The Newbery Challenge
What is the Newbery Challenge?

A mock Newbery contest held from September through early January when the real Newbery Awards are announced by the ALA.
How do you prepare for it?

1. Get financial support for the project
2. Select and Purchase books
3. Purchase food served at meetings
October 21, 2015
8 Cheshvan 5776

Dear Middle School Parents,

The Middle School Library is spearheading an exciting new reading initiative called the Newbery Challenge, where parents and students are invited to read three or more books out of a list of twelve, discuss the books in a group, and together decide which one they think will win the 2016 Newbery Award. The Newbery Award is given annually by the Association for Library Services to Children, a division of the American Library Association, to the author of the most distinguished contribution to American literature for children.

Students will learn about the Newbery Challenge in school and interested parents are invited to come to the library on Tuesday, November 3, at 8:00 AM to get the list of books and more details about the contest. Please RSVP to noreen@ramaz.org. Coffee will be served.

The library will be purchasing three copies each of the twelve books being considered for the Award. These books will be kept on a special cart in the library. The books can also be checked out from the regular shelf.

WHO DO YOU THINK WILL JOIN THIS LIST OF BELOVED AND ADMIRIED BOOKS?

2015 Medal Winner: The Crossover
by Kwame Alexander

1997 Medal Winner: The View from Saturday
by E.L. Konigsburg

1994 Medal Winner: The Giver
by Lois Lowry

1984 Medal Winner: Dear Mr. Henshaw
by Beverly Cleary

1978 Medal Winner: Bridge to Terabithia
by Katherine Paterson
Make announcement to students at school-wide gathering
Get lists from other schools

Here is our month-by-month reading list for 2015:

MG: Middle Grade, YA: Young Adult

Read 3 of these for the October 8, 2015 meeting:
A Handful of Stars by Cynthia Lord (MG)
Circus Mirandus by Cassie Beasley (MG)
The Way Home Looks Now by Wendy Shang (MG)
Fish in a Tree by Lynda Mullaly Hunt (MG)
Roller Girl by Victoria Jamieson (MG)
Stella by Starlight by Sharon Draper (MG)

Read 3 of these (or from last month) for the November 12, 2015 meeting:
Paper Things by Jennifer Jacobson (MG)
The War That Saved my Life by Kimberly Brubaker (MG)
Echo by Pam Munoz Ryan (MG)
Goodbye Stranger by Rebecca Stead (MG/YA)
Listen, Slowly by Thanhha Lai (MG)
Sunny Side Up by Jennifer Holm (MG)

Read 3 of these (or from the last 2 months) for the December 10, 2015 meeting:
Crenshaw by Katherine Applegate (MG)
The Marvels by Brian Selznick (MG)
Sword of Summer by Rick Riordan (MG)
The Thing about Jellyfish by Ali Benjamin (MG)
Firefly Hollow by Allison McGhee (MG)
Orbiting Jupiter by Gary Schmidt (YA)

Extra Credit:

Did you already read your 9 required titles? Do you want more reading suggestions?

Tiger Boy by Mitali Perkins
Lost in the Sun by Lisa Graff
Get lists from websites
Get suggestions from **Heavy Medal**, the mock Newbery blog of SLJ

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**2017 Newbery Reading List**

*January 19, 2016 by Jonathan Hunt*  
*23 Comments*

The 2016 winners have been announced. Hope you had time to catch your breath. Let’s start reading again!

**Freedom in Congo Square** by Carole Boston Weatherford . . . Fresh on the heels of the first Newbery Medal picture book, I offer you this one to consider. It’s got three starred reviews so far, and could likely add to that total in the coming weeks. Weatherford could go the Joyce Sidman route. She gets on our radar by authoring a couple of Caldecott Honor texts and—boom!—she’s a Newbery winner in her own right before you know it.

**Makoons** by Louise Erdrich . . . To me, this is the most anticipated read of the year. If you’ve ever heard me whine about the first three books in the series—something about the literary equivalent of watching paint dry on the wall—that will probably shock you, but Chickadee won me over with its brevity and humor in a way that the other books didn’t. I’m hoping for big things from this one. Don’t let me down, Erdrich!
Decide on 10-12 books that you think will be contenders

Purchase 3-5 copies of each title
Make the books accessible to students and parents for checkout
Prepare an annotated list of all of the books to give participants.
The Newbery Challenge Books

The following books can be read for the Newbery Challenge. Please try to read three or more books and email or tell Ms. Wachs (Noreen@ramaz.org) which books you are reading:

**Fiction**

**Crenshaw** by Katherine Applegate

Applegate tells the story of a ten-year-old boy whose imaginary friend helps him cope with a family crisis. (Grades 5-6)

Publishers Weekly says, “This accessible and moving novel demonstrates how the creative resilience of a child’s mind can soften difficult situations, while exploring the intersection of imagination and truth.”

**Cuckoo Song** by Frances Hardinge

Set in England after World War I, this is a creepy but ultimately loving story of the relationship between two sisters who have to band together against a world where nothing is as it seems. (Grades 5-7)

The Horn Book says, “Cuckoo Song is a sophisticated, disturbing tale that shivers with suspense and touching moments of bravery.”
**Stella by Starlight** by Sharon M. Draper

When the Klu Klux Klan’s unwelcome reappearance rattles Stella’s segregated Southern town, bravery battles prejudice. (Grades 5-8)

School Library Journal says, “This is an engrossing historical fiction novel with an amiable and humble heroine who does not recognize her own bravery or the power of her words.”

**The Thing about Jellyfish** by Ali Benjamin

After Suzy’s best friend Franny drowns, she becomes convinced Franny’s death is connected to a jellyfish sting. An obsession with these sea creatures emerges as science-minded Suzy navigates her grief. (Grades 5-8)

Voice of Youth Advocates (VOYA) says, “This novel has it all: just-right pacing, authentic voices and characters, beautifully crafted plot, and superb writing. Readers will find this story lingers with them after the book is closed.”

**Tiger Boy** by Mitali Perkins

When a tiger cub goes missing from an animal reserve in West Bengal, India, Neel is determined to find her before the greedy Gupta kills her and sells her body parts on the black market. (Grades 5-6)

School Library Journal says, “Set in the lush Sundarbans natural region of Bengal, this quiet gripping tale emphasizes the deep but often fragile connection that exists between humans and nature.”

**The War that Saved My Life** by Kimberly Brubaker Bradley

Set in World War II England, this novel tells the story of Ada, a young girl with a clubfoot, who is kept a prisoner by her mother because of her disability. After being evacuated from London, she is taken care of by a recluse but she finally achieves acceptance and love. (Grades 5-8)

The Wall Street Journal says, “…nuanced and emotionally acute, this vivid tale from the wartime home front in England, will have readers ten to fourteen wincing at Ada’s stumbles and rejoicing to the point of tears in her victories.”
Echo by Pam Munoz Ryan

Echo is an epic novel that tells the story of three children, all in dire circumstances, whose lives are changed by a harmonica that possesses magical powers. (Grades 7-8)

Publishers Weekly says, "The book’s thematic underpinnings poignantly reveal what Friedrich, Mike, and Ivy have in common: not just a love of music but resourcefulness in the face of change, and a refusal to accept injustice."

Listen Slowly by Thanhha Lai

A California girl born and raised, Mai can’t wait to spend her vacation at the beach. Instead she has to travel to Vietnam with her grandmother, who is going back to find out what really happened to her husband during the Vietnam War. (Grades 5-8)

School Library Journal says, "The sights, smells and tastes of Vietnam’s cities and villages come alive on the page, without overwhelming a story filled with a summer’s-worth of touching and hilarious moments."

Nightbird by Alice Hoffman

Twig lives in Sidwell, where people whisper that fairy tales are real. After all, her town is rumored to hide a monster. Two hundred years ago, a witch placed a curse on Twig’s family that was meant to last forever. But this summer, everything will change when the red moon rises. It’s time to break the spell. (Grades 5-6)

School Library Journal says, "...A clever narrator, beautiful imagery, and a quirky cast of secondary characters who populate the oddball town are the bright spots in this mix of fantasy and mystery."

Roller Girl by Victoria Jamieson

In her graphic novel debut, real-life derby girl Victoria Jamieson has created a coming-of-age story about friendship, persistence, and girl power.

The New York Times says, "Roller Girl's message of self-discovery, friendship, and perseverance will roll its way right into your heart."
The Way the Home Looks Now by Wendy Wan-long Shang

Twelve-year-old Peter Lee and his family are baseball lovers, who bond over games and talk of the Pittsburgh Pirates. But when tragedy strikes, the family falls apart and baseball no longer seems to matter. (Grades 5-6)

Publisher’s Weekly says, “Shang skillfully balances the different aspects of Peter’s life, robustly characterizing his friendships and his time at school and at home. Issues of sexism, racism and struggles with depression are handled deftly ...”

Non-Fiction

The Boys Who Challenged Hitler: Knud Pedersen and the Churchill Club by Philip Hoose

In this true story, set at the start of World War II, Denmark did not resist the German occupation. Deeply ashamed of his nation’s leaders, fifteen-year-old Knud Pedersen along with his brother and some schoolmates, decided to take action against the Nazis. Naming their club after Winston Churchill, the Churchill Club committed acts of sabotage which enraged the Germans, who eventually had the boys tracked down and arrested. (Grades 7-8)

Kirkus Reviews says, “Hoose tells the unknown true story with passion and clarity.”

Terrible Typhoid Mary: A True Story of the Deadliest Cook in America by Susan Campbell Bartoletti

This biography of Mary Mallon, also known as Typhoid Mary, begins in 1906, when Mallon was hired as a cook for a wealthy family in Oyster Bay, Long Island and typhoid broke out. (Grades 5-8)

School Library Journal says, “Bartoletti tells the woman’s story with empathy and understanding [and] explores the myriad violations of Mallon’s civil rights and the harsh treatment she received in comparison to other typhoid carriers.”
Create a group on your school’s Learning Management System for announcements of upcoming events and comments on the books.
Noreen Wachs

Dear Participants in the Newbery Challenge,

Please remember to come to our breakfast meeting in the Middle School Library on Tuesday, December 8th at 7:30 AM to discuss the books.

Looking forward to seeing you!

N. Wachs

Fri Dec 4, 2015 at 10:46 am  Comment  ·  Like

1 person likes this

Write a comment
Ilana
I am really looking forward to reading Crenshaw. I heard good review on it. I am ready The War that Saved my Life it is great so far!
Thu Oct 29, 2015 at 6:26 pm · Like 😊 2

Max
I am looking forward to reading all the books!(:
Thu Oct 29, 2015 at 7:40 pm · Like 😊 4

Noreen Wachs
I also read Roller Girl. It was a fun read and I learned a lot about what Roller Derby is all about. It's action packed!
Fri Oct 30, 2015 at 12:18 pm · Like 😊 2

Dina
Write a comment

Thu Dec 3, 2015 at 6:06 pm · Like 😊 1
Noreen Wachs

As you may know, our last meeting of the Newbery Challenge will be on Monday, January 4th at 4 PM in the library, when we will vote on which book we think will win the Newbery Award. This is the first day we come back after the midwinter break and it will be a pizza party. Please RSVP to noreen@ramaz.org if you plan to attend. Thanks.

N. Wachs

Thu Dec 17, 2015 at 9:49 am Comment · Like

😊 5 people liked this

Write a comment
Noreen Wachs

The Newbery Winner were just announced!

The winner was "Last Stop on Market Street" by Matt de Pena.

The Honor books were: "Echo" by Pam Munoz Ryan, "Roller Girl" by Victoria Jamieson, and "The War that Saved My Life" by Kimberly Brubaker Baker.

The winner is a real surprise because the book is a picture book aimed at grades K-3. The other books were all on our Newbery Challenge reading list and we are especially happy that Echo, a big favorite of all our readers was chosen as an Honor Book.

N. Wachs
Noreen Wachs

Thanks for all your wonderful comments about the Newbery winners. According to The Washington Post, *Last Stop on Market Street* was a "surprise winner" of the award. It is also interesting that the writer Matt de la Pena was the first Latino author to win the award. The book is also unusual because Mr. de la Pena won the Newbery for the book's story and the illustrator, Christian Robinson, won a Caldecott Honor for the illustrations.

An important librarian, who gave her opinion on who would win the Newbery and Caldecott Awards, is Elizabeth Bird. Ms. Bird worked for the New York Public Library and now works for the Evanston, IL. Public Library and she was once a judge for the Newbery Award. She guessed that *Last Stop on Market Street* would win the Caldecott Award!

Tue Jan 12, 2016 at 2:32 pm Comment · Like

😊 3 people liked this

Write a comment
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Mon Jan 11, 2016 at 12:40 pm Comment · Like

3 people liked this

View all 19 comments

Yeah

Wed Jan 13, 2016 at 3:25 pm · Like 1
Create a bulletin board with pictures of all the books and annotations.
- Create a list of participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
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<th>CRENSHA W</th>
<th>CUCKOO SONG</th>
<th>ECHO</th>
<th>LISTEN SLOWLY</th>
<th>NIGHTBIRD</th>
<th>ROLLER GIRL</th>
<th>STELLA BY STARLIGHT</th>
<th>TYPHOID MARY</th>
<th>THE BOYS CHALLENGED HITLER</th>
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What are the rules?

Every participant must read at least three books and attend two meetings.
What meetings were held?

• Introductory breakfast for parents to introduce the project
• Early morning breakfast meeting for parents, students and faculty to discuss the books.
• Book trailers were shown to lead off the discussions.
Early morning breakfast meeting for parents, students and faculty to discuss the books. Book trailers were shown to lead off the discussions.
Crenshaw book trailer
INTRODUCING:
Ali Benjamin
and
the thing about jellyfish

The Thing About Jellyfish book trailer
AJL Proceedings 2016
Final after school meeting to vote on which books will be chosen as the Newbery winner and Newbery Honor Books. Pizza was served.
When are the Newbery Awards announced?

At the midwinter conference of ALA in early January
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Which books won the Newbery Awards in 2016?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Winner</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Last Stop on Market Street</em> by Matt de la Pena</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Honor Books</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Echo</em> by Pam Munoz Ryan</td>
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<td><em>Roller Girl</em> by Victoria Jamieson</td>
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<td><em>The War That Saved My Life</em> by Kimberly Brubaker Bradley</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Which books did the Ramaz group choose?</th>
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<tr>
<td><em>Echo</em> by Pam Munoz Ryan</td>
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<td><em>The Thing About Jellyfish</em> by Ali Benjamin</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>The Boys Who Challenged Hitler: Knud Peterson and the Churchill Club</em> by Phillip Hoose</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Which other books were popular with our readers?

Listen Slowly by Thanhha Lai

Roller Girl by Victoria Jamieson

Stella by Starlight by Sharon M. Draper

The War That Saved My Life by Kimberly Brubaker Bradley
Final costs:

Pizza               $152
Books              $744.50
(5 copies each)

TOTAL:          $896.50

I am grateful to the Ramaz Parents Council for funding this project
Noreen Wachs ▶ Newbery Challenge

All of you know that the winner of the Newbery this year was a picture book and we all thought that the best book was *Echo*. I want to let everyone know that the New York Historical Society just announced that the 2016 Children’s History Prize goes to Pam Munoz Ryan for *Echo*!

Mon Jun 6, 2016 at 4:22 pm Comment · Like

😊 8 people liked this

💬 View all 4 comments

David
I thought it would get SOMETHING!
Mon Jun 6, 2016 at 7:53 pm · Like 😊 3

Hannah
I knew it would win an award
Tue Jun 7, 2016 at 12:32 pm · Like 😐 2

Ivy
Yay
Tue Jun 7, 2016 at 6:14 pm · Like 😊 2

Write a comment