



shadow judging



BOOK OF THE YEAR AWARDS

2025

“ I **loved** being able to **talk to my friends** about the book I have **read and hear** what they have to say about them. Sometimes I get **a really different perspective** and have to **think again** about the books and the characters in a different way. I like that.”

(Caitlin, The Geelong College, VIC)

[SHADOWJUDGING.CBCA.ORG.AU](https://shadowjudging.cbca.org.au)



## JOIN US & BE PART OF GROWING A READING CULTURE

Fostering young readers' opinions and engagement  
through the illumination of children's literature

### WHAT IS IT?

The CBCA Shadow Judging the Book of the Year Awards is a national program where young people read 6 shortlisted books from one of the CBCA Book of the Year Award categories (not new Illustrator), discuss, respond, and vote for their choice of winner.

Shadow Judges use the same Book of Year criteria to guide discussion as used by our Expert Judges. This process is supported with resources and each group can avail themselves of further support from your local Branch.

### WHY SHOULD YOU BE PART OF THIS PROGRAM?

Shadow judging is one way to **foster reading for pleasure** which can help to engage and empower young people to become lifelong readers. The program helps them to imagine, think critically and creatively— and provides a new nationwide platform to embed young voices into the literary awards conversation.

### DID YOU KNOW?

Children who experience an author visit are more likely to enjoy reading widely and consider in greater depth the books they read. We recommend groups invite an author or illustrator to share their expertise with a Shadow Judging group. Connecting young people, books and creatives is a powerful addition to the program.

Schools, libraries, bookshops, parents, grandparents or carers can facilitate a Shadow Judging reading group.



# BENEFITS OF THE PROGRAM

## READERS ARE SUPPORTED TO:

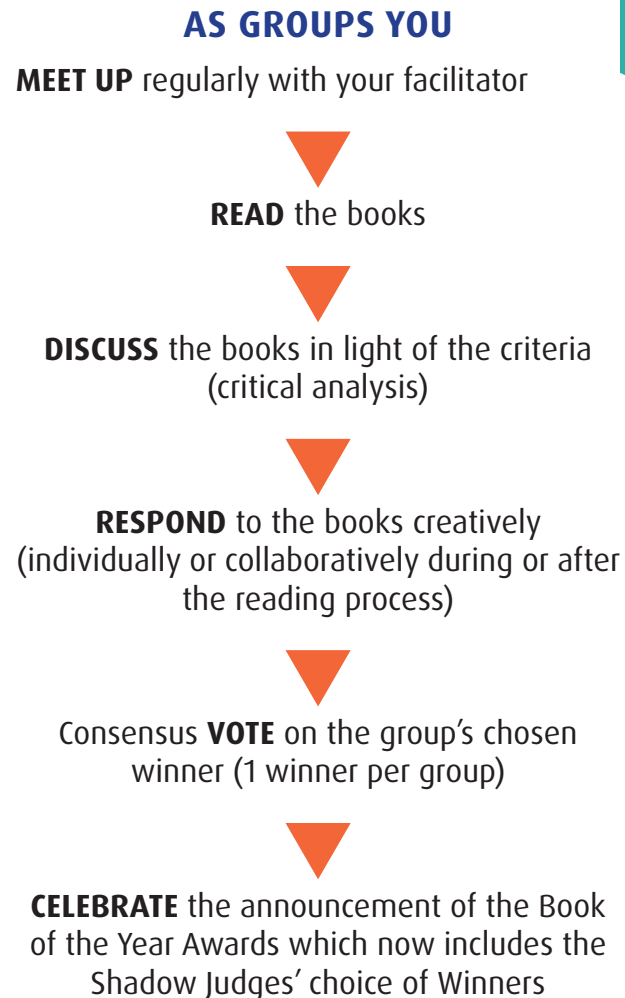
- > build personal literary appreciation as they are immersed in the language that describes literary techniques
- > are encouraged to imagine, think critically and respond creatively
- > develop a greater self-concept, empathy and awareness of diverse opinions
- > increase their reading repertoire (read more broadly)
- > absorb culture in a community/social context by sharing the experience
- > experience a sense of belonging & agency while sharing stories

## HOW TO PREPARE

1. Review the Notables Books and choose one appropriate category
2. REGISTER via the Shadow Judging Website \$50, decide on group NAME
3. Plan and organise your book group
4. Order your books and start as soon as you can after the Shortlist is announced. Older Readers and Younger Readers groups require time to read the 6 shortlisted books

If you would like to participate and need additional financial support, please contact your state CBCA Branch. Many branches offer funding or part-funding for groups who are disadvantaged by regional location or socio-economic circumstances.

# A BASIC GUIDE SHADOW JUDGING





**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION  
WE ARE HERE TO HELP, SO CONTACT US  
[SHADOWJUDGING.CBCA.ORG.AU](https://shadowjudging.cbca.org.au)**

## **IMPORTANT DATES**

### **2025**

REGISTRATIONS OPEN **FEBRUARY 10**

CBCA 'NIGHT OF THE NOTABLES' **FEBRUARY 25**

WEBINAR FOR FACILITATORS, OR THOSE WANTING TO FIND  
OUT MORE INFORMATION **MARCH 13**

CBCA BOOK OF THE YEAR SHORTLIST **MARCH 25**

SHADOW JUDGES CAN START JUDGING FROM **MARCH 25**

REGISTRATION OF A GROUP CLOSES **JUNE 16**

VOTING CLOSSES **AUGUST 1**

WINNERS ANNOUNCED AT  
CBCA BOOK OF THE YEAR AWARDS CEREMONY  
NATIONAL LIBRARY, CANBERRA

**AUGUST 15**