

IBA 2023: SLIDESHOW NOTES

Slide 1 School Library Association's Information Book Award

Slide 2 What's it all about?

Images of the shortlisted books grouped according to the three age categories (0-7; 8-12; and 13-16). Narrowed down from over 150 titles submitted by different publishers. This is the eleventh year of the award.

Slide 3 Who decides?

When introducing the award to older students point out how judging an award is different from choosing a suitable book for a research task, even though some of the criteria will be the same.

When choosing for a research task, you will be looking for the most relevant and helpful book(s) available – one(s) that will answer the particular questions you have in mind.

Slide 4 Criteria

Pause here to ask the students what they will be looking for.

Slide 5 How does the book look?

When talking about how a book looks with young children take the opportunity to check that they are familiar with the vocabulary we use when talking about books – such as endpapers or typeface, for example.

You can't always judge a book by its cover, but it is important, and particularly for booksellers, who depend on attracting customers. The look of a book is a form of marketing.

Does the inside live up to the promise of the cover? The design, layout, illustrations and typeface might influence a potential reader's feelings about whether they want to read the book or not.

Slide 6 How is the information organised?

The use of 'navigational' features which help the reader to locate information quickly, for example. Or the layout of each 'double-page spread' – almost all of the shortlisted books are organised this way.

Slide 7 How well is the book written?

This relates to the readability of the text. The vocabulary and sentence structure will determine how readable the text is.

The tone of the writing could be engaging or off-putting! Some non-fiction writing is relatively neutral or matter-of-fact in tone, some is funny and engaging, while some might be too academic-sounding. Some writing asks questions to make the reader think. Does the style of writing suit the intended audience? Something for older students to consider if they are judging books shortlisted for a younger category. Design elements, such as the size of print or background colour, could affect readability.

Slide 8 Appeal of the subject?

The danger here is that children and young people could fall into the trap of being too subjective. When judging something you need to try and avoid personal opinions and be objective. But recognising the possible appeal of the subject for a friend or teacher – being able to match the book to the reader – is a great skill to develop.

Would potential readers choose this book to read for personal interest or pleasure. An opportunity here to talk about and promote reading information books for pleasure, as an alternative to fiction or curriculum-based research.

The blurb or introduction also has the potential to draw the reader into the book. And familiarity with an author can also promote an interest in reading other books by them.

Slide 9 Reliability and accuracy of the information?

Check that your group or class are aware of where to look for the date of publication. This is particularly useful when comparing several books on the same subject, and particularly if they are about a subject area that is constantly changing, such as science or geography.

Is there any evidence of the author's subject knowledge or expertise? Have consultants, advisors or fact-checkers been used. This is usually mentioned on the imprint page where all the other bibliographic details are listed (publisher, date, ISBN etc.).

Slide 10 Originality?

If it's a book that is about a subject that is popular and already well catered for, does it stand out in some way by taking a new approach or bringing new information and ideas to the topic. Or does it simply fill a gap, by focusing on a new area of knowledge or one that is not very well covered?

A good opportunity to encourage pupils to review the library's stock, by using the catalogue or browsing the shelves.

Slide 11 Discussing the books

This is something that a panel of judges will do to reach a consensus of opinion about the winner(s). This involves being able to listen to other people's opinions, as well as being able to express your own, and will probably involve an element of compromise. All useful skills to develop.

Slide 12 One final question

Deciding which book to buy for the school library is of course very different from deciding which one you would buy for yourself! Once again, it's to do with being objective, taking into consideration the books that the library already has, and the interests and needs of the students who will use the book.

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INFORMATION
Book Award
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