



Battle of the Books 2026 FAQ

Who can register a team?

- Principals, teachers, and library staff from Catholic, Public, and independent schools can register a team.
- Each school can register a maximum of two teams, in the age categories: Junior (grades 3-5) and Senior (grades 6-8).
- Registration opens on November 10 and will close on February 14.

Do I need a team organized when I register?

- You do not need to have your team established when you register. Schools will manage their teams as necessary. The later a team is coordinated, the less time you'll have to prepare.

What does a team look like?

- Each team can have a maximum of nine (9) students, including six (6) players and up to three (3) substitutes. Extra participants are not allowed.
- Teams have two (2) members from each grade within their division, plus one (1) substitute from each of the same grades. For example, a Junior team will have 2 grade three students, 2 grade four students, and 2 grade five students, and a substitute from each of the grades.
- If you do not have enough players from a certain grade, only players from lower grades may substitute. For example: If you have no grade 7 players, you can have more players from grade 6, but not from grade 8.

What does this event involve?

- Battle rounds generally occur over one (1) or two (2) days, in-person at your local library. Teams will be assigned a date to visit the library to play their battle rounds.
- Typically, each team participates in 4 out of 5 rounds of play. Junior and Senior Teams only compete against their counterpart teams. Format may vary by system.
- At the end of the tournament, the judges total the scores for the rounds played by each team. The two highest-scoring teams in each grade division compete against each other at the Grand Battle to determine the Champions.

How are the "battles" played?

- Seated across from each other, teams will be asked alternating questions. Each set of two (2) questions will be from the same genre, i.e.. Adventure
- **New as of 2026:** Teams can make **three attempts** to answer the question within 30 seconds. If the team fails to respond, or provides an incorrect or a partial answer, the opposing team has a chance to answer and take those points.

- Round-robin battles consist of 16 paired questions, while Grand & Regional Battles have 20 questions.
- Six team members play at one time. One player is the designated Spokesperson. A Spokesperson can only be switched out between rounds.
- All team members may discuss the possible answers, but only the Spokesperson answers for the team.

How should I prepare my teams?

- Review our booklists. Encourage your team to read the books listed. Remember, Battle of the Books will be comprised of questions from these books only. Your local library will always have a copy of the title.
- The purpose of this event is to encourage the love of reading, so the best practice is READING!

Can the public library provide “training” on Battle of the Books?

- No. We do not have the capacity to offer training sessions, whether individually or in a group, in-person or virtually.

Which library system do I register with?

- Schools must register at the public library in the same town or city in which their school is located. For example, schools in Burlington will register with the Burlington Public Library.

What is the role of the public library?

- Burlington, Halton Hills, Milton, and Oakville public libraries work together to coordinate and execute these events. Our dedicated staff write the questions, provide the space, schedule the battles, and act as the moderators, scorekeepers, and timekeepers at the event. We can't wait to see you.

What is my role as a coach?

- As a team coach, you are a teacher, library staff, or principal at the school your team is representing. You will assemble your team and prepare them for battle. You will also need to facilitate transporting your team to the public library at least once to participate in the battles.

What if I don't agree with the scoring or decision by library staff?

- This is a friendly competition; the experience should be fun and social.
- The decisions and instructions of the public library staff are final. Harassment of any kind will not be tolerated.

Can family members attend the battles?

- Yes! We love to see school teams cheered on by their family members! Please be mindful of our spaces. Space varies by system and may be limited. Check with your local library system in advance. Children cannot be left unattended at any time.

For more information, check out your local library's Battle of the Books web page coming November 10. Contact information for your local library's Battle of the Books staff will be available at that time.