Please check in with your Building Leader.

## Creating Your Own Quizlet Account

Just as with Kahoot, Quizlet users can sign up either via your existing Google or Facebook account or by creating an account with an email and password.

Once an account has been created, the user will want to click the green button to create a class. Team members can be invited to join a class with the class code that appears once a class has been created.

## Developing Study Sets (Questions)

After inviting team members to join your class, you can create a study set for each book. When designing the study set, be sure to mark that any team member within the class can edit it. That way, team members can add their own questions to the study set.

What may work best for team members is that when they are creating a Kahoot with multiple choice questions, they simultaneously create a Quizlet flashcard.

# Conducting Technical Meetings (Scrimmage)

## Hosting a Technical Meeting

During Technical Meetings, the Building Leader (with the assistance of few Coaches) provides a way for representatives from each team to come together and practice trivia associated with a particular book. Technical Meetings should be held in a large group space with access to a projector and screen, such as the library, auditorium, or cafeteria; and they should last about 30 minutes.

## Using Kahoot and Quizlet in a Technical Meeting

As described on pages 3-4, teams have been working during their team meetings to create multiple choice questions and short answer questions related to each book in Kahoot and Quizlet. During a Technical Meeting, the Building Leader can use these questions to conduct mock battles. However, the two tools--Kahoot and Quizlet--work in very different ways.

### Kahoot

When using Kahoot, the Building Leader will want to log in and go to your Kahoots (click "My Kahoots" on the top left). Then, the Building Leader will want to select the correct Kahoot for the book that is the focus of the Technical Meeting. To play the Kahoot, the Building Leader may choose to have students play independently or in teams. From the Building Leader's device, they will be

able to project the questions and possible answer choices on a screen for the participants to see. Each answer choice is associated with a particular color and shape. On participants' devices, they will see four colored boxes that match the color and shape of each answer choice. Participants tap the box associated with the correct answer. Scoring is determined by both speed and accuracy.

## Quizlet Live

After logging in to Quizlet and opening the correct Quizlet study set for the book that is the focus of the Technical Meeting, the Building Leader will want to select "Live," and share the associated 6-digit code with students. Once students have input the code on their own devices, Quizlet randomly assigns students to teams. On each teammate's device, a question appears for the whole team. All potential answers appear, but the answers are across the devices. For example, if there were a team of three, The question would appear on each teammate's screen, but the answers on each teammate's device would be different. Only one teammate would have the correct answer on their device. Therefore, students in a team must work together to locate the device on which the answer is located. If a wrong answer is selected, the team must start the study set from the beginning. Thus, correct answers are rewarded over speed.

## Creating a Jeopardy Style Game

### Google Slides Jeopardy Template

In addition to using Kahoot and Quizlet Live, the Building Leader may wish to have students practice using a Jeopardy style game during the Technical Meetings. There is a free Jeopardy Google Slides template available at [tinyurl.com/googleslidesjeopardytemplate](https://tinyurl.com/googleslidesjeopardytemplate). Using this option may be the best choice in terms of most closely replicating the competition. One drawback of this option is that the Building Leader may want to input the questions into the template themselves, which will take more time. Additionally, scores are not automatically tallied. Coaches might be able to assist the Building Leader with these tasks if the Building Leaders shares the document.

### FlipQuiz

Along with the Google Slides template, Building Leaders can also use FlipQuiz ([flipquiz.me](https://flipquiz.me)) to create a Jeopardy style game. FlipQuiz is a free tool that allows users to input leveled questions and answers that are automatically generated into a Jeopardy board.

To create an account, one must go to the FlipQuiz website and follow the prompts to sign up by creating a username and entering an email and password. Once an account has been created, the user must click the green "New Board" button on the top left. For each board, the user can create up to 6 categories, each with 5 levels of difficulty.

In addition to the free version, a Pro version is available. The Pro version automatically tallies scores for teams, and it provides a link to digital flashcards with the questions in the board.

## Appendix A

# Our BOTB Team Contract

1. We all promise to listen to each other's ideas with respect.
2. We all promise to thoughtfully read each book by the assigned Team Meeting date.
3. We all promise to ask our coach or the building leader for help if we need it.
4. We all promise to share responsibility for our successes and for our mistakes.
5. We all promise to represent my school by demonstrating integrity and good sportsmanship throughout the BOTB competition.

If someone on our team breaks one or more of our rules, the team has the right to call a meeting with our coach and ask the team member to follow the rules. If the team member still breaks one or more of our rules, we have the right to vote to put that team member on probation until they begin to follow the five promises.

### Team Member Signatures:

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



## Appendix B

# Reading Goal Sheet

*Directions:* Find the number of pages in your assigned book. Determine if you want to read your book on the weekends. If you want to read your book on the weekends, divide the number of pages by 14, but if you only want to read on the weekdays, divide the the number of pages by 10. The resulting number is the number of pages you should try to read each day.

Name of Book: \_\_\_\_\_

Day of the Week	Page Started	Page Stopped	Total Number of Pages
Saturday			
Sunday			
Monday			
Tuesday			
Wednesday			
Thursday			
Friday			
Saturday			
Sunday			
Monday			
Tuesday			
Wednesday			
Thursday			
Friday			

# Sentences Summaries

Write down a one or two sentence summary of the reading that you complete each day.

Day of the Week	Summary Sentence
Saturday	
Sunday	
Monday	
Tuesday	
Wednesday	
Thursday	
Friday	
Saturday	
Sunday	
Monday	
Tuesday	
Wednesday	
Thursday	
Friday	

## Appendix C

# Reading Goal Bookmarks

## Battle of the Books Reading Goals

Directions: Determine which chapters or pages you will read each day.

- Decide if you want to read your book over the weekend.
- Find out the number of pages in each book.
- Divide the total number of pages in your book by the number of days (14 if you will read over the weekends, 10 if you will only read on the weekdays).

Day of the Week	Total Pages
Saturday	
Sunday	
Monday	
Tuesday	
Wednesday	
Thursday	
Friday	
Saturday	
Sunday	
Monday	
Tuesday	
Wednesday	
Thursday	
Friday	

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Day of the Week	Total Pages
Saturday	
Sunday	
Monday	
Tuesday	
Wednesday	
Thursday	
Friday	
Saturday	
Sunday	
Monday	
Tuesday	
Wednesday	
Thursday	
Friday	

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Day of the Week	Total Pages
Saturday	
Sunday	
Monday	
Tuesday	
Wednesday	
Thursday	
Friday	
Saturday	
Sunday	
Monday	
Tuesday	
Wednesday	
Thursday	
Friday	

Appendix D

# Sample Plot Diagram

**Plot Diagram for** \_\_\_\_\_

**Climax:**

9. \_\_\_\_\_

8. \_\_\_\_\_

7. \_\_\_\_\_

6. \_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

1. \_\_\_\_\_

**Rising Action**

**Falling Action**

10. \_\_\_\_\_

11. \_\_\_\_\_

12. \_\_\_\_\_

13. \_\_\_\_\_

**Resolution:**

**Exposition**

Protagonist:

Antagonist:

Setting – Time:

Setting – Place:

Internal Conflict:

External Conflict:

**Author's Theme:**

Symbolism:

Foreshadowing:

Irony:

**Name** \_\_\_\_\_

Appendix E

# Character Chart

Directions: Each time you read your book, use this form to important information you learn about the characters. Think about their personality, character traits, relationships, and how the character may be changing as the story progresses.

Character Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Circle One: Major Character or Minor Character

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Character Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Circle One: Major Character or Minor Character

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Character Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Circle One: Major Character or Minor Character

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## Works Cited

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