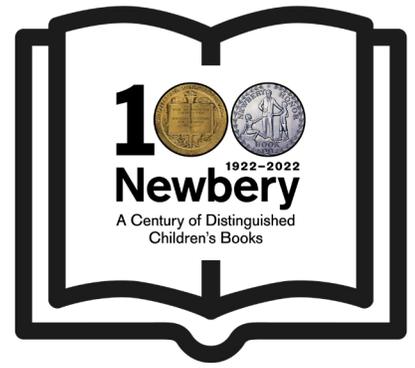


# Guide to Planning a Mock Newbery Discussion and Election



## How to use this guide:

This guide is designed to offer teachers and librarians several options to create Mock Newbery programs. It can be centered on young readers, adults, or both.

It is recommended that you read through, consider the age group(s) you are leading, and use the elements that work for you.

A Mock Newbery discussion can be conducted in a variety of ways; here are the key elements common to most programs:

- > The group reads pre-selected books that are eligible for the upcoming Newbery Medal (see Newbery Terms and Criteria for details).
- > The group discusses the titles in terms of literary quality with a child audience in mind.
- > The program culminates in a Mock election, in which participants vote to select the most distinguished of the books discussed.

Your Mock Newbery Election program can be as simple or as complex as you like. You can engage in a year-long process or hold a one-time event.

The **Newbery Medal** is awarded for the most distinguished American children's book of the year. The 100th anniversary of the Newbery Medal is a time for celebration. It is an opportunity to recognize the historical significance of more than 400 books that have been selected as Medal and Honor books and to learn about the selection process. Why not mark this anniversary by holding a community award program modeled after the actual Newbery Committee? This Mock Newbery election toolkit provides a guide for audiences of all ages to develop critical thinking skills, understand the award criteria, increase literary evaluation skills, and recognize the value of the award while igniting reading excitement.

## What is a Mock Newbery election and why should you consider hosting one?

A Mock Newbery election simulates the experience of the actual Newbery Committee. School and/or public library groups read and discuss eligible titles using the criteria for the award and then vote, just as the actual Newbery Committee does.

This year, you can join the nationwide celebration of the 100th Anniversary of the Newbery Award. What are some reasons why a group might want to hold a Mock Newbery?

- To encourage participants to become a part of a rich community of readers and to find their own voices in advocating for the books they believe should win
- To increase awareness of new books and to celebrate reading
- To develop the ability of participants to evaluate children's literature with a critical point of view that goes beyond personal likes and dislikes
- To collaborate and strengthen ties through school and public library joint programs

## Subjects covered in this guide:

### [Suggested Activities By Month](#)

### [Book Selection Guidelines and Eligibility](#)

### [Suggested Timeline and Discussion Guidelines](#)

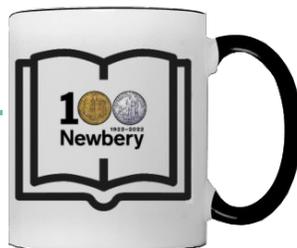
### [Criteria and Guide to Your Election Process](#)

### [Social Media](#)

### [Resources: Suggested Activities & Links](#)

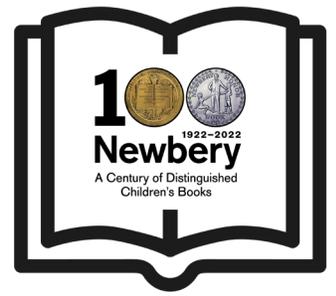
### [The Newbery: History and Process](#)

Check out the fun Newbery 100 merchandise!  
[bit.ly/NewberyMerch](http://bit.ly/NewberyMerch)



ASSOCIATION FOR LIBRARY  
SERVICE TO CHILDREN

ALSC IS A DIVISION OF THE AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION



## Suggested Activities By Month

The process and timeline for your Mock Election is based on the timing of the Newbery Award selection process. This example follows a typical academic calendar.

### *Late Summer through September – Garner Interest, Select Books, and Get Started*

**Garner interest** at your school or institution.

Begin to **select and order books**. Read and research potential nominees and eligible titles.

- > Think of how many copies of each title you will need of 4 to 12 different titles. Consider your budget for purchasing books for your school and community.
- > Create a spreadsheet with title details and cost for budgeting purposes.
- > Secure funding for the book purchases. Plan for cost to cover a range of copies.
- > Plan ahead and decide what you will do with the extra books after voting.

**Review criteria** and choose your reading list.

#### **Engage notables**

- > Consider **inviting one or two authors** on your reading lists for a virtual or in-person visit.
- > Consider inviting a **current or former Newbery Committee member** to share information about the process virtually or in-person.

Select the **range of students** (4th / 5th grade, 6th / 7th grade, or another age range) and build interest

### *October to December – Discuss Books*

- > Set up weekly or bi-weekly discussions as your schedule allows.

### *December & January – Final Discussions, Election and Awards Announced*

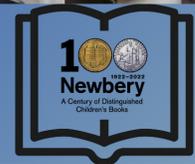
- > [Decide on your election process](#)
- > Vote on final selection
- > Post your selections on your school website, social media and other platforms. Announce your winners here: ALSC Blog connection
- > Announce your winners

### *Monday, January 24, 2022*

- > Watch the official Anniversary Newbery Medal announcements (<https://bit.ly/NewberyClubVid>).
- > YMA awards announced. Watch livestream or tape-delayed announcement (<https://bit.ly/YouthMediaAwards>).
- > Add time to discuss book(s) that did not win.



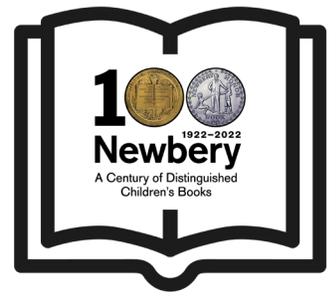
## Newbery Club



<https://bit.ly/NewberyClubVid>

# Guide to Planning a Mock Newbery

## Book Selection Guidelines and Eligibility



It is suggested that you design your Mock Newbery discussion group in a way that works for you. Some ideas are found on this and the following pages.

**Key points to keep in mind** when selecting books for your mock discussion:

- > **Books** must be original.
- > **Authors** must be citizens or residents of the United States.
- > All forms of writing may be considered (fiction, nonfiction, and poetry).
- > **Reprints, compilations, and abridgements** are not eligible.
- > Children's literature includes **books for ages 0-14**.
- > For a book to be distinguished, it should be marked by **significant achievement, excellent quality, and be individually distinct**.
- > Focus on excellence of presentation for a child audience, rather than popularity.
- > The award is given for text and illustrations are considered only if they distract from the text.

### Resource Tip

For a full list of terms and criteria, please see pages 9 and 10 of the [Newbery Medal Procedural Manual](https://bit.ly/NewberyMedalProceduralManual). (<https://bit.ly/NewberyHome>).

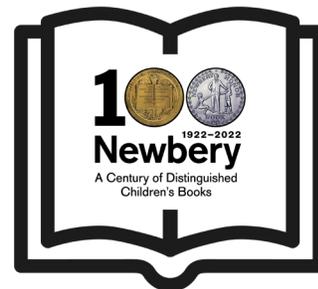
**Determine the number of books** that will be considered and plan how to obtain these. Think about how many books your group will reasonably be able to read and assess in the time frame you have set aside for your program.

**Options to obtain your books** include the public library, requests to publishers and book stores for discounts on large purchases, and organizing the reading so that books may be shared.

When selecting books, consider these sources for books that have been positively reviewed:

- > [Heavy Medal Blog](https://bit.ly/HeavyMedalBlog) -- <https://bit.ly/HeavyMedalBlog>
- > [Jen J's Booksheets](https://bit.ly/JenJBooksheets) -- <https://bit.ly/JenJBooksheets>
- > [For Those About to Mock](https://bit.ly/AboutToMock) -- <https://bit.ly/AboutToMock>
- > [Anderson's Bookshop Mock Newbery](https://bit.ly/AndersonMock) -- <https://bit.ly/AndersonMock>
- > [Goodreads Mock Newbery 2022](https://bit.ly/GoodreadsMock) -- <https://bit.ly/GoodreadsMock>

**Let the group know** that the actual committee members read hundreds of books and that there is no "short list." It's very possible that the award winners will not be among the books chosen by your group, and that's okay. It's wonderful to celebrate lots of different books!



## Suggested Timeline and Discussion Guidelines

### Some tips to keep in mind:

- > Use good critical analysis, no vague words (e.g. cute, nice, good).
- > Be cooperative—listen to each other, no side conversations.
- > Refer back to the criteria to keep the discussion focused.
- > Make comparisons only to books that were published in the year under consideration.
- > Clarity—be clear in what you say. Think through the point you are making.
- > Be concise—be sure that what you have to say adds to the discussion; try not to repeat what others have said.
- > Do not book talk or summarize the plot.
- > Refrain from relating personal anecdotes.

*"Listen well,  
lobby wisely,  
speak strategically,  
defend passionately,  
mourn graciously,  
and celebrate heartily!"*

- Andrew Medlar

-- ALSC President, 2015-2016 and Director of Book Ops, the organization that provides collection development, technical services and distribution for the 150 locations of New York Public Library and Brooklyn Public Library

Get Started by planning your group discussions, by reviewing these guidelines and tips as well as the suggested weekly planning guide.

Weekly Planning Guide	
<b>Week 1</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Overview of Newbery Medal</li><li>● Booktalk selected titles</li><li>● Hand out books</li></ul>	<b>Week 2</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Review Newbery criteria from ALA</li></ul> Break into small discussion groups and note opinions via informal rating form
<b>Week 3-6</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Discussion continues</li><li>● Can you arrange an author visit? If so, plan for the visit by brainstorming questions.</li></ul>	<b>Week 7-8</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Discussion continues</li><li>● Do some online research: Are there any additional books to consider? If so, add titles to the list.</li></ul>

### Discussion Guidelines (based on CCBC Guidelines):

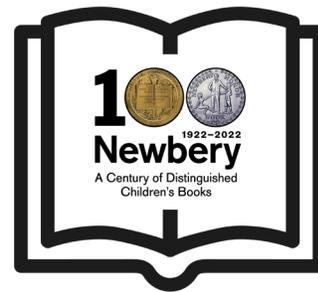
- > Talk about what the book is, rather than what it's not.
- > Do a round of positive commentary on the book.
- > Refrain from personal stories or comparisons to books NOT on the discussion list.
- > Respond to comments made.
- > Speak to the whole group.
- > Do a round of concerns/criticism.

### Discussion Prompts for Newbery Discussions

<https://bit.ly/MockNewberyWorksheets>

Feedback Form  
Newbery Criteria: Characters  
Newbery Criteria: Plot  
Newbery Criteria: Setting  
Newbery Criteria: Theme  
What Does It Mean to Be Distinguished?  
Windows and Mirrors  
Evidence  
Overall Reaction  
Defend Your Choice  
Convince Me!

## Criteria and Guide to Your Election Process



Mock Newbery Elections typically culminate in an exciting voting process. This can be especially engaging when the group follows some or all of the ballot procedures used by the actual Newbery committee. As students read and think about the books, the tools provided in this guide may help them evaluate effectively.

### Criteria & Election

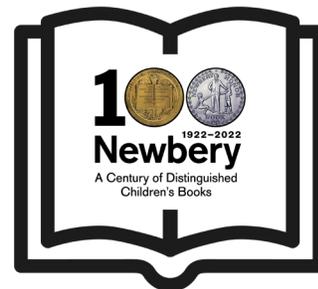
When evaluating a book to determine whether or not it is distinguished, consider using the following questions with your group, which is revised from the criteria found in the Newbery Manual. The chart found on this page can also highlight key literary elements. Encourage participants to consider both strengths and weaknesses of each title, which can lead to stronger in-person discussions. Reminder: See Pages 9 and 10 of the Manual.

- > **Interpretation of theme or concept:** Is there a sense that the author’s essential messages are being conveyed successfully through characterization, plot, style and setting?
- > **Presentation of information including accuracy, clarity, and organization:** If you are reading historical fiction, biography or nonfiction, are the historical details accurate? If you are reading science fiction, do you notice a solid base in scientific fact?
- > **Development of plot:** What is happening in the story? Is there a distinguishable story arc and is it memorable?
- > **Delineation of characters?** Has the author provided a believable approach to characters with appropriate dialogue and development?
- > **Delineation of setting?** Do you have a sense of the world in which the story takes place? How well is the setting developed? How does the setting enhance or complement the story?
- > **Appropriateness of style:** Does the text flow? Is the vocabulary and sentence structure appropriate? Is it written in the first or third person? How does the style contribute to the story?
- > **Presentation for a child audience:** Would a young reader consider the book to be readable? Do you get a sense that the author is “showing” facts rather than “telling?”
- > **Illustrations?** Illustrations should not be considered unless they distract from the text.

### Sample Criteria and Election Sheet

Title:	
Author:	
Theme	☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆
Plot	☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆
Character	☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆
Setting	☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆
Accuracy	☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆
Originality	☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆
Interest	☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆
Pros	
Cons	
Overall Rating (circle one)	1 2 3 4 5

*We want to know which titles your group selected. Please check back here to get the link to post your winning titles to the ALSC Blog.*  
<https://bit.ly/ALSCBlog>



## Guide to Your Election Process, cont.

These sample ballot sheets can be created for students to vote for specific titles.

### Mock Newbery Ballot Sample

Vote (1-3 pts)	Title	Author

Theme ★★★★★

Plot ★★★★★

Character ★★★★★

Setting ★★★★★

Accuracy ★★★★★

Originality ★★★★★

Interest ★★★★★

Pros

- great setting
- great character
- great plot and theme

Cons

- No cons

1    2    3    ④

### How to Tabulate Your Results

When selecting the medal recipient, the Newbery committee uses a **ranked choice ballot** and each member votes for their top three books. **First, second, and third place votes receive four, three, and two points respectively.** A book must receive at least eight first place votes and receive at least eight more points than the next book to receive the Newbery Medal. The committee reballots with optional discussion if no title meets these requirements. Honor books can be selected based on the results from an existing vote, or the committee can decide to reballot to select Honors.

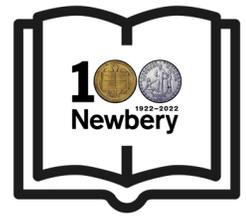
The following is **similar to the ballot used in the real Newbery election.** Some mock elections modify the voting process to meet their group's size and interests. For instance, some groups may look for the most points regardless of the eight-vote/eight-point rule which requires a majority in a committee of fifteen. Some groups may decide to automatically choose the books receiving second, third, and fourth most votes as Honor titles.

### Here's a way your process might go. The Group Organizer:

- > Fills in the Mock Newbery Ballots with each eligible title and author.
- > Asks voters to select three eligible books and assign a 1, 2 or 3 for the books they would like to win, in order of preference
- > Counts the number of votes received for each book and records it on the Ballot Tabulation sheet below.
- > The Winner and Honors are announced.

### Mock Newbery Vote Tabulation (set up a chart like this for each title)

Title:	Enter number of votes received	
First place votes		x4 =
Second place votes		x3 =
Third place votes		x2 =
		<b>Total</b>

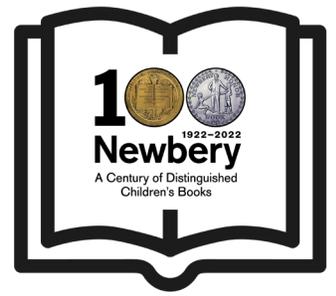


### Sample Social Media Posts and Graphics

Posting on Social Media is extremely important to spread the word. Consider these Social Media ideas:

- > Release Reminder: Ask for releases or permission from parents or guardians of children before posting their photos.
- > Video: If using Seesaw, Shutterfly or other apps you may be able to include recordings in posts announcing your awards.
- > Hashtags: Suggested hashtags are here and included below: #MockNewbery #Newbery100 #MockNewbery100
- > Tag: @WeAreALSC

Timing	Facebook/ Instagram	Twitter
<b>At the Beginning of your Newbery Election Program</b>	<p>Our [INSERT NAME OF GROUP] is running a #MockNewbery100 #Newbery100 *** OR</p> <p>Happy 100th anniversary to the Newbery Awards! [INSERT NAME OF GROUP] will be running a #MockNewbery100 in celebration of #Newbery100. We will choose our titles on [date] and start our discussions the following week! #middlegrade #mglit #bookclub #library @wearealsc</p>	<p>Happy #Newbery100! [INSERT NAME OF GROUP] will be running a #MockNewbery to celebrate the centennial anniversary. We'll choose our titles on [DATE] and start our discussions the following week! @wearealsc</p>
<b>While Reading and Discussing</b>	<p>Today we discussed [INSERT #BOOK TITLE/S]. We chose these titles because of their exceptional [ADD QUALITIES] *** OR</p> <p>We had a great time discussing [#BOOK TITLE/S] written by [@TAG AUTHOR] for #MockNewbery100 today. These books are [DESCRIBE] and we can't wait to continue reading! [@TAG PUBLISHER] #Newbery100 #middlegrade #mglit #bookclub #library @wearealsc</p> <p>For author visit with screen shot of author: [@TAG AUTHOR] visited us for a special Skype session today! We had a blast learning about [#BOOK TITLE] for #MockNewbery100. Thank you [AUTHOR NAME] for joining our book talk! [@TAG PUBLISHER] #Newbery100 #middlegrade #mglit #library #authorvisit @wearealsc</p>	<p>We had a great time discussing [#BOOK TITLE/S] for #MockNewbery100 today. These books are [DESCRIBE] and we can't wait to continue reading! #Newbery100 [@TAG AUTHOR] [@TAG PUBLISHER]</p> <p>For author visit [optional screen shot of author]: [@TAG AUTHOR] visited us for a special Skype session today! We had a blast learning about [#BOOK TITLE] for #MockNewbery100. [@TAG PUBLISHER] #Newbery100 #authorvisit @wearealsc</p>
<b>While Deliberating and Finalizing Your Selections</b>	<p>Our #MockNewbery100 winners and honorees will be announced [WHEN]. Be sure to check out the ALA's Youth Media Awards [add details] for the actual announcement. *** OR</p> <p>We are in our last days of #mocknewbery100 discussions! The [NAME OF GROUP] will announce their selection on [DATE]. Be sure to tune in to the Youth Media Awards by @ALALibrary for the 2022 Newbery Award announcement on Monday morning. [DETAILS of the YMA ANNOUNCEMENT HERE] #Newbery100 #LLX2022 #YMA @wearealsc</p>	<p>We are in our last days of #mocknewbery discussions! The [NAME OF GROUP] will announce their selection on [DATE]. Be sure to tune in to the YMA awards by @ALALibrary for the Newbery Award announcement on Monday! #Newbery100 @wearealsc</p>
<b>Upon completion</b>	<p>Thank you to everyone who attended our #MockNewbery Discussion and program. We appreciate everyone's support for the amazing work from our youth judges! *** OR</p> <p>We are happy to finally announce our [AGE GROUP] #MockNewbery award winners. For our 2022 #MockNewbery, we selected [#BOOK TITLE] by [@TAG AUTHOR]. Thank you for an amazing year of reading to all the youth judges! It was a perfect way to celebrate #Newbery100 @wearealsc</p>	<p>Happy to announce our [AGE GROUP] #MockNewbery100 award winners. This year, we selected [#BOOK TITLE] by [@TAG AUTHOR] as the winner. Thank you for an amazing year of reading to all the youth judges! It was a perfect way to celebrate #Newbery100 @wearealsc</p>



## Resources: Suggested Activities & Links

### *Suggested activities to support your program*

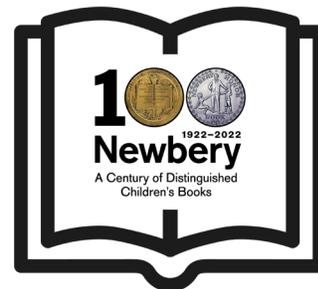
- > Ask students to write down their thoughts informally on post-its/ posters. If your program is virtual consider using FlipGrid (<https://info.flipgrid.com/>).
- > Practice summarizing and comparing.
- > Understand what is meant by distinguished.
- > Create art to encapsulate the theme of a book.
- > Speak with a librarian who has served on the selection committee.
- > Invite a Newbery award-winning author to speak with your students. If you are unable to host a visit or skype with an author, view their websites to hear their acceptance speeches (<https://bit.ly/NewberySpeeches>).
- > Write notes of appreciation to authors on your reading list.
- > Write one sentence to persuade someone to read the book you like best.
- > Create bookmarks for your favorite titles.
- > Play a Newbery trivia game. (<https://bit.ly/NewberyTrivia>).
- > Set up a scavenger hunt for Newbery titles in your library.
- > Create book trailer TikToks for the Newbery titles you are discussing.
- > Have a lunch banquet with food that matches the theme of your book choices.
- > On the morning of the Youth Media Award announcements, serve themed food/ cake cupcakes.

### **Celebrate Newbery 100 activities**

- > Try a "Read 100 titles" challenge. This can be any title!
- > Newbery Book talk every day for 100 days.
- > Have a 100th Birthday Party for the Newbery Award.
- > Vote for best Newbery ever.
- > Read a Newbery Award book and watch the film.
- > Create bookmarks for the best Newbery under 180 pages or by genre.

### *Links to Resources*

- > **Mock Newbery Tool Kit** (<https://bit.ly/BlogNewberyClub>).
- > **CCBC Book Discussion Guidelines** (<https://bit.ly/CCBCGuidelines>).



## The Newbery: History and Process

### *A Brief History of the Newbery Award*

Frederic Melcher, an American publisher, brought the idea of the Newbery Award to the American Library Association's Children's Librarians' Section in 1921; it was first awarded on June 27, 1922.

The Newbery Medal was the first children's book award and is the best known and most discussed children's book award in the United States. It was named for John Newbery (1713-1769), who was considered the first publisher of books for children.

The Newbery criteria has evolved over the years. For example, from 1932 to 1958 an author who had previously received the Newbery could only receive it again if there was a unanimous decision from the committee. Additionally, the Newbery and Caldecott committees used to be combined into one.

### *The Newbery Process*

The Newbery Award Selection Committee consists of 15 members: one chair, six appointed members from the Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC) membership, and eight members elected by the ALSC membership.

The Committee comes together to discuss suggested and nominated titles, culminating in final discussions and voting in late January or early February. Members value the confidentiality of the award, and cannot share the committee's discussions or ballots. To learn the ins and outs of the process, please visit the [Newbery Medal homepage](https://bit.ly/NewberyHome) (<https://bit.ly/NewberyHome>).

The awards are announced at the ALA Youth Media Awards. There is a celebratory banquet at the Annual ALA Meeting where the Medal winner gives a speech, and during which the Medal and Honor winners are celebrated.

### *Acknowledgements*

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