



shadow judging



BOOK OF THE YEAR AWARDS

2025

FACILITATOR GUIDE

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

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

80
years
THE CHILDREN'S
BOOK COUNCIL
OF AUSTRALIA
1945-2025





The CBCA Shadow Judging program invites young people to read, discuss and respond to the shortlisted books for the CBCA Book of the Year Awards. **As a facilitator, your role is to guide and support a group of young readers through this exciting process.**

GETTING STARTED

1. Register as a Facilitator: Visit the CBCA Shadow Judging Book of the Year Awards website and Register. <https://shadowjudging.cbca.org.au/register/>

You will need to input:

- your name and your Group name
- your contact details
- nominate the category your group would like to judge e.g., Older Readers, Younger Readers, Early Childhood, Picture Book, Eve Pownall; (The Notables are announced on Tuesday February 25 which can assist you choosing a category ahead of the Shortlist announcement on March 25)
- nominate Branch membership details (yes/no)
- pay registration fee of \$50 per group
- multiple groups can be registered at the same time, but need a different group name.

2. Familiarise yourself with the program: Review the timeline, program details, criteria, and resources available on the CBCA Shadow Judging website.

ON MARCH 13th there will be a zoom webinar open to all registered or interested potential facilitators so you can hear from experienced facilitators and your Shadow Judging National Subcommittee (contact your local branch for details or watch the CBCA Facebook page for details).

3. Organise Your Group:

- Gather a group of young readers
- Ensure an inviting space for meetings
- Organise purchase of shortlisted books for your chosen category or ensure they are available from your library
- Download Reading Journals from the Resources on the program's website (once the Shortlist is announced)



GROUP MEETINGS

- 1. Introduce** the CBCA Shadow Judging the Book of the Year Awards program and explain the goals and activities.
- 2. The Criteria:** Discuss the criteria (from the Resources page) and learn how to critically think about a book against the criteria (the same criteria used by our Expert Judges) e.g. You could use a known book to introduce the criteria prior to actual commencement of reading your SL books (The Notables list also offers choices).
- 3. Reading Schedule:** Create a timeline to ensure participants stay on task and (or 'have time to read') read all six shortlisted books.

4. Discussion Sessions: Facilitate discussions about the books, focusing on themes, characters, plot, literary language, and the judging criteria.

5. Creative Responses: Encourage participants to respond creatively to the books (e.g., artwork, reviews, fan fiction) at any time during the program. This is the part of the program that allows reader choice, develops creative thinking and can build collaboration.

6. Voting: By August 1st, guide the group through the voting process to come to a consensus according to the criteria to nominate their category winner and not just their favourite.

7. The facilitator must **upload their winner** on to the Shadow Judging website.

8. Celebrate all the winners of the CBCA BOOK OF THE YEAR AWARDS by viewing the winning announcement on August 15 at noon. Check to see if your state branch has a celebration event or hold one yourself.

RESOURCES AND SUPPORT

- CBCA Website: Use the resources and support available on the CBCA Shadow Judging website.

Branch Members participating in the program have (6 months) free access to SORA (Older & Younger Readers) or STORYBOX LIBRARY (Early Childhood, Picture Book, Eve Pownall)

- State/Territory CBCA Branch: Connect with your local CBCA branch for additional support.
- Newsletters: arrives fortnightly in your inbox. We would love groups to

contribute photos, reflections and any interesting stories.

- Completion Certificates: Download certificates and distribute to participants in a celebratory manner once the program is complete.

TIPS FOR FACILITATORS

- **Engage Young Readers:** Encourage active participation and ensure all voices are heard. Where possible let the group run itself. Be the guide on the side. (Some suggestions on next pages.)
- **Be Flexible:** Adapt the program to suit the needs and interests of your group.
- **Stay Organised:** Keep track of reading schedules, discussions, and creative responses.
- **Celebrate:** Celebrate the group's achievements and participation in the program.

Creator Visit: (optional)

In the past groups, groups that experienced a creator visit gained valuable learning and insight through the shared experience of hearing about the writing or illustration process. Creators have also reported the experience was mutually rewarding. Meeting the person behind the books can create a personal connection to the stories and characters. There may be funding available through your local CBCA Branch or community service club/ group/ council.

CONCLUSION

The CBCA Shadow Judging program is a fantastic opportunity to connect young readers with great literature and empower them to share their opinions and creativity. As a facilitator, you play a crucial role in making this experience enjoyable and enriching for everyone involved.

Enjoy the process and reach out through our email shadowjudging@cbca.org.au if you have any questions or require support.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION
WE ARE HERE TO HELP, SO CONTACT US**

SHADOWJUDGING.CBCA.ORG.AU