

**Douglas County Libraries
Battle of the Books Rules 2026**



General Rules

1. There are four levels of play: The Interschool Battle, the Branch Elimination Rounds, the Wild Card and the District Battle.
2. The library will place teams in conferences to determine which teams compete against each other.
3. Once Battle dates are set they will not be changed.
4. At the beginning of each battle a coin flip will determine which team will be team A and which will be team B. Team A sits to the audience's left and receives the first question and all odd-numbered questions. Team B sits to the audience's right and receives the second question and all even-numbered questions.
5. Teams may not bring any battle-related materials to competitions. Team members and associates are prohibited from taking videos during a battle for later study. Keeping score and briefly noting book titles for future study is allowed. Any team found cheating will be disqualified, with the length of disqualification determined by the severity of the offense.
6. All students who participate, either as a competing team or audience member, must maintain proper decorum. It is expected that Battle participants/spectators will display good sportsmanship and respect for other participants/spectators and the Battle program. A failure to do so may result in ejection from the battle. There will be no communication between audience members and team members in any form, i.e. signs, hand signals, verbal cries, mouthing of answers. Students should be apprised of the consequences of cheating and the appearance of cheating.
7. If it is determined that an audience member is attempting to assist a team, that audience member will be asked to leave; further penalty to the team will be at the discretion of the judges.
8. Battles will start when scheduled and will proceed if 3 or more team members are present from each team. If at least 3 team members are not present 5 minutes after the scheduled start time, the deficient team will forfeit the battle. Exception: If a team has planned absences for a school-sanctioned function, that team will be allowed to battle with no less than 2 team members. Library Battle representatives must be notified at least 2 weeks in advance of the planned absence. When a team forfeits, the opposing team automatically wins with 50 points.
9. Late team members will not be permitted to join their team once the Battle has begun. No substitutions can be made once a Battle is in progress.

Castle Pines
360 Village Square Lane
Castle Pines, CO
80108

Castle Rock
Philip & Jerry Miller
100 S Wilcox St
Castle Rock, CO
80104

Highlands Ranch
9292 S Ridgeline Blvd
Highlands Ranch, CO
80129

Lone Tree
10055 Library Way
Lone Tree, CO
80124

Louviers
7885 Louviers Blvd
Louviers, CO
80131

Parker
20105 E Mainstreet
Parker, CO
80138

Roxborough
8357 N Rampart Range Rd
Suite 200
Littleton, CO
80125

10. Teams are not permitted to watch Battles for other teams in their grade level. Team members may watch their own team Battle if they are not participating, provided they follow the audience rules. Coaches or parents who may be involved with Battle of the Books on several levels (e.g. as a coach of one team and a parent of a child on another) may be permitted to watch other Battles, but may not discuss the questions or content of one Battle with members of another team. Team members found breaking this rule will be subject to punishment at the Judges' discretion, which could include suspension for one or more battles or disqualification of the entire team for that evening's Battle.

11. Due to the sharing of questions between library branches, Battle questions will not be distributed to schools once their team has battled with a particular set of questions.

12. Parents or coaches who are using a digital device to take photos of their team's battle are asked to please be respectful of the privacy of other participants and not post photos taken to Facebook or other social media sites. We discourage the filming of battles due to distraction and potential content breaches.

Responding to Questions

1. Each team will designate one member as the spokesperson for the team. Only the spokesperson may respond to the question. Whispered prompts to spokesperson are allowed, but only the spokesperson may give the team's answer.

2. Team members may only communicate (talk or gesture) with one another when it is their turn to respond, and only after the question has been read. If a team member speaks when it is not their question, or prior to the end of the reading of the question, the team will first be given a warning. For a second offense, the team will be given a 2 point penalty; for a third offense, the team will be disqualified from the battle.

3. Teams may huddle while deciding upon an answer.

4. A correct response is comprised of 2 parts - the title and author(s) of the work as written on the official booklist. No partial answers will be accepted.

5. A pronunciation guide will be available to all teams prior to the start of battles. The pronunciation of the title and author(s) shall be deemed acceptable if pronounced phonetically. Differences in all title and author words that reflect distinctions due to nation, locality and speech conditions will be accepted. This includes stammering due to nerves provided the answer is deemed accurate by the judges. No challenges are allowed on pronunciation. Visit <https://www.dcl.org/botb/> for an author and title pronunciation guide.

6. Initial articles (like A and The) in titles will be disregarded when determining if a title is given correctly.

7. Once the spokesperson begins to respond with a title and author(s), only that title and author(s) will be accepted as the team's answer. If the spokesperson attempts to change the team's answer after beginning, the answer will be judged incorrect and no points will be awarded. Standing when answering questions is recommended but not required.
8. If it is recognized that a question has been read incorrectly (for example a word has been mispronounced) or the meaning of a question has been altered because of incorrect information, the question will be replaced with a random tiebreaker.
9. When reading a question, the Questioner must indicate if part of the question is a direct quotation from the book.
10. If a judge is unclear about a question or answer, and wishes to confer with another judge, they can say "Confer;" the judges can then step outside the room and confer for no more than 2 minutes.
11. Decisions made by the judges are final and may not be challenged.

Time Limits and Scoring

1. A team has 30 seconds after the question is read to respond. A warning will be given when 10 seconds are remaining. If there is no response after time is called, the judge will give a verbal prompt. The answer must be given immediately after the verbal prompt. Conferring after the timer has signaled is not allowed.
2. If a correct answer is given the team is awarded 5 points. If an incorrect response or no response is given, no points are awarded, and the second team will have the opportunity to respond.
3. When the initial question is repeated for the second team; the second team then has 15 seconds to respond. If they respond correctly the team is awarded 3 points. If an incorrect response or no response is given no points are awarded. The Questioner then gives the correct answer.
4. A round will consist of 20 questions - 10 for each team. At the end of a round if the score is tied, there will be a tiebreaker round.

Tiebreakers

1. Each team is given a dry erase board on which to write.
2. Each team will answer the questions simultaneously by writing the answer on the board. For tiebreakers, only the title is required. Teams do not need to also write the name of the author(s).

3. Spelling does not count.
4. Challenges are allowed.
5. After each question, teams have up to 30 seconds to write their answer before revealing their boards. Teams should write as much of the title as possible. If a title is only partially written but clearly identifiable to the judges, it will be accepted. However, the written title must be clearly distinguishable from the other nine options; if the judges cannot confidently determine the intended title, the answer will be marked incorrect. Once a team has written their answer, they must raise a thumb to indicate readiness. When both teams have raised thumbs, they must wait for the judge's verbal prompt to reveal their boards.
6. If both teams answer either correctly or incorrectly, the judges will move on to the next question.
7. If one team answers incorrectly and the other answers correctly, the team that answers correctly wins the battle.
8. No points will be awarded for correct tiebreaker questions. The winning team will be awarded 5 additional points for winning the Battle.

Challenges

1. Challenges may only be made by team members. The challenger should attract the attention of the referee by clearly stating, "Challenge."
2. A contestant may only challenge a question that has been asked and answered by their team. Challenges must be made before the next question (or present question, in the case of a steal) is presented to the opposite team.
3. The battle will be suspended while the challenger is given the opportunity to explain why the question is being challenged.
4. Coaches may NOT confer with the team challenging a question. The team has three minutes to explain and prove the challenge from the time they're given an unmarked copy of the book in question by the judge. An alternate correct answer must be explicitly clear in the book. The challenging team must find the exact page in the book where the alternate answer is located.
5. If the challenge is accepted the question will be discarded and will be replaced with a random tiebreaker question. The new question goes first to the team of whom the question was originally asked. Note: if a question is read incorrectly or has incorrect information this rule will apply.
6. If the challenge is found to be without merit, the score is not changed.

7. A team may have no more than two challenges in any one battle.
8. Challenges are allowed during tiebreakers.
9. The decision of the judges is final and may not be challenged.

Standings

1. In the determination of standings, the first element to be considered is win-loss record. Teams with the greater number of wins will be placed higher in the standings than teams with a smaller number of wins. Teams are awarded 1 point for a win, and zero points for a loss.
2. If two teams have the same number of wins, the team with the higher cumulative point differential for all previous battles will be placed higher.
3. If two teams have the same number of wins and the same point differential, the team who has scored the most cumulative points in all previous battles will be placed higher.
4. In the instance that both teams are equal after calculating (2) and (3), the teams' head-to-head record will be the final factor taken into account.
5. Standings are calculated automatically via Tournify (taking the above factors into account, in order) and cannot be challenged.
6. To accommodate five battle locations, the teams seeded 4th and 5th (for both grade levels) will compete in a Wild Card battle on Monday, March 9. The winners will advance to the District-level competition. A total of four teams will advance to the District level. These are:
 - The winner of the Wild Card battle (earning the 4th seed)
 - The teams seeded 1st, 2nd, and 3rd in the District

7. The Branch champion with the highest cumulative point differential for the entire Battle of the Books competition (Interschool Battles and Branch Elimination Battles) will be seeded 1st, and will battle the 4th seed Wild Card Winner in the first District Semifinal. The 2nd and 3rd seeded teams will battle each other in the second Semifinal; the two Semifinal winners will battle in the District Final.