WWE’s WrestleMania Reading Challenge Toolkit

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Overview of the WWE® & YALSA Reading Challenge

Background: Ever since Teen Read Week™ (TRW) was inaugurated in 1998, many librarians have wanted to celebrate and encourage teen reading for more than just one week a year. In response to requests from librarians, the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA), with the support of World Wrestling Entertainment (WWE), now offers librarians the opportunity to participate in the WWE Reading Challenge.

Goal: to reach reluctant readers and get more teens reading by implementing a reading incentive program that provides prizes from World Wrestling Entertainment as a reward. The Reading Challenge is a program designed to encourage teens to not only continue their reading beyond TRW, but to earn a reward for doing so by offering chance to win prizes donated by WWE. This is a win-win situation for librarians because it provides you with a way to extend TRW as well as an opportunity to reach out to reluctant readers.

Program Overview:
- The program will be implemented through libraries. For libraries to participate, the librarian must register online at www.ala.org/yalsa (it’s free) by no later than October 21st, 2006.
- The program is for teens in grades 9-12.
- All teens will be challenged to read 10 items (including magazines, but not more than 2. the other 8 must be chapter books) in their free time between Oct. 15th and Jan. 16th and keep a log of what they read.
- All teens will be asked to read Athletic Shorts, by Chris Crutcher, and Black and White by Paul Volponi.
- Teens who wish to be eligible to win prizes from the WWE will be required to write an essay or create a webpage interpretation of one of the two required reads.
- Each library will judge contest entries and pick one winner to advance to the Reading Challenge National Finals, where five teens will win money for their library, a pair of tickets to WrestleMania and a trip to Detroit to go to WrestleMania®.
- In Detroit the 5 national finalists will compete for the National Reading Challenge Title and a ring-side seat at WrestleMania.
- This event is sponsored by the WWE® and the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA).
- Each library will judge contest entries and pick a 1st, 2nd and 3rd place winner. WWE will send the prizes in advance of the end of the contest period.
- The 1st place winner at each library will be eligible to become one of five teens to advance to the Reading Challenge National Finals in Detroit to be held on March 31, 2007. Each library will submit the 1st place winners winning entry to YALSA by January 31, 2007.
  - YALSA will choose five finalists, one each from 5 regions of the country.
- Official contest rules and details will be posted on the www.ala.org/teenread website as soon as possible.
Timeline:

- Sept. – Oct.:
  - Register to participate at www.ala.org/teenread
  - Display the poster in your library
  - Download the Reading Challenge Toolkit from www.ala.org/teenread and plan your program(s)

- Oct. 15 -- 21:
  - Celebrate Teen Read Week™
  - Launch the Reading Challenge in your library (see page of this toolkit for ideas)

- Oct. 15 -- Jan. 16:
  - Teens read books, keep reading logs and write essays and/or create artwork
  - Offer programming periodically to keep teens interested in the program. See page 6 of this toolkit for ideas.

- Week of Jan. 22:
  - Host a culminating event in your library and announce the winners
  - Send your 1st prize winner’s entry on to YALSA for entry in the Reading Challenge National Finals by January 31st

- Feb. 23: YALSA announces the 5 national finalists

- March 31: the 5 prize winners compete in Detroit for the title of WrestleMania Reading Challenge National Champion.

- April 1:
  - WrestleMania 23 airs on pay per view. The 3 grand prize winners attend with a parent or caregiver.
  - Host a viewing of WrestleMania at your library.

Books:

- Teens are required to read either 10 books or 8 books and 2 magazines, and keep track of what they read via a reading log (a sample is provided in the toolkit). Teens who do not complete their reading log aren’t eligible to enter in the contest to win WWE prizes.
- The books teens read must not be required reading for class, and the reading should be done in their free time.
- Teens will keep a log of what they read and turn it in to their librarian in order to be eligible for the prizes and to submit an essay or web space for the contest. A sample log is provided in the Appendix on page 15.
- Chris Crutcher’s Athletic Shorts and Paul Volponi’s Black and White are the two required reads, but the other items can be of the teens’ choosing.
- Since this event is geared especially toward reluctant readers (at the request of WWE®), you may want to develop your own display or list of titles that have appeal to this type of teen. You can also check YALSA’s annual Quick Picks for Reluctant Young Adult Readers lists online at www.ala.org/yalsa/booklists. The lists go back to 1997.
  - Annotated lists are available on the For Members Only portion of the site.
Contest: (Official contest rules and details will be posted on the www.ala.org/teenread website as soon as possible)

- In order to avoid legal issues a contest is necessary.
- Teens will be asked to write an essay or create a web space based on Athletic Shorts or Black and White. The essay or web space must be of the teen’s creation. They may not receive substantive assistance, input or direction from parents, caregivers, library staff, peers, etc.
  - The Essay: a suggested length is 300 words, and essays should be about Athletic Shorts and/or Black and White. Suggested essay topics:
    - A comparison of two or more stories in Athletic Shorts
    - A comparison of Athletic Shorts and Black and White
    - A discussion of how reading Athletic Shorts or Black and White has influenced the reader.
  - The Web Spaces can be any of the following, or a combination of more than one:
    - A web page that features a comparison of the two books
    - A wiki that features major plot points and characters
    - An annotated list of books similar to one or both of the required reads via a tool like Library Thing, Listal, etc.
    - A visual interpretation of one of the books by staging photos and placing them on Flikr or other image hosting service with explanatory captions
    - A visual interpretation of one of the books by creating a video and placing it on YouTube or other video hosting service
    - A podcast where a main character is interviewed
    - A MySpace type of account that creates a profile for one of the story’s characters (applicant must meet any age or other requirements established by the web site)
- Librarians and Library Media Specialists should organize a panel of judges at each participating library made up of teachers, PTA/PTO members, parents and/or community members to choose the essay winner.
  - Judging the essay: we recommend judging the essays based on the following objective criteria: (i) demonstrated knowledge of the book; (ii) creativity; (iii) use of memorable, unique, compelling, moving, and/or engaging descriptions; and (iv) personally revealing discussion. Use of formal grammar, spelling and writing conventions can be taken in to consideration.
  - Judging the web space: judging depends in part on the object that is created, but these factors should be taken into consideration: (i) demonstrated knowledge of the book(s); (ii) creativity; (iii) use of memorable, unique, compelling, moving, and/or engaging text, images and/or sound; (iv) originality; (v) technical execution.

Launch Program:
- See page 6 of this toolkit for ideas
- Check YALSA’s web site for updates at www.ala.org/teenread
Teens Read Books & Write Essay or Create Web Space:
- Help teens find books that appeal to them by creating displays, providing readers’ advisory and/or conducting booktalks
  - Consider techniques that help teens select books but that aren’t too time consuming for you. One trick is to put stickers on books. Address labels work fine for this. Type a teaser on the labels and put on appropriate books. Examples:
    - Someone dies, Tear jerker, Love story, Murder most foul, Banned book, Lots of pictures, Will creep you out, They live happily ever after, Guaranteed to make you laugh, etc.

Implement Programming Throughout the Contest
- To keep teens’ interest high and to ensure that they have access to a wide variety of reading materials, host a program periodically that is related to the Reading Challenge.

Judge the Contest Entries
Essays can be sent to judges ahead of time for scoring with a score sheet that you create. Keep in mind that judging the web spaces will require judges to have Internet access. Judges may want to narrow down the entries in advance, then meet to discuss their choices and select the winners. Choose judges from a wide range of backgrounds and provide them with refreshments.

Host a Culminating Event & Announce the Winners:
- See page 6 of this toolkit for ideas. Reward any individual who completed the reading log and/or entered the contest. Be sure to get publicity for your library and for the winners.
Launch Ideas
Work with your Teen Advisory Group (TAG) to brainstorm, plan and implement a special launch of the Reading Challenge. Some ideas to consider:

- Conduct booktalks to English classes and mention the Reading Challenge. Choose books for the talks that would appeal to reluctant readers, and make an effort to visit lower level and/or remedial English classes.
- Put a teaser on your library’s web site, blog, My Space space, newsletter, etc. that says “Win a Trip to WrestleMania. Visit the library on [fill in the date here] to find out how. Choose an evening or weekend day to host a brief, fun informational session about the Reading Challenge. Provide refreshments and hand out the reading logs.
- Wear a button at work that says “ask me how to win a trip to WrestleMania.”

Programming Ideas
Work with your Teen Advisory Group (TAG) to brainstorm, plan and implement activities to promote the Reading Challenge and to draw reluctant readers in to the library by planning regular events during the Reading Challenge and offering online information and resources. Consider collaborating with local organizations and businesses to hold some of the events outside the library at schools, community centers, shopping malls, coffee shops and other places teens in your community hang out.

King of the Ring
Have your TAG identify twenty or so of their favorite books. Create a display in the library with the 20 books in a mini wrestling ring. Have teens vote to eliminate a book a week in an effort to identify the best teen book of all time. The last book left in the ring is, the best book, or the King of the Ring. A variation to this program would be use YA authors instead of particular titles.

New Wrestlers
For this creative art project, teens create their own WWE character, including name, personality, history, signature moves and “look.” They could assemble a composite from existing wrestlers, or put together a whole new creation. Using old wrestling magazines, or any magazine with suitable body parts, they could cut and paste and create their own new wrestler, perhaps even going so far as to create cards with pictures and statistics. A variation on this theme would be to have teens create a My Space for their fictitious character, or to use computer software to create the character instead of cutting and pasting magazines.

Movie Time
Show the film version of Athletic Shorts. Sponsor a contest to see who can find the most ways the film differs from the book. Be sure to provide refreshments. The same could be done with other films made from books the teens have read. Or films made from other books could be shown between TRW and the end of January to entice teens to try reading the book, too.

WWE Fearless
In this spin-off of “Fear Factor” meets “Truth or Dare,” teens are given a choice of tasks. They
can select between answering WWE or book trivia or performing disgusting acts like eating pickled pigs feat, sardines, chocolate covered insects, etc. Give winners books, gift certificates, etc. as prizes.

**As the WWE Turns**
In this creative writing project, teens pick their favorite faces or heels and rewrite their storylines. Teens can create new feuds and storylines, or alter what is known to be true between the stars of WWE. For an extra twist, try using *The Official Movie Plot Generator: Hilarious Movie Plot Combinations* by the Brothers Heimberg for extra humorous starts. Have teens vote on their favorite new storylines. Post the winners on the library’s web site or in the library.

**WWE Pictionary**
Host a WWE Pictionary Night at your library. Use the official WWE web site and wrestling related books to come up with possible Pictionary choices. Some examples to consider could be King Booker, SummerSlam, SmackDown, Raw, Jake the Snake Roberts, Turning the Tables, etc. Teens could choose the funniest pictures to be displayed in the library. Books, t-shirts and so on could be given out as prizes to the winners.

**Electronic Gaming Tournament**
Set up a gaming tournament using the WWE Wrestling video games. This could become a challenge match with other teens giving a play by play like the TV commentators do.

**Duct Tape Projects**
Using clear duct tape, put pictures of wrestlers, their logos, etc. between the layers of the duct tape and then make wallets, purses, bookmarks or any other creative duct tape object. For more ideas on duct tape projects, go to: [http://seanm.ca/duct-tape/](http://seanm.ca/duct-tape/).

**Give Something Back**
Many WWE wrestlers give back to their communities by volunteering their time at local schools and/or traveling abroad to entertain troops in Iraq and Afghanistan. Conduct a paperback drive to collect books to send to troops overseas, or find out if particular families in your community may be in need of resources or services because the parent or caregiver is doing a tour of duty overseas. Contact a local National Guard Unit, veterans group or Armory and coordinate the project with them.

**SmackDown Book Challenge (culmination activity)**
Select a time in January to host this battle of the books type of challenge. Information about the SmackDown Book Challenge can be sent to local newspapers, cable stations and radio to encourage spectators. Anyone who has submitted their essay or visual interpretation is eligible to participate in a local final challenge.

Using librarian-made-in-advance questions from the two required reading titles, teens compete against one another in a series of rounds, with the winner being the one with the most questions answered correctly. 4-5 rounds of questions are asked, with a scorer keeping track of the number
of correct answers for each participant. There should be an impartial judge, who has read the books, who can rule on the correctness of answers. In addition, an emcee can help move the challenge along and/or heighten interest while someone else reads the questions.

Personnel Needed for Event:
Judge
Scorer
Emcee
Reader[s] of questions

After a set number of rounds, or when there are obvious winners, the challenge concludes. Awards should be handed out to the winners while each participant should receive a small prize as a souvenir of taking part in this challenge.

Depending upon the time of day, suitable refreshments could be served. If challenge is held in the morning, bagels and juice would be appropriate. If held in the afternoon, perhaps pizza and soft drinks, or even popcorn and soft drinks, would be welcome.
Selected Sports and Other Titles Fun to Read

While these books were selected for teens, the titles on this list span a broad range of reading and maturity levels. We encourage adults to take an active role in helping individual teens choose those books that are the best fit for them and their families.

Anderson, M.T. Feed. Teenagers Titus and Violet live in a future where corporations define the lives of Americans and it’s common for parents to endow their newborns with the Feed—a minicomputer with an Internet connection that’s implanted in a child’s head.


Benton, Jim. It’s Happy Bunny: Life Get One. “Always remember, your enemies are just friends that really, really bite.” Snarky philosophy from Happy Bunny.

Bissinger, H.G. Friday Night Lights: A Town, a Team and a Dream. Bissinger scouts the Permian Panthers High School football team from Odessa, Texas, the winningest football team in Texas history.

Blais, Madeleine. In These Girls, Hope is a Muscle. The town, the team, the dream, Amherst's high school girl's winning basketball season.

Bloor, Edward. Tangerine. Soccer, football, fitting in, family secrets, and murder.

Brooks, Bruce. The Moves Make the Man. Jerome, a thirteen-year-old African American basketball player develops a deep friendship with an emotionally disturbed white student.

Cochran, Thomas. Roughnecks. Follow a senior football player through the day of the state football championship.


Crutcher, Chris. Ironman. Anger at his father fuels seventeen-year-old Bo's quest for victory in the triathlon.

Crutcher, Chris. Staying Fat for Sarah Byrnes. Swimming is the background for this story of Moby, an ex-fat boy, and Sarah Byrnes whose tragic past lives up to her name.
De la Pena, Matt. **Ball Don’t Lie.** When playing the game, come strong or don’t come at all. Sticky Reichard rules the basketball court in this gritty novel.

Deuker, Carl. **Painting the Black.** A high school senior must choose between his love for the game of baseball and his honor.

Gallo, Donald, ed. **Ultimate Sports: Short Stories by Outstanding Writers for Young Adults.** Sports sets the background for stories of losing, winning, and growing up.

Gutman, Dan. **Honus & Me.** The magic behind the most valuable baseball card takes Joe on a trip through time.

Hawk, Tony. **Between Boardslides and Burnout: My Notes from the Road.** It's his life.


Hobbs, Will. **Downriver.** Fifteen-year-old Jesse and other rebellious teenage members of a wilderness survival team abandon their adult leader, steal his van and rafts, and run the dangerous whitewaters of the Grand Canyon.

Hobbs, Will. **Far North.** Stranded in the Canadian wilderness, two boys endure a brutal subarctic winter of bear, wolf, and moose attacks while they repeatedly struggle to escape.

Horowitz, Anthony. **Skeleton Key: An Alex Rider Adventure.** Can Alex Rider save the world - again?

Hyde, Dayton O. **The Major, the Poacher and the Wonderful One-Trout River.** A fanatical fly-fisherman who dreams of landing a prize trout is challenged by a young boy.

Johnson, Maureen. **The Key to the Golden Firebird: a Novel.** The three Golden girls struggle to overcome their grief over their father's death. Two of the girls are star softball players.

Johnson, Scott. **Safe at Second.** Todd must overcome a serious baseball injury and move on with his life.

Kinsella, W.P. **Shoeless Joe.** A magical tale of baseball heroes and a field of dreams.

Klass, David. **Danger Zone.** A small-town basketball star travels to Los Angeles to join the American Teen Dream Team to prepare for international competition in Rome.

Klass, David. **Home of the Braves.** Joe is proud of being captain of the soccer team, but other challenges take up more of his time and energy.

Korman, Gordon. **Son of the Mob.** Dating is never easy when you’re the son of the mob!
Korman, Gordon. **The Toilet Paper Tigers.** A very funny baseball story about a losing team and how they got better with the help of a smart-talking girl.

Krovatin, Chris. **Heavy Metal and You.** His music or his girl?

Lipsyte, Robert. **The Contender.** What does it take to be a contender in boxing? In life?

Lynch, Chris. **Iceman.** Fourteen-year-old Eric is a study in contrasts, emotionally insecure but an absolute animal in the hockey rink where he slams out his anger and suffering.

Macdonald, Andy. **Dropping in with Andy Mac: Life of a Pro Skateboarder.** From Big Wheels to half pipes: the world of Andy Mac.

Macy, Sue. **A Whole New Ball Game.** The All-American Girls Professional Baseball League soon developed a following of their own.

Macy, Sue. **Winning Ways.** A photo history of women in sports.

Mikaelson, Ben. **Touching Spirit Bear.** After angry Cole attacks another boy, he agrees to a Circle Justice sentence of banishment to a remote island, where he encounters a mystical spirit bear.

Murphy, Claire. **To the Summit.** A climbing expedition to the top of Denali with her father takes 17-year-old Sarah on a journey of discovery deep within herself.

Myers, Walter Dean. **Fallen Angels.** Seventeen-year-old Richie Perry's stint in Vietnam brings home to him the agony and futility of war as he learns to kill and watches his comrades die.

Myers, Walter Dean. **Hoops.** Lonnie is at first disgusted with his basketball coach but soon learns more from him than how to improve his game.

Myers, Walter Dean. **Slam!** A 17-year-old African American basketball player has to overcome lots of distractions that are interfering with his star status.

Peet, Mal. **Keeper.** The famous World Cup soccer player El Gato was trained by a mysterious “keeper” on a field hewn out of the jungle when he was a child in South America.

Platt, Larry. **Only the Strong Survive: The Odyssey of Allen Iverson.** Bubbachuck, the answer, AI - who is the real Allen Iverson?


Roberts, Kristi. **My 13th Season.** A very talented young girl, dealing with her mother's death, moves to a school and a team where the coach doesn't think a girl should be one of his players.
Shan, Darren. **Lord Loss.** Blood and gore, we want more! Werewolves, demons and a death-defying chess match.

Spinelli, Jerry. **There's a Girl in My Hammerlock.** When Maisie doesn't make cheerleading, her next plan to lure Eric away for Liz is to try out for his wrestling team--and she makes it!

Tocher, Timothy. **Chief Sunrise, John McGraw and Me.** Two young men are determined to make it to the major leagues during the 1919 baseball season.

Trueman, Terry. **Inside Out!** Alan's got a gun, Dirt Bag's not real, who is more dangerous?

Wallace, Rich. **Shots on Goal.** Making it to the district play-offs for soccer is harder than it looks.

Wallace, Rich. **Wrestling Sturbridge.** Will Ben stay the second-best wrestler through his senior year?

Weekly World News Editors and David Perel. **Bat Boy Lives!** The twisted world of tabloid news, from the checkout line to you.

White, Robb. **Deathwatch.** Guiding the wealthy, out-of-state hunter Madoc on a hunt for bighorn sheep, Ben becomes the hunted when he runs afoul of Madoc.

Zusak, Markus. **Fighting Ruben Wolfe.** Two brothers from the wrong side of the tracks spar with life not only in defense of family but also on the Australian underground boxing circuit.
Get Publicity

Use communication tools at your disposal to launch the Reading Challenge and to promote specific events. Place information on the library’s web site, blog and or My Space space. Put flyers up in the library and throughout the school. Include information in the library’s newsletter. Tailor the sample press release below and send it to your local newspaper. For more tips and information on how to get publicity and connect with the media, go to:

www.alala.org/ala/pio/mediarelations/mediarelations.htm

Sample Press Release:

For Immediate Release

[insert date]

For more information contact:

[insert complete contact info, including phone # and email for the appropriate library personnel]

[insert headline in 18 pt. font]

Area teens are extending their reading beyond Teen Read Week™ by taking part in WWE’s Reading Challenge. Teens are challenged to read 10 books or 8 books and 2 magazines between now and January 15th. This program is sponsored by World Wrestling Entertainment and the Young Adult Library Association (YALSA). Teens can compete to earn prizes, including a trip to WrestleMania, and money for their library.

Judy Nelson, YALSA’s president, feels that "today’s teens seem to have less and less free time, and there are increasingly more activities to for them to take part in during what little leisure time they have. That is why it’s important to encourage teens to set aside some time to read." Literacy is a topic of both local and national concern, and falling test scores and lower graduation rates among teens today are a serious issue. Here in [insert name of hometown or state] standardized reading test scores for teens are [insert latest scores—check your state department of education’s web site].

Studies show a regular reading habit makes teens better readers, and area librarian [insert full name of local librarian #1] agrees. "One of the most important ways teens acquire the habit is by watching adults they respect” says [insert last name of librarian #1]. Being around adults who are avid readers can counteract the latest statistics from The Nation’s Report Card (http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard), which indicate that in homes across America the number of different types of reading materials has decreased, and a smaller percentage of seventeen-year-olds saw adults reading in their homes.

[insert full name of local librarian #2] hopes to increase teen literacy locally by offering a series of programs for teens throughout the Reading Challenge. [describe the programs and provide contact information for readers who want to learn more]
Parents and caregivers of teens are encouraged to make time for their teens to read at home. [insert name of local librarian #2] offers these ideas:

- Visit the local public or school library with your teen to attend a program or to check out books.
- Set aside time each night for the family to read.
- Give books or magazine subscriptions to your teen as a gift or reward.
- Share your favorite book with your teen.
- Surf the Internet with your teen to learn about new books or authors. A good place to start is [www.al.org/yalsa/booklists](http://www.al.org/yalsa/booklists).
- Join a book discussion group at the school or public library.

Teen Read Week™ is held annually during the third week of October, and the Reading Challenge runs from now through January 15th. To find out more about the Reading Challenge contact your local library at [insert local library contact info here].

-END-
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Important: This completed log must be turned in to your library by no later than close of business on Jan. 16, 2007 in order for you to be eligible for the contest. Incomplete logs will not be valid.
I pledge that I have fully read each of the items listed above in my free time between Oct. 15, 2006 & Jan. 16, 2007 and that none of the books are required reading for any of my classes.

Signature: ________________________________