



Appalachia Intermediate Unit 8

Book Selection Guidelines for the Interscholastic Reading Competition

Appalachia Intermediate Unit 8 recognizes the expertise of administrators, teachers, library media specialists, and other staff members to select library materials for inclusion in the Interscholastic Reading Competitions. The intermediate unit supports the philosophy that this competition must provide sufficient books from varied subject area disciplines to help advance student's education and appreciation for reading. This belief makes it mandatory that a sound basis for literature selection and review be established.

It is believed that the principles set forth in the School Library Bill of Rights should be used as a basis for those selecting media. The principles are as follows:

- To provide materials that will enrich and enliven the flexibility of the curriculum, taking into consideration the varied interests and motivation, the individual abilities, and the maturity levels of the pupils served.
- To provide materials that will stimulate growth and factual knowledge, literary appreciation, aesthetic values and ethical standards.
- To provide a background of information which will enable students to make intelligent judgments in their daily lives.
- To provide materials on opposing sides of controversial issues so that young citizens may develop under guidance the practical habits of critical reading, questioning and thinking.
- To provide materials representative of many religions, ethnic and cultural groups and their contributions to our American heritage.
- To place principle above personal opinion and reason above prejudice in the selection of materials of the highest quality in order to assure a comprehensive collection appropriate for the users of the library.

Selection of Media

The selection of materials is delegated to the professionally qualified library media specialists, teachers, and administrators from the Appalachia IU 8 area. Parents, coaches, community leaders, and students should be encouraged to recommend selections for the Interscholastic Reading Competition. In evaluating materials for inclusion in the competition, members of the committee should reference standard selection tools, such as selected lists, professional reviews, bibliographical sources, and state and national award lists. In addition, books may be selected on the recommendation of professional staff, students and parents, provided they meet the criteria for selection.

The Interscholastic Reading Competition rotates four book lists for its competitions. Evaluation of competition books is a cyclical process, which requires a yearly re-evaluation of the availability, suitability, accuracy, value, up-to-dateness, and style of books included. Those books, which are no longer available or meet the IU 8 selection criteria, will be "weeded" from the collection.

Selection Criteria:

- Provides a variety of materials of excellent quality, representing all levels of ability, needs, and interests
- Contributes to the informational, recreational and cultural growth of young people
- Clarity, adequacy, objectivity, recentness, and appropriateness of text
- Reputation or significance of the author
- Clear organization and presentation of contents
- High degree of readability and/or comprehensibility
- High degree of potential user appeal
- High artistic quality and/or literary style
- Value commensurate with cost

Questioned Media

Occasional objections to some materials may be voiced by the public despite the care taken in the selection process and despite the qualifications of the members of the selection committee. The procedure for complaints is as follows:

1. The IU 8 Interscholastic Reading Competition Co-Chairperson will be responsible for listening to the complainant and explaining the selection procedures, but will make no commitments regarding the questioned media.
2. A complaint in reference to a book shall be submitted in writing to the IU 8 Interscholastic Reading Competition Co-Chairperson using the competition's "Request for Reconsideration of a Book" form. The completed form must be received at the Appalachia IU 8 office no later than September 1, if it refers to a book on the fall reading list and January 1 if it refers to the spring list. "Request for Reconsideration of a Book" forms submitted after the deadlines will be addressed when the next rotation of that book list becomes valid and not for the present year's competition. This form is available from the reading team's coach or the IU 8 office.
3. Copies of the completed criticism will be forwarded to the members of the Interscholastic Reading Competition Book Selection Committee. This nine to twelve member committee will include library media specialists, teachers, and administrators from the IU 8 area.
4. The Book Selection Committee will meet in September to review any concerns dealing with the fall competition book list, and in January to address concerns dealing with the spring book list. Forms received late will not be addressed during these meetings. The decision of the committee is final.
5. The review of these materials should be handled objectively, unemotionally, and routinely. The Book Selection Committee will determine the validity of the objection according to the following criteria.
 - A book is not to be excluded because it contains immoral actions or situations. It is to be excluded if these elements are used to give the overall impression that immorality is to be excused, made little of, defended or glamorized.
 - The use of vulgar language (the "four letter words") does not necessarily mean immorality. Usually such language is a violation of good taste rather than an infringement of moral code. Vulgar language may be a violation when it is employed to belittle morality.

- Books presenting accents on sexual scenarios will be reviewed to ascertain their appropriateness for the age level of the readers and community standards. While we would not in any case include the sensational or over-dramatic, the fact of sexual incidents should not automatically disqualify a book. Rather the decision should be made on the basis of whether the book presents life in its true proportions, whether circumstances are realistically dealt with, and whether the book is of literary value.
 - These book selection guidelines are subject to revision as new technologies and better library procedures may warrant.
6. The decision of the Book Selection Committee will be reported to the complainant in writing within two weeks of the meeting. The committee will meet to address "Request for Reconsideration of a Book" issues during the months of September and January.

Coaches Responsibilities

- Copies of these guidelines should be made available, upon request, to interested parties from the team's school.
- All coaches will read these guidelines and sign the Interscholastic Reading Competition Registration Form, in the appropriate location, to indicate that they and their team will abide by the book selection and questioning procedures detailed in this document. It is also strongly recommended that a member of the administration from the team's school read this document and gives his/her approval for the team involvement.
- Participating teams who object to a book listed in the Interscholastic Reading Competition have the right to take the following actions:
 1. Voice their objections to the IU 8 Interscholastic Reading Competition Co-Chairperson and complete the "Request for Reconsideration of a Book" form (Note: The form must be received prior to September 1 and January 1.)
 2. Have the coach obtain the parent's permission before their child reads the book. (Note: Many times what one parent objects to another does not.)
 3. Participate in the competition but choose to not read the questioned book (Note: Questions will not be substituted for ones dealing with books a team chooses not to read.)
 4. Withdraw the team from the competition (Note: This must be done at least one week prior to the competition.)

REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION OF A BOOK

(This form must be filled in completely for the complaint to be addressed.)

Author: _____ Date of Complaint: _____

Title: _____

Publisher (if known): _____

Request initiated by: _____

Phone #: _____ Address: _____

City, State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Complainant Represents (Please check & complete the space):

{ Myself { Organization Name: _____

{ Other (Please Identify): _____

1. To what in the book do you object: (Be specific; cite pages) _____

2. What do you think might be the result of students reading this book? _____

3. For what level would you recommend this book?

{ Elementary { Middle / Jr. High { High School { None

4. Is there anything good in this book? _____

5. Did you read the entire book? { YES { NO

If NO, what parts did you read? _____

6. Are you aware of the judgment of this book by literary critics? { YES { NO

7. What do you believe is the theme of this book? _____

8. What would you like the Interscholastic Reading Competition Committee to do about this book?

{ Withdraw it from the competition { Assign it to a different level

{ Ask coaches to obtain the parent's permission before their child reads the book

9. In its place, what book of equal literary quality would you recommend that would convey as

valuable a picture and perspective of our civilization? _____

Signature of Complainant

Date the Committee Addressed Complaint:

(Committee will complete this space)

NOTE: USE ADDITIONAL PAGES IF NECESSARY

SEND THE COMPLETED FORM TO:

APPALACHIA IU 8, SPECIAL PROJECTS OFFICE
580 FOOT OF TEN ROAD, DUNCANSVILLE, PA 16635