Battle of the Books

2019-2020
How does this work?

Any interested 4th and 5th grade students can apply!

There are 21 books for this year’s battle. Read as many as you can. The top 5 readers (highest AR scores + most number of books read) will be chosen to represent M.M. Pierce at our competition in April.

However... if you read at least 8 of the books (1 from each category and one additional) and pass the AR test with an 80% or higher, we’ll invite you to come cheer on our team at the competition (and have lunch at Grioli’s!)
Sweep

For nearly a century, Victorian London relied on "climbing boys"—orphans owned by chimney sweeps—to clean flues and protect homes from fire. The work was hard, thankless and brutally dangerous. Eleven-year-old Nan Sparrow is quite possibly the best climber who ever lived—and a girl. With her wits and will, she’s managed to beat the deadly odds time and time again. But when Nan gets stuck in a deadly chimney fire, she fears her time has come. Instead, she wakes to find herself in an abandoned attic. And she is not alone. Huddled in the corner is a mysterious creature—a golem—made from ash and coal. This is the creature that saved her from the fire. *Sweep* is the story of a girl and her monster. Together, these two outcasts carve out a life together—saving one another in the process.

*From Goodreads.com*
Dead End in Norvelt

Melding the entirely true and the wildly fictional, *Dead End in Norvelt* is a novel about an incredible two months for a kid named Jack Gantos, whose plans for vacation excitement are shot down when he is "grounded for life" by his feuding parents, and whose nose spews bad blood at every little shock he gets.

But plenty of excitement (and shocks) are coming Jack's way once his mom loans him out to help a feisty old neighbor with a most unusual chore—typewriting obituaries filled with stories about the people who founded his Utopian town. As one obituary leads to another, Jack is launched on a strange adventure involving molten wax, Eleanor Roosevelt, twisted promises, a homemade airplane, Girl Scout cookies, a man on a trike, a dancing plague, voices from the past, Hells Angels . . . and possibly murder.

Endlessly surprising, this sly, sharp-edged narrative is the author at his very best, making readers laugh out loud at the most unexpected things in a dead-funny depiction of growing up in a slightly off-kilter place where the past is present, the present is confusing, and the future is completely up in the air.

*From Goodreads.com*

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*Dead End in Norvelt* is the winner of the 2012 Newbery Medal for the year's best contribution to children's literature and the Scott O'Dell Award for Historical Fiction!
Full of Beans

Grown-ups lie. That’s one truth Beans knows for sure. He and his gang know how to spot a whopper a mile away, because they are the savviest bunch of barefoot conchs (that means “locals”) in all of Key West. Not that Beans really minds; it’s 1934, the middle of the Great Depression. With no jobs on the island, and no money anywhere, who can really blame the grown-ups for telling a few tales? Besides, Beans isn’t anyone’s fool. In fact, he has plans. Big plans. And the consequences might surprise even Beans himself.
Although Mitsi Kashino and her family are swept up in the wave of anti-Japanese sentiment following the attack on Pearl Harbor, Mitsi never expects to lose her home—or her beloved dog, Dash. But, as World War II rages and people of Japanese descent are forced into incarceration camps, Mitsi is separated from Dash, her classmates, and life as she knows it. The camp is a crowded and unfamiliar place, whose dusty floors, seemingly endless lines, and barbed wire fences begin to unravel the strong Kashino family ties. With the help of a friendly neighbor back home, Mitsi remains connected to Dash in spite of the hard times, holding on to the hope that the war will end soon and life will return to normal. Though they've lost their home, will the Kashino family also lose their sense of family? And will Mitsi and Dash ever be reunited?

From Goodreads.com
In an evocative and fast-paced adventure on the high seas and on a faraway island, an orphan boy named Peter and his mysterious new friend, Molly, overcome bands of pirates and thieves in their quest to keep a fantastical secret safe and save the world from evil. Best-selling authors Dave Barry and Ridley Pearson have turned back the clock to reveal the wonderful story that precedes J. M. Barrie’s beloved Peter Pan. Peter and the Starcatchers is brimming with richly developed characters, from the scary but somehow familiar Black Stache and ferocious Mister Grin to the sweet but sophisticated Molly and fearless Peter. Page after page of riveting adventures take readers of all ages on a voyage from a filthy, crime-ridden port in old England across the turbulent sea. Aboard the Neverland is a trunk that hold the “greatest treasure on earth” — but is it gold, jewels, or something far more mysterious and dangerous?

From Goodreads.com
Gregor the Overlander

This irresistible first novel tells the story of a quiet boy who embarks on a dangerous quest in order to fulfill his destiny—and find his father—in a strange world beneath New York City.

When Gregor falls through a grate in the laundry room of his apartment building, he hurtles into the dark Underland, where spiders, rats, cockroaches coexist uneasily with humans. This world is on the brink of war, and Gregor's arrival is no accident. A prophecy foretells that Gregor has a role to play in the Underland's uncertain future. Gregor wants no part of it -- until he realizes it's the only way to solve the mystery of his father's disappearance. Reluctantly, Gregor embarks on a dangerous adventure that will change both him and the Underland forever.

From Goodreads.com
Bob

It’s been five years since Livy and her family have visited Livy’s grandmother in Australia. Now that she’s back, Livy has the feeling she’s forgotten something really, really important about Gran’s house.

It turns out she’s right.

Bob, a short, greenish creature dressed in a chicken suit, didn’t forget Livy, or her promise. He’s been waiting five years for her to come back, hiding in a closet like she told him to. He can’t remember who—or what—he is, where he came from, or if he even has a family. But five years ago Livy promised she would help him find his way back home. Now it’s time to keep that promise.

Clue by clue, Livy and Bob will unravel the mystery of where Bob comes from, and discover the kind of magic that lasts forever.

Wendy Mass and Rebecca Stead, two masterminds of classic, middle-grade fiction come together to craft this magical story about the enduring power of friendship.

From Goodreads.com
The Wild Robot Escapes

Shipwrecked on a remote, wild island, Robot Roz learned from the unwelcoming animal inhabitants and adapted to her surroundings--but can she survive the challenges of the civilized world and find her way home to Brightbill and the island?

*From Goodreads.com*
Escape from Mr. Lemoncello's Library

Kyle Keeley is the class clown, popular with most kids, (if not the teachers), and an ardent fan of all games: board games, word games, and particularly video games. His hero, Luigi Lemoncello, the most notorious and creative gamemaker in the world, just so happens to be the genius behind the building of the new town library.

Lucky Kyle wins a coveted spot to be one of the first 12 kids in the library for an overnight of fun, food, and lots and lots of games. But when morning comes, the doors remain locked. Kyle and the other winners must solve every clue and every secret puzzle to find the hidden escape route. And the stakes are very high.

In this cross between Charlie and the Chocolate Factory and A Night in the Museum, Agatha Award winner Chris Grabenstein uses rib-tickling humor to create the perfect tale for his quirky characters. Old fans and new readers will become enthralled with the crafty twists and turns of this ultimate library experience.

From Goodreads.com
Holes

Stanley tries to dig up the truth in this inventive and darkly humorous tale of crime and punishment—and redemption.

Stanley Yelnats is under a curse. A curse that began with his no-good-dirty-rotten-pig-stealing-great-great-grandfather and has since followed generations of Yelnats. Now Stanley has been unjustly sent to a boys' detention center, Camp Green Lake, where the warden makes the boys "build character" by spending all day, every day, digging holes: five feet wide and five feet deep. It doesn't take long for Stanley to realize there's more than character improvement going on at Camp Green Lake. The boys are digging holes because the warden is looking for something. Stanley tries to dig up the truth in this inventive and darkly humorous tale of crime and punishment—and redemption.

From Goodreads.com
A House with a Clock in its Walls

Mystery/Suspense
Floors

The Whippet Hotel is a strange place full of strange and mysterious people. Each floor has its own quirks and secrets. Leo should know most of them – he is the maintenance man's son, after all. But a whole lot more mystery gets thrown his way when a series of cryptic boxes are left for him . . . boxes that lead him to hidden floors, strange puzzles, and unexpected alliances. Leo had better be quick on his feet, because the fate of the building he loves is at stake . . . and so is Leo's own future!

From Goodreads.com
All the Lovely Bad Ones

Travis and his sister, Corey, can't resist a good trick. When they learn that their grandmother's quiet Vermont inn, where they're spending the summer, has a history of ghost sightings, they decide to do a little haunting of their own. Before long, their supernatural pranks have tourists flocking to the inn, and business booms. But Travis and Corey soon find out that they aren't the only ghosts at Fox Hill Inn. Their thoughtless games have awakened something dangerous, something that should have stayed asleep. Restless, spiteful spirits swarm the inn, while a dark and terrifying presence stalks the halls and the old oak grove on the inn's grounds. Only Travis and Corey can lay to rest the ghosts they've stirred. This means discovering the secret of Fox Hill and the horrors visited on its inhabitants years before... Once again, Mary Downing Hahn has created a chilling and gripping ghost story in the tradition of The Old Willis Place, Witch Catcher, and Deep and Dark and Dangerous.

From Goodreads.com
Because of Mr. Terupt

It’s the start of fifth grade for seven kids at Snow Hill School. There’s . . . Jessica, the new girl, smart and perceptive, who’s having a hard time fitting in; Alexia, a bully, your friend one second, your enemy the next; Peter, class prankster and troublemaker; Luke, the brain; Danielle, who never stands up for herself; shy Anna, whose home situation makes her an outcast; and Jeffrey, who hates school.

Only Mr. Terupt, their new and energetic teacher, seems to know how to deal with them all. He makes the classroom a fun place, even if he doesn’t let them get away with much . . . until the snowy winter day when an accident changes everything—and everyone.

From Goodreads.com
Rain Reign

Rose Howard has Asperger’s syndrome, and an obsession with homonyms (even her name is a homonym). She gave her dog Rain a name with two homonyms (Reign, Rein), which, according to Rose’s rules of homonyms, is very special. Rain was a lost dog Rose’s father brought home. Rose and Rain are practically inseparable. And they are often home alone, as Rose’s father spends most evenings at a bar, and doesn’t have much patience for his special-needs daughter.

Just as a storm hits town, Rain goes missing. Rose’s father shouldn’t have let Rain out. Now Rose has to find her dog, even if it means leaving her routines and safe places to search. Rose will find Rain, but so will Rain’s original owners.

*From Goodreads.com*
Merci Suarez knew that sixth grade would be different, but she had no idea just how different. For starters, Merci has never been like the other kids at her private school in Florida, because she and her older brother, Roli, are scholarship students. They don’t have a big house or a fancy boat, and they have to do extra community service to make up for their free tuition. So when bossy Edna Santos sets her sights on the new boy who happens to be Merci’s school-assigned Sunshine Buddy, Merci becomes the target of Edna’s jealousy. Things aren’t going well at home, either: Merci’s grandfather and most trusted ally, Lolo, has been acting strangely lately — forgetting important things, falling from his bike, and getting angry over nothing. No one in her family will tell Merci what’s going on, so she’s left to her own worries, while also feeling all on her own at school. In a coming-of-age tale full of humor and wisdom, award-winning author Meg Medina gets to the heart of the confusion and constant change that defines middle school — and the steadfast connection that defines family.

From Goodreads.com
Front Desk

Mia Tang has a lot of secrets.

Number 1: She lives in a motel, not a big house. Every day, while her immigrant parents clean the rooms, ten-year-old Mia manages the front desk of the Calivista Motel and tends to its guests.

Number 2: Her parents hide immigrants. And if the mean motel owner, Mr. Yao, finds out they've been letting them stay in the empty rooms for free, the Tangs will be doomed.

Number 3: She wants to be a writer. But how can she when her mom thinks she should stick to math because English is not her first language?

It will take all of Mia's courage, kindness, and hard work to get through this year. Will she be able to hold on to her job, help the immigrants and guests, escape Mr. Yao, and go for her dreams?

From Goodreads.com
City of Ember

Many hundreds of years ago, the city of Ember was created by the Builders to contain everything needed for human survival. It worked...but now the storerooms are almost out of food, crops are blighted, corruption is spreading through the city and worst of all—the lights are failing. Soon Ember could be engulfed by darkness...

But when two children, Lina and Doon, discover fragments of an ancient parchment, they begin to wonder if there could be a way out of Ember. Can they decipher the words from long ago and find a new future for everyone? Will the people of Ember listen to them?

*From Goodreads.com*
Running Out of Time

Jessie lives with her family in the frontier village of Clifton, Indiana. When diphtheria strikes the village and the children of Clifton start dying, Jessie's mother sends her on a dangerous mission to bring back help. But beyond the walls of Clifton, Jessie discovers a world even more alien and threatening than she could have imagined, and soon she finds her own life in jeopardy. Can she get help before the children of Clifton, and Jessie herself, run out of time?

From Goodreads.com
After their home burns down, fourteen-year-old Nick, his younger brother, and their father move into a ramshackle Victorian house they've inherited. When Nick opens the door to his attic room, he's hit in the head by a toaster. That's just the beginning of his weird experiences with the old junk stored up there. After getting rid of the odd antiques in a garage sale, Nick befriends some local kids—Mitch, Caitlin, and Vincent—and they discover that all of the objects have extraordinary properties. What's more, Nick figures out that the attic is a strange magnetic vortex, which attracts all sorts of trouble. It's as if the attic itself has an intelligence . . . and a purpose.

Ultimately Nick learns that the genius Nikola Tesla placed the items—his last inventions—in the attic as part of a larger plan that he mathematically predicted. Nick and his new friends must retrieve everything that was sold at the garage sale and keep it safe. But the task is fraught with peril—in addition to the dangers inherent in Tesla's mysterious and powerful creations, a secret society of physicists, the Accelerati, is determined to stop Nick and alter destiny to achieve its own devious ends. It's a lot for a guy to handle, especially when he'd much rather fly under the radar as the new kid in town.

*From Goodreads.com*
The Mysterious Benedict Society

"Are you a gifted child looking for special opportunities?"

Dozens of children respond to this peculiar ad in the newspaper and are then put through a series of mind-bending tests, which readers take along with them. Only four children—two boys and two girls—succeed. Their challenge: to go on a secret mission that only the most intelligent and inventive children could complete. To accomplish it they will have to go undercover at the Learning Institute for the Very Enlightened, where the only rule is that there are no rules. But what they’ll find in the hidden underground tunnels of the school is more than your average school supplies. So, if you’re gifted, creative, or happen to know Morse Code, they could probably use your help.

From Goodreads.com
Sooo... will you join our team?

See Mrs. Allen after class for your permission form!