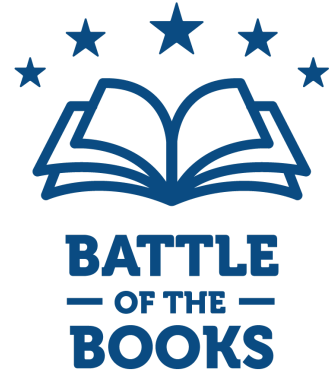




Youth Programs



Battle of the Books

for Middle School Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students

Rules and Guidelines

2026-2027 Competition Year

(New/changed information is highlighted in green)

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Battle of the Books is an annual competition sponsored by Gallaudet University through its Youth Programs office. For the 2026-2027 competition year, it consists of a Preliminary competition, a Playoff or Finals competition and a National Battle of the Books competition.

This Rules and Guidelines booklet governs the Gallaudet University Preliminary, Playoff/Finals, and National Battle of the Books competitions for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Middle School students (hereafter Battle of the Books). The Battle of the Books is currently entering its 15th year.

2. DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

There are three divisions in the competition. The divisions consist of students who read at the third/fourth grade levels (Bison), fifth/sixth grade levels (Blue), and the seventh and above levels (Buff). The division names are as follows:

Buff - one of Gallaudet's primary colors.

Blue - one of Gallaudet's primary colors.

Bison - named after Gallaudet's beloved mascot.

The Buff and Blue divisions will have three parts to their competition: a preliminary competition conducted through the use of Zoom video conferencing with schools within their divisions; a playoff competition conducted through the use of Zoom video conferencing with BOTB Librarians presiding; and finally a national competition at Gallaudet consisting of the top six Buff teams and the top six Blue teams.

The Bison division will have two parts to their competition: a preliminary competition conducted through the use of Zoom video conferencing with other schools within their division and a finals competition conducted through the use of Zoom video conferencing with BOTB Librarians presiding. Only the first place team of the Bison finals will be invited to Gallaudet to attend the national competition (to watch, not participate).

The objectives of the Battle of the Books are to:

- advocate for literacy amongst deaf and hard of hearing middle school students
- promote a spirit of academic competition and good sportsmanship
- encourage the development of critical thinking skills.

3. ELIGIBILITY

3A. School and Program Eligibility

The Gallaudet's Battle of the Books competition is open to teams of middle school students currently enrolled in recognized schools or programs for deaf and hard of hearing students in the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom. Recognized schools or programs may include residential schools, day schools, mainstream programs, or any other type of educational program

having middle-school-aged deaf or hard of hearing students. The Youth Programs office shall determine what constitutes “recognized schools or programs.”

The Youth Programs office will give special consideration to three scenarios.

1. When a single school or program does not have enough students to field its own Battle of the Books team, it may ask to assemble a team by combining students from one other school or program that is within reasonable proximity to itself. However, the majority of readers must hail from the requesting school/program and the additional reader(s) cannot be from another school/program that is already fielding their own Battle of the Books team. In the case of a school district, such as a city or county school system with multiple middle schools, district-wide teams may be assembled only when individual schools do not have enough students to field their own teams.

2. Other options are for a mainstreamed or home-schooled student to join the team of a local school or program for the deaf. The decision whether to allow external students to participate on the school’s team is solely based on the school’s discretion.

3. If a home-schooled or mainstreamed student is not able to join the team of a local school or program for the deaf, a team can be formed consisting of other home-schooled and/or mainstreamed students from a larger geographical area.

Written petitions for special consideration will be considered by the Youth Programs office. School and program eligibility decisions will be made on an annual basis. The Youth Programs office may contact individual schools or school districts to verify enrollment numbers.

3B. INDIVIDUAL ELIGIBILITY

All Battle of the Books participants must be deaf or hard of hearing. The Youth Programs office reserves the right to request verification from a school official of a member’s eligibility to play.

Battle of the Books participants must be in the fifth through eighth grades. Students in the fourth grade and below OR ninth grade and above are not eligible. Students who are taking both eighth grade and high school classes must be enrolled in the eighth grade for at least 50% of their classes.

A student’s eligibility for the Battle of the Books is limited to a total of four years, starting in the fifth grade and ending in the eighth grade. We encourage larger schools to use students from the sixth through eighth grades; for smaller schools, an understandable need may arise to use fifth graders in order to be able to field a team.

Note: When a student has played in a specific division (i.e. Blue), the student is not allowed to play in a lower division the following year (i.e. Blue in 2022 to Bison in 2023). Students are

allowed (and encouraged) to move up to a higher division from year to year as their reading comprehension skills increase.

3C. ACADEMIC ELIGIBILITY AND READER ELIGIBILITY

The Buff division is only for students who read at the seventh grade or above. Fifth grade students may participate as long as they are reading at the seventh grade or above.

The Blue division is for students who read at the fifth and sixth grade levels.

The Bison division is for students who read at the third and fourth grade levels.

To determine the appropriate reading division for your students, the following list includes examples of assessment tools that schools may choose to use: NWEA (MAP) test results, Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA), state standardized test results, etc. See below for a helpful graphic breakdown showing what assessment results need to be met for each division:

READING ASSESSMENT RESULTS CHART										
GRADE LEVEL	DIVISION	GUIDED READING LEVEL	LEXILE LEVEL	DRA LEVELS: INDEPENDENT	FOUNTAS & PINNEL LEVEL	NWEA/MAP RIT LEVEL	STAR (UNIFIED)	STAR (ENTERPRISE)	READING A-Z	IRLA
Grade 3	Bison	-	520L-820L	-	M	186-195	865-1035	176-567	Q	white
		N		30	N				R	
		O		34	O				S	
		P		38	P				T	
Grade 4	Bison	-	740L-940L	40	P	196-203	914-1071	271-703	-	black
		Q			Q				U	
		R			R				V	
		S			S				W	
Grade 5	Blue	-	830L-1010L	50	S	204-209	950-1110	347-908	-	orange
		T			T				X	
		U			U				Y	
		V			V				Z	
Grade 6	Blue	-	925L-1120L	60	V	210-213	984-1143	429-1124	Z ¹	purple
		W			W					
		X			X					
		Y			Y					
Grade 7	Buff	Z	970L-1120L	70	Y	214-217	1004-1172	477-1278	Z ²	1 - Bronze
					Z					
Grade 8	Buff	Z	1010L-1185L	80	Z	218-235	1024-1194	534-1327	-	2 - Bronze

For the Blue division only, the Youth Programs office will send a Google Form for chaperones to fill out with each participant's reading assessment scores in order to ensure that the readers on the Blue team are appropriately placed. More information will be shared with Blue division chaperones following registration.

Schools also have full discretion in deciding appropriate consequences for behavior-related issues, academic probation, academic suspension, or the equivalent that occurs at their schools with their readers. The Youth Programs office has no control over what a school decides in

relation to behavior or academic-related issues that occur at the school. Chaperones are to communicate with the Youth Programs office if a reader is removed from a team after the chaperone has submitted the team's registration.

3D. ELIGIBILITY FOR NATIONAL COMPETITION

All Battle of the Books Chaperones must choose the final team roster that consists of readers who can participate in the National competition. If a school knowingly chooses readers to compete during Playoffs who will be unable to go to the National competition, the school's standing for that year's competition will not be recognized and the Youth Programs office reserves the right to suspend the school from the following year's competition.

If one of the 6 Nationals-bound teams needs to be replaced, the team with the next highest score earned during the Playoffs will be invited to the National competition.

Reader Replacement Policy

If a team loses a reader prior to the National competition, the chaperone must notify the Battle of the Books Coordinator immediately. The team's first course of action is to replace the reader with its designated alternate reader. If no alternate reader is available, the school may select a replacement reader, provided that the replacement will have sufficient time to read the required books before the competition. If a suitable replacement cannot be found by either method, the team will be permitted to attend Nationals with two readers, but will automatically become ineligible for team awards; individual readers will remain eligible for individual awards.

If a team loses two readers prior to the National competition, the team is ineligible to attend Nationals and will be replaced by another qualifying team.

If Gallaudet has already made travel arrangements for a reader prior to notification of a replacement, under Section 7A, the school will be responsible for reimbursing Gallaudet for those existing bookings and covering the cost of any new travel arrangements required for the replacement reader.

4. REGISTRATION, FEES, AND NUMBER OF READERS

Every fall, the Youth Programs office will provide information about registration to schools and programs across the nation. Registration takes place online through the Youth Programs website. Registration for the 2026-2027 competition will end on Friday, September 18, 2026 at 6:00 p.m. Eastern Time.

All participating schools for the Bison division will be expected to pay a \$100 registration fee to help offset Battle of the Books operating costs.

All participating schools for the Buff and Blue divisions will be expected to pay a \$250 registration fee. The higher fee for the Buff and Blue divisions helps offset the travel, lodging,

meal expenses for a larger number of teams coming to the National competition from this division, and other operating costs. If a school fields a team in both the Buff and Blue divisions, the school will need to pay \$250 per team.

The registration fee is waived for schools or programs entering the competition for the first time or after a hiatus of at least 5 years. Schools or programs may apply for a registration fee reduction or waiver if they cannot make the full team payment due to budgetary constraints or similar reasoning. All requests for registration fee reductions/waivers must be made to the Youth Programs office by Friday, October 23, 2026.

A late fee of \$100 will be applied to any school that does not submit the required registration fee by Monday, November 2, 2026. Please note that all registration fees are non-refundable, regardless of whether a team later withdraws from the competition.

There will be no maximum number of teams for any of the three divisions. Schools can register up to three teams (one per reading division). All registered schools are welcome to participate in the competition.

The Youth Programs office will send each registered team an email acknowledging their registration. Any follow-up correspondence will be sent by email.

There is no maximum number of readers for each team, but the suggested maximum is nine readers (in order to play 3 students in each of the three Preliminary matches). The minimum number of readers for each team is three readers. For schools that have more than three readers, the school decides at its own discretion how to use those readers in Preliminary matches. Schools may decide not to use all of their available readers if they feel some readers have not shown enough commitment to reading the books.

If the school advances to the Playoffs, the school must decide which final three readers they will use in the Playoff matches. Those three readers will become the same readers that will compete in the National competition.

Alternate Reader Policy

Teams may designate one alternate reader in case a reader needs to be replaced. The alternate reader may practice with the team up until the National competition. The alternate reader may only be used to fully replace another team member, not as a substitute who is swapped in and out during matches. Once the alternate reader takes the place of a team member, that replacement is permanent for the remainder of the competition and the remainder of the season.

Teams must submit final rosters of all students and chaperones online on or before Friday, October 23, 2026. Any roster changes after that date must be approved by the Youth Programs office.

5. DESIGNATED CHAPERONE

Each team must have at least one chaperone. If a team advances to the national competition, Gallaudet Youth Programs will allow a second chaperone (they will need to register due to liability reasons) to accompany the team at the school's expense (air/ground transportation, meals, and lodging). The school or program must designate one chaperone as the primary contact person for each division.

The Chaperone's role is to:

- prepare the team for the competition and make decisions about roster changes;
- rally, and support the team during breaks between chapters and matches;
- determine the order in which readers sit and answer questions during Chapter Two;
- demonstrate and instill the same moral virtues we expect from the readers including honesty, fairness, and respect;
- provide a safe environment for the readers, without any stigmas in place
 - For instance, chaperones do not make inappropriate comments to their readers that may display various -isms including sexism, racism, etc.

During the two-minute break between chapters, chaperones may rally, and support their teams. At all other times during a match, chaperones must watch their teams from their assigned seating.

If your school sends two chaperones to Nationals and the two chaperones are not of the same gender, chaperones will be paired with a chaperone of the same gender from a different team for lodging purposes.

Chaperones are responsible for their teams at ALL times and are expected to remain at the competition site throughout the entire competition. In the event of an emergency, or if there is a specific need to leave the site for a brief time (for example, to obtain medical supplies), please speak directly with the Youth Programs office staff on-site to inform them of the situation prior to leaving the competition site. At least one of the chaperones must remain with the team members at all times.

6. CHAPERONE GUIDELINES

The Battle of the Books program is designed to be largely student-led and students will be expected to facilitate their own discussions about the assigned books and develop their own study materials. The Chaperone role is simply to guide and support these students on their journey. What a Chaperone can and cannot do is tiered depending on the division. Chaperones

for a Bison division team will be able to offer more support and guidance, Blue division teams can have moderate support, and then Buff division teams will be largely independent. Chaperones will be required to sign a participation contract online.

Bison Division:

A list of what Bison Division Chaperones CAN do:

- 1) Guide students in establishing a framework for when to read/how much to read. For instance: helping to break down the books into smaller sections to be read before each team meeting, encouraging them to assign a specific span of time to complete reading one book before starting the next one, etc.
- 2) Help students schedule regular practice meetings to prepare for the competition and provide space/set up online meetings for them to be able to meet.
- 3) Help support students by reading ONE of the four assigned books along with them (clarification: chaperones are not to sign these books out loud for their readers) and then help in developing practice questions and facilitating group discussions for that same ONE book (students will be expected to read, develop practice questions and discuss the other three books without support from the chaperone).
- 4) Develop a maximum of three practice Final Chapter questions for ONE of the four assigned books (this must be from the same book chosen for the aforementioned point #3) and work with students on presenting strong answers using those three questions only.
- 5) Answer any contextual questions or elaborate on historical events if it will support their understanding of the book.
- 6) Help students prepare for the competition by explaining the rules and the competition format. Communicate with Gallaudet's Youth Programs office to ensure registration and so forth.
- 7) Set up a mock competition or a tryouts competition in which students read non-BOTB books and participate in a tryouts test of sorts in which similar rules or a similar competition format is used.
- 8) Give definitions for vocabulary words that students struggle with from their assigned books.
- 9) Help students prepare for the Final Chapter by showing the Final Chapter video created by the Youth Programs Office.
- 10) Help players practice for the Final Chapter presentation by holding a mock competition using questions from a non-BOTB book.
- 11) Provide copies of the BOTB Study Guide packet sent by the Youth Programs office.
- 12) Work on logistics for the Preliminary matches by working with other schools to ensure a working Zoom connection for match days.

A list of what Bison Division Chaperones CAN'T do:

- 1) Answer any questions a student might have about the books if they can look up the answer in the book themselves (ex: What was the name of the city that character visited in the book?)
- 2) Mandate the development of possible questions by the team (this **MUST** be done on their own by their own accord)
- 3) Facilitate discussion of all four books (Chaperones can choose only **ONE** book to help facilitate discussions for)
- 4) Find websites or other materials relating to the book and share them with the team
- 5) Read/sign the books to their students (students are expected to read the books independently)

Blue Division:

A list of what Blue Division Chaperones **CAN** do:

- 1) Guide students in establishing a framework for when to read/how much to read. For instance: helping to break down the books into smaller sections to be read before each team meeting, encouraging them to assign a specific span of time to complete reading one book before starting the next one, etc.
- 2) Help students schedule regular practice meetings to prepare for the competition and provide space/set up online meetings for them to be able to meet.
- 3) Help students prepare for the competition by explaining the rules and the competition format. A video by the Youth Programs office will be sent to registered teams explaining the rules and guidelines.
- 4) Communicate with Gallaudet's Youth Programs office to ensure registration and so forth.
- 5) Set up a mock competition or a tryouts competition in which students read non-BOTB books and participate in a tryouts test of sorts in which similar rules or a similar competition format is used.
- 6) Give definitions for vocabulary words that students struggle with from their assigned books.
- 7) Encourage students to develop questions for the books (cannot mandate it).
- 8) Help students prepare for the Playoff and National competitions by showing the Final Chapter video created by the Youth Programs Office.
- 9) Help players practice for the Final Chapter presentation by holding a mock competition using questions from a non-BOTB book.
- 10) Provide copies of the BOTB Study Guide packet sent by the Youth Programs office.
- 11) Work on logistics for the Preliminary matches by working with other schools to ensure a working Zoom connection for match days.

A list of what Blue Division Chaperones **CAN'T** do:

- 1) Answer any questions a student might have about a book except when students request a definition of a word.
- 2) Help develop practice questions relating to the assigned books.

- 3) Mandate the development of possible questions by the team (this MUST be done on their own by their own accord).
- 4) Facilitate discussion of the books.
- 6) Find websites or other materials relating to the book and share them with the team.
- 7) Read/sign the books to their students (students are expected to read the books independently)

Buff Division:

A list of what Buff Division Chaperones CAN do:

- 1) Help students prepare for the competition by explaining the rules and the competition format. A video by the Youth Programs office will be sent to registered teams explaining the rules and guidelines.
- 2) Communicate with Gallaudet's Youth Programs office to ensure registration and so forth.
- 3) Set up a mock competition or a tryouts competition in which students read non-BOTB books and participate in a tryouts test of sorts in which similar rules or a similar competition format is used.
- 4) Give definitions for vocabulary words that students struggle with from their assigned books.
- 5) Encourage students to set up a timeline and/or develop questions for the books (cannot mandate it).
- 6) Help students prepare for the Playoff and National competitions by showing the Final Chapter video created by the Youth Programs Office.
- 7) Help players practice for the Final Chapter presentation by holding a mock competition using questions from a non-BOTB book.
- 8) Provide copies of the BOTB Study Guide packet sent by the Youth Programs office.
- 9) Provide space/set up online meetings and help the team schedule practice sessions (cannot be mandated).
- 10) Work on logistics for the Preliminary matches by working with other schools to ensure a working Zoom connection for match days.

A list of what Buff Division Chaperones CAN'T do:

- 1) Answer any questions a student might have about a book except when students request a definition of a word.
- 2) Help develop practice questions relating to the assigned books.
- 3) Mandate the development of possible questions by the team (this MUST be done on their own by their own accord).
- 4) Develop a timeline for students to read the books (i.e. mandating that students read Chapters 1 through 10 of a book by a given date).
- 5) Facilitate discussion of the books.
- 8) Find websites or other materials relating to the book and share them with the team.

- 9) Read/sign the books to their students (students are expected to read the books independently)

If it is discovered that a Chaperone has violated one of the above guidelines, the team will be disqualified from the current competition and may be suspended for the following year. Parents and other school officials are also asked to maintain the integrity of the competition by adhering to the same guidelines given to the chaperones.

During the Preliminary, Playoff/Finals, and the National competitions, Chaperones must watch their teams during matches, incommunicado. Chaperones may advise, support, and counsel their teams either before or after the match or during the two-minute breaks, but they cannot talk about the content of the books.

7. NATIONAL COMPETITION TEAMS

The top six teams from the Buff Division and the top six teams from the Blue Division will receive an all-expenses-paid* trip to Gallaudet University to participate in the Battle of the Books National competition. In addition, the first-place winner of the Bison Division Finals will also be invited to attend Nationals with all major expenses covered.

Gallaudet University will provide funding for travel, lodging, and meals for three student readers and one chaperone from each qualifying team. This includes transportation during the competition period, lodging accommodations, and all meals from dinner on the day of arrival through breakfast on the day of departure. Meals during travel and any meals outside the official competition period are the responsibility of the team.

One chaperone per team will be covered by Gallaudet. If a school sends two qualifying teams, travel and accommodations for two chaperones—one per team—will be covered. Schools that wish to send a second chaperone with a single team may do so at their own expense. In this case, the school is responsible for purchasing the additional chaperone's airfare. Youth Programs will still arrange all lodging, meals, and transportation during the competition for the additional chaperone, and the school will be billed for those costs after Nationals conclude.

The second chaperone is permitted to stay at the Kellogg Hotel with the team, eat with the team, participate in team discussions, sit with the team during matches, and wear team apparel alongside the primary chaperone.

Each team may bring up to three student readers and two chaperones (one funded by Gallaudet, one at the school's expense). No additional students or adults may attend Nationals. If additional students accompany the team for any reason, they must be supervised by their own chaperone(s) provided by the school. The team's designated chaperone may not also supervise additional students. Schools are fully responsible for making travel, lodging, and meal arrangements for these individuals.

Students who are not official members of a qualifying team may not take part in team meals, off-campus social events, or other official activities. They may not sit with the team during matches or wear team apparel at any time, whether at the competition or elsewhere. Gallaudet University assumes no liability for anyone beyond the designated student readers and chaperones for each team.

*For international teams that qualify for Nationals, Gallaudet will provide funding for airfare up to a maximum of \$630 per person. Any costs beyond this amount must be covered by the school.

7A. TRAVEL CANCELLATION REIMBURSEMENT POLICY

In the event that a reader or chaperone is unable to participate in the National Competition or still attends but requires cancellation of any portion of their booked travel after travel arrangements have been booked by Gallaudet Youth Programs, the participating school shall be fully responsible for reimbursing Gallaudet Youth Programs for any non-refundable or non-transferable flight costs incurred. This obligation applies regardless of whether the cancellation pertains to the entire round-trip itinerary or to only one leg of the scheduled travel.

This policy shall apply under all circumstances, including but not limited to personal circumstances, administrative decisions, changes in school staffing, or alternative travel arrangements made independently of Gallaudet Youth Programs. Reimbursement shall be required whether the cancellation results in a full withdrawal from the National competition or a modification to previously arranged travel.

Consideration for waiver of reimbursement may be made solely at the discretion of Gallaudet Youth Programs and only in cases involving verified medical emergencies or other extenuating circumstances, as determined by Gallaudet Youth Programs.

To mitigate avoidable costs, participating schools are strongly encouraged to communicate any potential changes to travel needs or personnel as early as possible and prior to the booking of travel arrangements.

Reimbursement must be made in full within thirty (30) calendar days of the invoice date. Failure to comply with this policy may affect the school's eligibility to participate in future Gallaudet Youth Programs programs and events.

8. TEAM ATTIRE AND PLAYER ILLNESS

All Battle of the Books readers and chaperones shall keep in mind that they represent their school at all times, and be conscious of how they present themselves to other Battle of the Books participants and the general public. As such, readers and chaperones shall wear appropriate and coordinated school or team apparel during the Preliminary, Playoff, and National competitions. Schools are responsible for the cost of the team apparel. At a minimum, tops should include the

school name and may include the school or team logo or other design. Any use of the Gallaudet University Youth Programs or Battle of the Books logo on team apparel must be pre-approved by the Youth Programs office.

The Youth Programs office reserves the right to review team apparel before and during the competition and to request that members of a team change to appropriate attire if necessary.

Barring sudden illness or other emergencies, all readers are expected to remain in the competition room for the entire match. Emergency bathroom breaks are excepted and can take place during the two-minute breaks.

If a reader is sick and misses school on the day of the Preliminary competition, this does not disqualify them from being eligible for one of the final three spots on the team if their team advances to the Playoffs. If your Preliminary team only has three registered readers, and one is out due to illness on the day of the Preliminary matches, your team can still participate in the Preliminaries with two readers and will still be considered eligible for the Playoffs (assuming the third reader will return to the team before Playoffs/Finals).

If a reader on a Playoff team with only three registered readers cannot make it due to illness during a match, we will give that team a 1-point default for that reader's answer during the Final Chapter. If there are two or more readers on a Playoffs team unable to show up for the match and rescheduling is not a possible option, the team automatically forfeits the match.

9. ACCESSIBILITY ACCOMMODATIONS

For the Preliminary and Playoffs/Finals portion of the competition, if any accommodations are needed for readers, it will be the responsibility of the participating school to provide those accommodations—the only exception being for PowerPoint adaptations, which the Youth Programs will readily accommodate.

For the National competition, advance notification of all accessibility accommodations is required by Friday, February 5, 2027 to allow appropriate accommodations to be made, and to ensure that the accommodation does not give any individual or team an advantage over any other individual or team. If a school requests accommodations after the deadline, the accommodations may not be provided.

Interpreters – Readers may request interpreters to help during introductions and objections, Final Chapter presentation answers, and other special circumstances. Interpreters can also be used to facilitate team discussions between readers, if needed. Because the competition questions are presented in both ASL and written English, interpreters cannot be used during the actual showing of questions and answers.

Vision and Perception - A reader may request accommodations for a visual or perceptual impairment: for example, the need for a font style, size, or color change, a background color or

intensity changes, close-vision monitor, and so on. An interpreter may also sit next to the student to help facilitate communication if needed.

Fidget Toy/Stress Ball: A reader can bring their fidget toy or stress ball to assist with remaining focused during a match. This fidget toy and stress ball must be visually and auditorily non-distracting and used by the reader below the table. Readers must communicate with the BOTB Librarian before the match if they intend to use a fidget toy or stress ball. The Youth Programs office reserves the right to review fidget toys and stress balls before and during the competition and to request that the reader remove or replace toys/balls if necessary.

Other Additional Disabilities - A reader may request accommodations for any other additional disability: for example, a reader who uses a wheelchair may need to play all matches in a convenient location during Nationals.

10. MATCH FORMAT

10A. Rounds and Number of Questions

Preliminary Match Format

Each match shall consist of two rounds, designated Chapter One and Chapter Two. The two rounds are played consecutively, with a two-minute break in between.

Bison Division:

- Chapter 1 will consist of 9 Multiple Choice, Short Answer, and True or False questions for which team members will be allowed to discuss amongst each other before submitting the answers.
- Chapter 2 will consist of 9 Multiple Choice, Short Answer, and True or False questions for which team members will be allowed to discuss amongst each other before submitting the answers.

Buff and Blue Divisions:

- Chapter 1 will consist of 12 Multiple Choice, Short Answer, and True or False questions for which team members will be allowed to discuss amongst each other before submitting the answers.
- Chapter 2 will consist of 12 Multiple Choice, Short Answer, and True or False questions for which team members will be allowed to discuss amongst each other before submitting the answers.

Playoffs Match Format

Each match shall consist of three chapters, designated Chapter One, Chapter Two, and the Final Chapter. All three rounds are played consecutively, with two-minute breaks in between.

Bison Division:

- Chapter 1 will consist of Multiple Choice, Short Answer, and True or False questions for which team members will be allowed to discuss amongst each other before submitting the answers. In the Quarterfinals and Semifinals there will be 9 questions, in the Championship match there will be 12 questions.
- Chapter 2 will consist of Multiple Choice, Short Answer, and True or False questions for which individual team members will take turns answering. They will not be allowed to discuss amongst each other before submitting the answers. In the Quarterfinals and Semifinals there will be 9 questions, in the Championship match there will be 12 questions.
- The Final Chapter will consist of 3 Presentation-Style questions for which team members will take turns giving answers. Each of the three readers will answer one question with no help from their teammates. The three questions will be shown right before the Final Chapter begins so that teammates can assign themselves one of the three questions. Each team will be given some time to choose which question they want to answer after these questions are shown for the first time. Once the team agrees on who will answer which of the three questions, each reader can expect their chosen question to be shown once more for the reader to view right before their presentation.

Blue and Buff Divisions:

- Chapter 1 will consist of 12 Multiple Choice, Short Answer, and True or False questions for which team members will be allowed to discuss amongst each other before submitting the answers.
- Chapter 2 will consist of 12 Multiple Choice, Short Answer, and True or False questions for which individual team members will take turns answering. They will not be allowed to discuss amongst each other before submitting the answers.
- The Final Chapter will consist of 3 Presentation-Style questions for which team members will take turns giving answers. Each of the three readers will answer one question with no help from their teammates. The three questions will be shown right before the Final Chapter begins so that teammates can assign themselves one of the three questions. Each team will be given some time to choose which question they want to answer after the questions are shown for the first time. Once the team agrees on who will answer which of the three questions, each reader can expect their chosen question to be shown once more for the reader to view right before their presentation.

Nationals Match Format

Each match shall consist of three rounds, designated Chapter One, Chapter Two, and the Final Chapter. All three rounds are played consecutively, with two-minute breaks in between.

- Chapter 1 will consist of 6 Multiple Choice, Short Answer, and True or False questions for which team members will be allowed to discuss amongst each other before submitting the answers. *Note: In the Quarterfinals and Semifinals the number of questions will increase to 9 and in the Championship match it will increase again to 12.*

- Chapter 2 will consist of 6 Multiple Choice, Short Answer, and True or False questions for which individual team members will take turns answering. They will not be allowed to discuss amongst each other before submitting the answers. *Note: In the Quarterfinals and Semifinals the number of questions will increase to 9 and in the Championship match it will increase again to 12.*
- The Final Chapter will consist of 3 Presentation-Style questions for which team members will take turns giving answers. Each of the three readers must answer one question with no help from their teammates. The three questions will be shown right before the Final Chapter begins so that teammates can assign themselves one of the three questions. Each team will be given some time to choose which question they want to answer after the questions are shown for the first time. Once the team agrees on who will answer which of the three questions, each reader can expect their chosen question to be shown once more for the reader to view right before their presentation.

10B. QUESTION DISTRIBUTION AND SCORING

Chapters One and Two

Multiple Choice, Short Answer, and True or False questions will be used for these chapters. For the Preliminary and Playoff matches, questions will be drawn from all three of the assigned Preliminary books in no particular number or order. For the national competition, questions will be drawn from all four of the assigned Nationals books. Each correct answer in Chapter One and Two is worth 2 points.

For the **Bison** division, the maximum number of points that can be earned in each of the first two chapters of the Preliminary matches are 18 points, a perfect score for the entire match will be 36.

For the **Blue and Buff divisions**, the maximum number of points that can be earned in each of the first two chapters of the Preliminary matches is 24, a perfect score for the entire match will be 48.

For the **Bison Finals** competition, the maximum number of points that can be earned in the:

- Quarterfinals is 51 (18+18+15)
- Semifinals is 51 (18+18+15)
- Championship is 63 (24+24+15)

For the **Blue and Buff Playoffs**, the maximum number of points that can be earned in each of the first two chapters of the Playoff match is 24, and the maximum number of points that can be earned in the Final Chapter is 15. A perfect score for the entire Playoff match will be 63.

Nationals Round Robin:

For the National round robin play, the maximum number of points that can be earned in each Chapter One and Chapter Two is 12 points, a perfect score for the entire match will be 39.

Nationals Tournament Bracket:

For the Blue and Buff National competition, the maximum number of points that can be earned in the:

- Quarterfinals is 51 (18+18+15)
- Semifinals is 51 (18+18+15)
- Championship is 63 (24+24+15)

An example of a Multiple Choice question is:

Question: What happened to Andrea after she snapped at Penny for calling her a ‘friend’?

- a) Reverie melted away and she was back home
- b) The Sandman showed up and took her away
- c) Margaret Grace walked in and took her ticket away
- d) Penny forced her into a nightmare tent

Answer: a.) Reverie melted away and she was back home (pgs. 74-75)

Book: The Circus of Stolen Dreams by Lorelai Savaryn

An example of a Short Answer question is:

Question: Deb’s grandparents’ house didn’t have electricity or running water, so when Deb’s grandma asked her to get water for the family, what would Deb do?

Answer: She would haul water from the village well; she would fill two buckets with water and carry them back home (pg. 12)

Book: She Persisted: Deb Haaland by Laurel Goodluck

Note: During the Playoffs, Finals, and Nationals matches, the BOTB Librarian will determine whether the written short answers are accepted or not. During the Preliminaries, the BOTB Coordinator will determine whether disputed answers will be accepted or not.

An example of a True or False question is:

True or False: Ruby and Liam were supposed to be project partners in social studies, but Liam was scared to talk to Ruby, so he did the whole project alone.

Answer: False; Liam got switched to a different class before they could work on it (pgs. 43, 59)

Book: Ruby Lost and Found by Christina Li

Note: For True or False answers in Chapter One and Two, any “false” answer will be accompanied by an explanation on the answer slide. The explanation is not a required part of the answer, but provided for the benefit of the readers and audience members.

Final Chapter (for Playoff, Finals, and National matches only)

Presentation-Style questions will be used for this chapter. Questions will be drawn from all three of the assigned books (four books for the national competition teams). Right before the Final Chapter starts, teams will be shown the three questions then they will need to assign a reader to each of the three questions. For an example, see below:

- 1) *What Lane?*- What were some of the ways that Dan helped Stephen after noticing he was being treated differently because he was Black? Name events from the book to support your answer. (James)
- 2) *This Light Between Us*- Pick one of the following soldiers from the 442nd Regiment and explain using examples from the book why you think they were one of the most impressive: Mutt, Teddy, or Alex. (Rosalie)
- 3) *The Distance Between Us*- Compare Reyna’s life when she was living in Mexico and when she was living in the United States. Which place do you think was better for Reyna to grow up in? Use evidence from the book to support your answer. (Estella)

Readers will be asked a question, then given up to two minutes to write notes AND answer the question presentation-style. The Gallaudet Librarians will score the answers on a scale of 0 to 5 points. The maximum number of cumulative points that can be earned in this round is 15 points.

11. COMPETITION FORMATS

11A. PRELIMINARY COMPETITION FORMAT

During the Preliminary portion of the competition, the Youth Programs office will schedule the matches each team will play. Teams will play three matches against selected teams and no wins/losses will be recorded. Instead, each team’s point totals will be recorded in order to determine which teams will advance to the Playoffs.

The **Bison** division will play all of its round robin Preliminary matches on Tuesday, November 3, 2025. Participating teams will be expected to excuse their players from school on this day in order to be able to play in all three matches. Parents and school community members are welcome to watch the matches.

The **Buff** division will play all of its round robin Preliminary matches on Wednesday, November 4, 2025. Participating teams will be expected to excuse their players from school on this day in order to be able to play in all three matches. Parents and school community members are welcome to watch the matches.

The **Blue** division will play all of its round robin Preliminary matches on Thursday, November 5, 2025. Participating teams will be expected to excuse their players from school on this day in order to be able to play in all three matches. Parents and school community members are welcome to watch the matches.

Each school **MUST** have the latest version of PowerPoint in order to show the Match PowerPoints. Each school **MUST** also have Zoom conferencing capabilities in order to participate (a Zoom Pro membership is strongly encouraged). A room at the school or program must be designated as the competition room for the assigned day and times for the participating team. If an interpreter is needed, the participating school will provide one.

Fans and school officials are welcome to watch the matches, but they must in no way interfere with the match, including discussion of the questions and answers. The entire team must be visible when on Zoom with the other school/program. Readers should be seated at a table with a school banner that is taped on the front of the table or on a backdrop in a visible manner.

Google Drive links will be used to send the files that each school will need in order to participate in the Preliminary matches. A practice match will also be shared in advance of the competition for schools to test their equipment with. Each school's chaperone will be sent links to all three Preliminary matches the day before the Preliminary competition begins to download in advance. The school cannot open the file until one hour before the match begins via Zoom conferencing with the other school. The school will need to set up a laptop or a laptop-projector/smart TV/smartboard connection to show the match to the team. A separate laptop or laptop-projector/smart TV/smartboard connection will be needed to connect via Zoom to the opposing team. The chaperone will then work with the other chaperone during each of the round robin matches to go through the match together with teams playing each question at the same time. Both chaperones will judge both teams' answers with disputed answers being sent to Gallaudet's head BOTB Librarian.

All questions in the Match PowerPoints will be signed in ASL using video clips with the English translation appearing on screen as well.

Preliminary Chapters One and Two

Multiple Choice, Short Answer, and True or False questions will be shown on the screen in both ASL and written English. After the signer has stopped signing the question, all teams will be given 30 seconds to discuss and submit an answer. All answers are to be written on a white board and shown to the chaperones. A timer will be on the PowerPoint and the answer must be submitted by the team before time expires. If a reader has written an answer and has taken their pen off the whiteboard before time has expired, the answer can be submitted. If a team is still arguing over which answer to submit and time has expired, the team will not be given a chance to submit an answer. The chaperones will determine whether the answer is acceptable or not. If there is a dispute, the chaperone of the team with the disputed answer will take a picture of the answer

and send it to the Head BOTB Librarian at Gallaudet. A decision on the disputed answer(s) will then be given to both chaperones after a review.

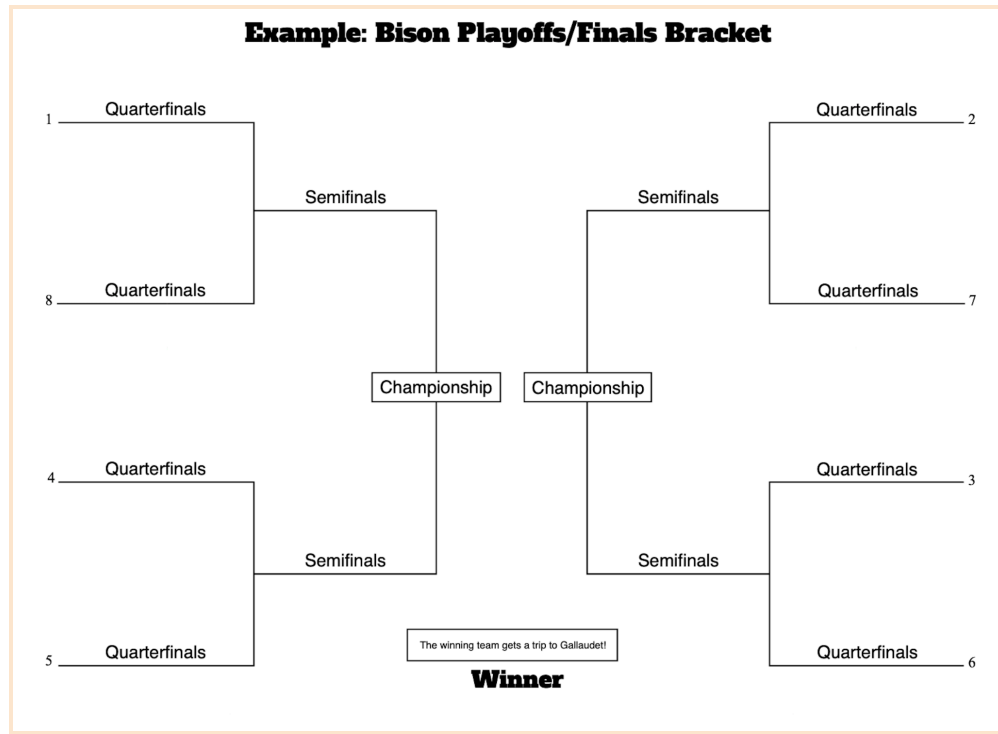
Preliminary Competition Format

At the end of each Preliminary match, the chaperones will then confirm their teams' total points with each other. Once all participating teams have completed their Round Robin matches, the top 12 teams for the Buff division, the top 16 teams for the Blue division, and the top eight teams for the Bison division will be announced via email (the number of Blue and Buff teams may change depending on the number of teams that register for each Division), the Battle of the Books website, and on the Gallaudet University Youth Programs' social media platforms.

11B. PLAYOFFS COMPETITION FORMAT

The top 12 teams from the Buff division will have one match in front of the BOTB Librarians via Zoom conferencing. The top six scoring teams from the Buff Playoffs will then be invited to the national competition at Gallaudet. The top 16 teams from the Blue division will have one match in front of the BOTB Librarians via Zoom conferencing. The top six scoring teams from the Blue Playoffs will then be invited to the national competition at Gallaudet. Again, we reserve the right to change the number of teams eligible for the playoffs in each division based on the number of teams that register.

The top eight teams from the Bison division will compete in the Finals tournament bracket. The bracket will open with the Quarterfinals match, those that win will advance into the Semifinals and subsequently, teams that lose will be eliminated from the competition. This will continue until one final Bison division team is named the Championship team. These matches will take place via Zoom conferencing. The winner of the Bison division Finals will be invited to watch the National competition at Gallaudet University.



Playoffs Chapter One and Two

Multiple Choice, Short Answer, and True or False questions will be shown on the screen in both ASL and written English. Teams will be given time to answer the question (30 seconds for Bison, Blue, and Buff) and the timer will start after the signer has stopped signing the question. All answers are to be written on a white board or blank paper and shown to the BOTB Librarian. An answer must be submitted by the team before time expires. If a reader has written an answer and has taken his/her pen off the whiteboard before time has expired, the answer can be submitted. If a team is still trying to determine which answer to submit and time has expired, the team will not be given a chance to submit an answer. Gallaudet's BOTB Librarians will determine whether the answer is acceptable or not.

Chapter One will continue to be a team discussion round while Chapter Two will be an individual round in which players take turns answering the questions.

Playoffs Final Round

Presentation-Style questions will be shown on the screen in both ASL and written English. Each reader will be given up to two minutes to give a presentation-style answer to the BOTB Librarian. The BOTB Librarian will then award points on a 0-5 scale for each answer.

Playoffs Confidentiality Agreement

All participating Playoff teams and spectators are expected to sign a confidentiality agreement in order to protect the integrity of the Playoff competition. Chaperones are responsible for ensuring that each individual present in the competition room reads and understands the terms

of the confidentiality agreement prior to signing. Players, chaperones, school officials, and fans who are in the room during the Playoff match are not to share any information about the questions and answers with anyone who was not present during the match, nor are they to share their score in any manner, including on social media, until after their respective playoff period is complete. Sharing scores outside of the competition room will be considered a violation of the confidentiality agreement. Any violation of the confidentiality agreement will be grounds for immediate disqualification from the competition.

11C. NATIONAL COMPETITION FORMAT

During the National competition, the six Buff and Blue teams will first compete in a round robin competition format. Each team will compete in turn against every other team. Teams can expect to play five matches. The setup will be similar to the Preliminary competition except with two teams in the same room.

The procedures for Round One and Two of the National competition matches will be exactly the same as the Playoffs portion of the competition.

During the Final Chapter, one player from each team will take turns answering presentation-style. While one player is giving his/her answer, the player from the other team will not be present so that no player gains an unfair advantage by watching someone else answer the same question. All other aspects of the Final Chapter from the Playoffs portion will remain the same during the National competition.

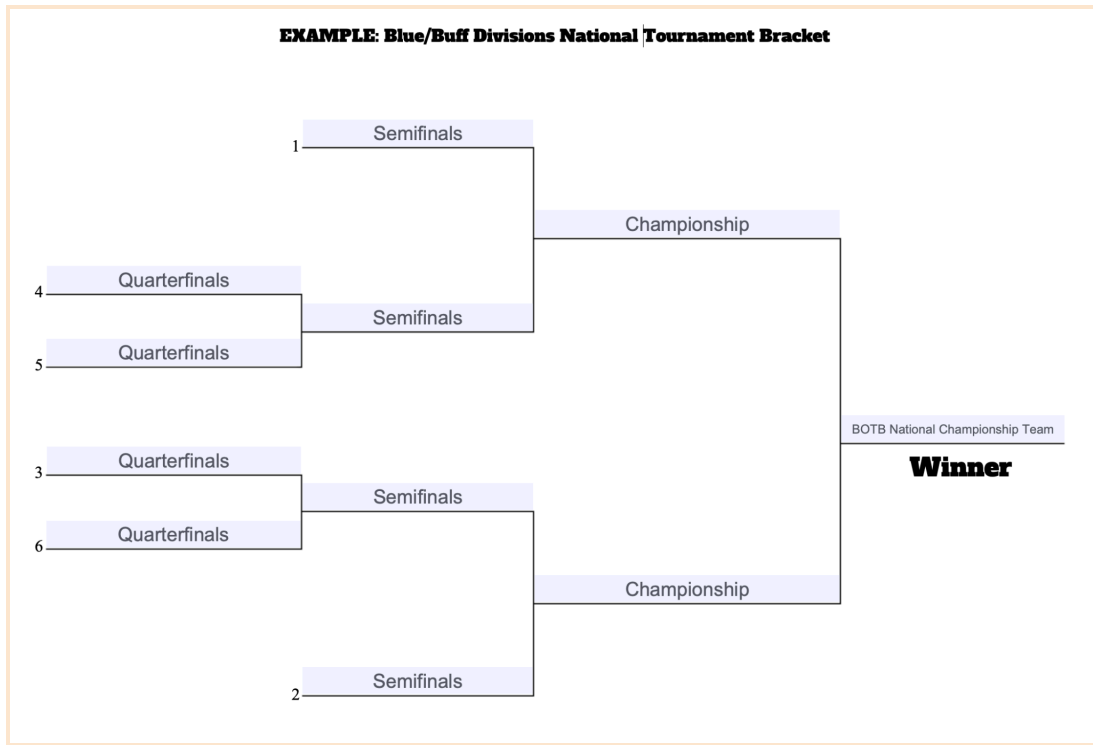
National Tournament Bracket:

On the first day of the National competition, we will have the six Blue and Buff teams play round robin matches against the other teams in their division. We will record win and loss results during the round robin matches. The teams' records will determine their seeding for the next day's tournament bracket.

The #1 and #2 teams will advance directly into the Semifinals round. For the Quarterfinals round:

- the #3 team will play the #6 team
- the #4 team will play the #5 team

The winners of the Quarterfinals round will advance to the Semifinals round. The winners of the Semifinals round will advance to the Championship match. The Third Place and Fourth Place teams will be determined by the points earned by the losing teams in the Semifinals matches.



12. RULES DURING MATCHES

Chapters One and Two

- A. All answers must be written on a dry erase board or blank paper and shown to the chaperones/BOTB Librarians.
- B. Answers that are communicated to the BOTB Librarians in a way other than writing will not be accepted.
- C. Once the dry erase board/paper has been given to the proctor and has left the reader's or a team's hands, the answer is considered final and may not be taken back for corrections or additions by any reader at any time.
- D. Changes, strikeouts, and corrections must be clear. If changes make the answer ambiguous or illegible, the BOTB Librarians will rule it incorrect. If there is any writing on the dry erase board/paper that is not relevant to the answer, it must be marked out so the BOTB Librarians do not have to guess at which answer is intended. Players are encouraged to circle the correct written answer so the BOTB Librarians can clearly distinguish the final answer.
- E. While this is not a handwriting competition, answers must be written legibly. Legibility is at the discretion of the BOTB Librarians, objections on handwriting will not be considered.
- F. Answers that are not proper nouns need not be capitalized and will be accepted with or without capitals. All proper nouns must be correctly capitalized (i.e. Holden Caulfield, London, etc.) For proper nouns, full names are not required. However, if you include the

full name, spelling must be correct for both the first AND last name. If more than one character in the book (i.e., Ron or Fred Weasley) shares the same last name, the first name will be a required part of the answer.

- G. All character names **MUST** be spelled correctly and capitalized.
- H. For the Bison and Blue division players, spelling should be as accurate as possible for all non-proper noun answers. Buff division players must spell all key parts of the answer correctly.

Final Chapter

- A. When a player is giving his/her presentation-style answer, the other players on the team may not communicate in any way with the player giving the answer.
- B. If a player uses spoken English to voice an objection or give his Final Chapter answer, an ASL interpreter, provided by Gallaudet University, will be used to ensure that the BOTB Librarians can understand the player. Interpreters will be instructed to interpret the answer word for word and include any vocal representations of uncertainty or “stalling” (i.e., “umm”).

13. COMPETITION STANDINGS

13A. PRELIMINARY COMPETITION STANDINGS

The 12* teams in the **Buff** division with the highest point totals after the completion of their round robin matches will be invited to the Playoffs. There will be no wins and losses in the competition.

The 16* teams in the **Blue** division with the highest point totals after the completion of their round robin matches will be invited to the Playoffs. There will be no wins and losses in the competition.

The 8 teams in the **Bison** division with the highest point totals after the completion of their round robin matches will be invited to the Playoffs. There will be no wins and losses in the competition.

*We reserve the right to change the number of teams eligible for the playoffs in each division based on the number of teams that register.

If there is a tie between two teams (or more) in any division, the Youth Programs office will resolve it using the following steps, in order:

Step 1: The Tiebreaker

The Youth Programs office will look at which of the two tied teams earned the highest score in the Tiebreaker. All teams will be expected to complete the Tiebreaker at the close of Volume 3, (the Tiebreaker will be built into the end of Volume 3's match PowerPoint and points earned during the Tiebreaker will not count towards the total score for Volume 3).

The Tiebreaker will consist of 5 team discussion questions. The winner of the Tiebreaker will be the team that earns the highest score.

Step 2: First Correct Answer

If the tied teams earn the same score in the Tiebreaker, we will look at which team was first to answer a question correctly that the other team(s) did not. That team wins the tiebreaker.

Example:

Tiebreaker Question 1
-Team A: correct
-Team B: correct
Tiebreaker Question 2
-Team A: correct
-Team B: correct
Tiebreaker Question 3
-Team A: incorrect
-Team B: incorrect
Tiebreaker Question 4
-Team A: incorrect
-Team B: correct
Tiebreaker Question 5
-Team A: correct
-Team B: incorrect

Both teams earned 6 points, but Team B won the Tiebreaker as they answered correctly when Team A did not on Question #4

Step 3: Cumulative Volume Scores

If Step 2 still doesn't break the tie, we will add up the scores earned by all teams within the division for each match: Volume 1, Volume 2, and Volume 3, separately.

The volume with the lowest cumulative division score is considered the most challenging volume and will be used as the tiebreaker. Of the tied teams, the higher ranking goes to the team that scored higher in that volume.

If the tied teams are still tied after comparing the hardest volume, the next-hardest volume (by the same lowest-cumulative-score logic) will be compared, and so on, until the tie is broken.

13B. PLAYOFFS COMPETITION STANDINGS

All of the teams in the **Buff and Blue Playoffs** will have at least one match in front of the BOTB Librarians in the Playoffs. The top six teams from each division will then be invited to the national competition. If there is a tie between two teams in either division, we will look at the total number

of points earned in the Final Chapter by each of the tied teams. If this does not break the tie, we will look at which team amassed the most points in Chapter Two alone. The team that has the highest combined score for Chapter Two will win the tie. If both teams scored the same number of points in Chapter Two, then we will conduct a Tiebreaker. We will contact the teams who are tied for another match via Zoom. The Tiebreaker will consist of 5 questions. These five Tiebreaker questions will be team discussion questions. The winner of the Tiebreaker will be the team that earns the highest score in the Tiebreaker. If both teams earned the same final score, we will then look at the first team to get a question right that the other team didn't. *(Refer to 13a for an example of a Tiebreaker procedure)*

All of the teams in the **Bison Finals** will have at least one match vs an opposing team with BOTB Librarians presiding. Bison division teams will complete the Finals bracket to determine a Bison Division championship team. If there is a tie between two teams in the Bison division during a head-to-head match, then we will conduct a Tiebreaker. The Tiebreaker will consist of 5 questions. These five Tiebreaker questions will be team discussion questions. The winner of the Tiebreaker will be the team that earns the highest score.

If both teams earned the same final score, we will then look at the first team to get a question right that the other team didn't. *(Refer to 13a, Step 2: First Correct Answer)*

While Bison division teams are expected to play their matches concurrently with the opposing team during the Finals; in rare extenuating circumstances (that must first be approved by the Battle of the Books coordinator) that this is not possible and teams play at separate times and their matches result in a tie, we will break the tie by looking at the total number of points earned in the Final Chapter by each of the tied teams. If this does not break the tie, we will look at which team amassed the most points in Chapter Two alone. The team that has the highest combined score for Chapter Two will win the tie. If both teams scored the same number of points in Chapter Two, then we will conduct a Tiebreaker. We will contact the teams who are tied for another match via Zoom. The Tiebreaker will consist of 5 questions. These five Tiebreaker questions will be team discussion questions. The winner of the Tiebreaker will be the team that earns the highest score in the Tiebreaker. If both teams earned the same final score, we will then look at the first team to get a question right that the other team didn't. *(Refer to 13a, Step 2: First Correct Answer)*

13C. NATIONAL COMPETITION STANDINGS

The six teams in the Buff and Blue divisions will play round robin matches against teams in the same division (each team can expect to play 5 matches). The teams will then be seeded for the tournament bracket based on their win and loss records during the round robin matches. When two or more teams within a division have the same won-lost record, the following formulas are applied to determine their final standing and which teams are seeded higher for the tournament bracket.

When calculating point differential for the purpose of breaking a multi-team tie, the final recorded score of each match shall be used, inclusive of any points earned during a tiebreaker procedure.

If a match between two teams within the tie was itself decided by a tiebreaker, the score resulting from that tiebreaker shall be treated as the official final score of the match for all differential calculations.

Two Teams

Two-way ties in the standings are broken by looking at head-to-head competition between the two teams involved. The team that wins its competition against the other team is awarded the higher place in the standings.

Three Teams

If one team beats the other two teams in the three-way tie, then that team is awarded a higher place in the standings. To settle the tie between the remaining two teams in the three-way tie, refer to the above procedure for a two-way tie. For a three-way tie in the standings among teams A, B, and C, each having won the same number of matches, the point difference of each team versus each other team in the tie is compared and added or subtracted:

	<u>TEAM A</u>	<u>TEAM B</u>	<u>TEAM C</u>
	A: 31 vs. B: 51	B: 55 vs. C: 65	C: 42. vs. A: 47
DIFFERENCE	-20 pts.	-10 pts.	-5 pts.

	<u>TEAM A</u>	<u>TEAM B</u>	<u>TEAM C</u>
	A: 47 vs. C: 42	B: 51 vs. A: 31	C: 65 vs. B: 55
DIFFERENCE	+5 pts.	+20 pts	+10 pts

	<u>TEAM A</u>	<u>TEAM B</u>	<u>TEAM C</u>
TOTAL DIFFERENCE	-15 pts.	+10 pts	+5 pts

Team B wins this tiebreaker by having the largest positive point difference. If two teams are to advance from this tiebreaker, then Teams B and C advance, with Team B finishing higher in the standings than Team C.

Four Teams

If one team beats the other three teams in the four-way tie, then that team is awarded a higher place in the standings. To settle the tie between the remaining three teams in the four-way tie, refer to the above procedure for a three-way tie. For a four-way tie in the standings among teams A, B, C, and D, the first step would be to look at who has won the most matches amongst the four teams. For example

Team A record vs. Teams B, C, D: 2-1
Team B record vs. Teams A, C, D: 2-1
Team C record vs. Teams A, B, D: 1-2
Team D record vs. Teams A, B, C: 1-2

Teams A and B would be the top two teams in this scenario. To determine the higher placing team between Team A and B, we would then look at the head-to-head result between the two teams. If Team A defeated Team B, then Team A would be the higher-placed team. If three out of the four teams are to advance, then Team A and B would advance automatically, and the head-to-head result between Team C and Team D would determine the third team to advance.

Five (or more) Teams

If the tiebreak procedure for five or more teams happens, it will be determined by the Youth Programs office on-site.

If any teams are tied after the first tiebreaker level, the second tiebreaker level will consider the total number of points earned by each tied team during all Round Robin Matches. The highest cumulative point total will break the tie.

Determination of Third and Fourth Place

Third and fourth place at the National level shall be determined by the scores earned by the two losing semifinal teams. The team with the higher semifinal score shall be awarded third place, and the team with the lower semifinal score shall be awarded fourth place.

In the event that the two teams' semifinal scores are equal, the team's cumulative score across all rounds of the National tournament shall serve as the tiebreaker, with the higher cumulative score determining third place.

14. TIMEOUTS AND OBJECTIONS

There are no timeouts during the Battle of the Books matches.

Objections to a question, or its official answer, may be made only by readers competing in the match in question.

Examples of common objections that will be considered by the BOTB Librarian include:

1. A proper noun was spelled wrong and the BOTB Librarian mistakenly accepted it.
2. A proper noun was capitalized incorrectly and the BOTB Librarian mistakenly accepted it.

3. A reader feels an answer could be accepted as an alternative answer.

Objections from room staff, members of the audience, or other persons are not permitted under any circumstances.

Objections must be related to the questions and answers, not to the match procedures or room environment/technology. Those types of issues need to be brought to the attention of the moderator immediately. Some examples of situations that are not objections but need attention immediately: 1. equipment failures; 2. room lighting, ventilation, or other environmental factors; or 3. blocked views.

Objections by members of the teams competing in the match must be filed before the next question is played or before a timeout is called. Retrospective or *post hoc* objections will not be accepted.

A reader may object to a question or answer by raising their hand and saying “Objection.” The BOTB Librarian will ask the objector to state their objection, and then listen to and consider the reader’s alternate answer and rationale for it. Only the objector can explain their reasoning during the objection process. Other team members shall remain seated. Chaperones are not allowed to consult with their team during this process. The other team may not give a rebuttal but may stand up and give their view when appropriate, such as defending their answer.

If deemed necessary and agreed upon by the BOTB Librarian, the objecting individual may refer to the book to find evidence to support their objection, however this must be kept brief. The BOTB Librarian reserves the right to request that the objector stand next to them when they scan through the book. All answer slides will have the book title and the page number(s) used for obtaining the answer.

Occasionally, the BOTB Librarian may wish to consult the books or consult with the Head Librarian to double-check a possible answer. In this situation, the whiteboard containing the disputed answer will be set aside, and the BOTB Librarian will review the materials and talk with the Head Librarian. The BOTB Librarian will announce the final decision. Once that decision has been made, no further objections or disputes related to that question and answer will be permitted. The decision is final.

The BOTB Librarian is not required to provide detailed explanations for their final decisions. They will not take part in extended discussions or debates about why an answer was accepted or rejected. All decisions are based solely on whether the answer meets the parameters of the question and/or follows the rules listed in section 12. Answers that do not meet these standards may be declined without further explanation.

Frivolous objections are not permitted at any time during a match. Some examples include:

1. Readers cannot object based on the legibility of a player's handwriting. The BOTB Librarian's decision on legibility is final. However, a reader can object if one member has spelled a proper noun wrong, and the BOTB Librarian appears to have overlooked it.
2. Readers cannot object to questions missed based on their lack of attention or readiness. The readers must follow the pace of the moderator.
3. If readers are concerned about suspected inappropriate verbal or nonverbal communication taking place among the opposing team and being overlooked by Youth Programs staff, this concern should be brought to the BOTB Librarian's attention during the break.

Objections cannot be made during the Final Chapter. Chaperones cannot object at all during any point of the matches.

15. AUDIENCE INTERFERENCE

During the National Gallaudet's Battle of the Books competition, our staff will take appropriate steps to ensure that audience members do not communicate in any way during a match. Gallaudet's Battle of the Books volunteers will ask anyone in the audience caught signing or otherwise communicating to a reader during a match to leave the room.

Although all readers are deaf or hard of hearing, many do have residual hearing with or without amplification, and can be distracted by audience noise as well as "visual noise" in the form of excessive physical motions in the audience. Thusly, only minimal applause is allowed during the match. Moderators will remind the audience at the beginning of each match of the need for proper behavior. People who are being distracting or disruptive will be asked to cease the offending behavior. If they continue, they will be asked to leave the room.

At the BOTB Librarian's discretion, backup questions may be used to replace any questions thrown into doubt by audience interference.

Only chaperones are allowed to talk to their team during the matches—either during breaks or at the beginning and end of each match. If an audience member, chaperone, parent, or another member from that team's school gives advice or tries to talk the team during the match, that person will be asked to leave the competition room.

In cases of extreme disruption by an audience member (i.e. parents, school administrators, or other students), that person will be asked to leave the room immediately by the Gallaudet Librarians and/or the Youth Programs Manager. If the disruptive behavior continues or occurs again with the same person, that person may not be permitted to enter any of the competition rooms for the rest of the competition weekend.

16. SPORTSMANSHIP AND CONDUCT

Appropriate sportsmanship and professional behavior is expected from all readers, teams, and chaperones at all times throughout all phases of the competition. During each division's competition periods, sharing a team's final score in any manner is considered a violation of the confidentiality agreement and will lead to disqualification from the competition.

Chaperones and their schools are responsible for the behavior of their teams and individual members. Gallaudet University will not be responsible for any damage, injuries, vandalism, or other liabilities caused by participants. All readers and chaperones are expected to conduct themselves properly and in accordance with law. Underage drinking, use of illegal drugs or any other type of illegal activity will not be tolerated. A list of infractions and consequences is detailed in the Participation Contract form that each reader and their parents or guardian reads and signs before the National competition.

The Youth Programs team and the Battle of the Books Executive Committee reserves the right to determine appropriate consequences for any violations committed by a member of a team. When possible, the Youth Programs will work with the chaperone and/or administrative members of the reader(s)'s school to determine the appropriate consequences.

17. COMMUNICATION DEVICES

Communication devices may not be used in competition rooms at any time by readers or chaperones. This prohibition includes headphones, earphones, smartphones, smartwatches, tablets, notebook computers, Bluetooth devices, and any other similar devices. The use of these devices may compromise the fairness and integrity of the Battle of the Books competition. Readers must hand their devices to their chaperones before the start of each match.

18. PHOTOGRAPHY AND VIDEOTAPING

During the Preliminary and Playoff competitions, still and video photography is allowed at the respective school sites. No still or video photography is allowed during the match that include the question or answer slides of the competition PowerPoint. Still or video photography may be posted to social media sites by any person after the Youth Programs team deems it no longer a confidentiality issue (depending on the competition, this could be at the end of the competition day or at the end of the competition week).

Still or video photography is allowed during the National competition. Photographs or videos may be taken during breaks between chapters and before or after the competition.

19. CERTIFICATES AND AWARDS

For all Preliminary competition participants, each will receive a certificate and a t-shirt.

For the Bison, Buff and Blue divisions, the awards are as follows:

There will be one reader selected from each of the top six (eight for the Bison Division) schools to the **All-Star** team and each reader will receive individual medallions.

An additional reader from each division will be selected as the **Most Outstanding Reader** and receive a trophy. The Most Outstanding Reader is a student who not only demonstrates excellent knowledge, but also exhibits leadership, team spirit, and a positive attitude toward all. The Most Outstanding Reader award can be awarded to any reader from the National competition (for the Bison division, the Finals competition) and is not limited only to the Championship team. The Battle of the Books Executive Committee will select the winner of this award.

A **Sportsmanship Award** is awarded to one team each from the Buff and Blue divisions at the National competition. The final determination will be based on a vote by all the readers and chaperones in the National competition. Winning teams will receive a plaque and team members will receive individual medallions. The criteria for this award is for teams to exhibit the best qualities of good sportsmanship including teamwork, cooperation, friendliness, dedication, fairness, honesty, hard work, extra effort, and a positive attitude. Readers and chaperones cannot vote for their own team.

The winning school of the Gallaudet's Battle of the Books competition will receive a **Championship** plaque for the school for permanent display, and individual trophies for the chaperone(s) and readers.

The **2nd place** team will receive a plaque for the school for permanent display, and individual medallions for the chaperone(s) and readers.

The **3rd and 4th** place teams will receive a plaque for display at the schools.

For the **Bison Division**, additional awards are as follows:

The camp fee for Gallaudet Youth Programs' 'Got Skills?' summer camp, taking place on Gallaudet University's campus in Washington D.C., will also be waived for readers from the 2nd place team.

20. BOOKS AND QUESTIONS

All books used during the competition are selected by the Battle of the Books Executive Committee. Questions are also developed by the Battle of the Books Executive Committee. Every effort will be made to select books that reflect the diversity of the United States and the world. The books selected will be mainly, but not always, contemporary in order to prevent students from using movie adaptations of books to gain an unfair advantage. Participating schools are also expected to disallow the use of the books selected as a part of the school curriculum for the same time period.

Schools are responsible for the purchase of the books used for the preliminary competition. Schools can order books for the competition in advance once the books are announced (usually in May). Books will be provided by the Youth Programs office for all players that advance to the national competition.

Note: Readers that receive books for the National competition are expected to keep the books for personal use after the competition. The books for the National competition are purchased by the Youth Programs office and become the property of the readers after receiving them and must not be reallocated to other students or school resources.

20B. Book Selections

All book choices for the Battle of the Books competition are carefully reviewed, deliberated on and selected by the Battle of the Books executive committee. The committee relies on Lexile scores to determine which book is befitting of which division. For the Bison division, books are usually in the 300L-600L range. For the Blue division, books are usually in the 610L-750L range. For the Buff division, books are usually in the 760L-950L range. Books that have won special recognition are also taken into consideration by the committee. Some of the award lists that the committee has used in the past to inform their selections include: Stonewall Book Awards, Michael L. Printz Awards, Pura Belpre Awards, Coretta Scott King Book Awards, American Indian Youth Literature Awards, etc.

While each book is evaluated on a case-by-case basis, the committee tries to adhere to a general set of guidelines. These guidelines are as follows:

- Book length falls between 150-400 pages
- Ensure that the author's experiences/ethnicity/race matches that of the protagonist or other characters in the book
- Screen books for instances of sexual activity, graphic violence, sexual violence, and/or heavy drug-use
- Select books within each division that are diverse in authors and character identities
- Balance a variety of book genres within each division (ex: pairing a memoir with a fantasy novel)
- Spotlight graphic novels when possible
- Follow current social justice movements and choose books that highlight these topics
- Choose books that touch on important themes, encourage personal growth, and allow readers to see things from a different perspective

21. COPYRIGHT OF QUESTIONS

All of the questions used in the Battle of the Books competitions are copyrighted and are the sole property of Gallaudet University. No other use of these questions is permitted. Anyone who copies questions in any manner will be asked to leave the competition.

22. INFRACTIONS AND CONSEQUENCES

Infractions and Consequences are detailed in the Participation Contract and are considered part of these Rules and Guidelines. The Participation Contracts will be distributed to members of each Nationals-bound team and electronically signed by each reader and parent/guardian, and by each chaperone.

All chaperones are responsible to ensure that their readers follow the code of conduct as outlined in the reader Participation Contract. If there is a major violation of the Participation Contract, a reader may be asked to leave the competition pursuant to the Participant Contract if there is a violation. If a team has less than three readers as a result of having readers asked to leave the competition, that team will forfeit the remainder of their matches.

Chaperones will also be expected to sign a chaperone Participation Contract online. If there is a major violation of the chaperone's Participation Contract, the chaperone may be asked to leave the competition. The Youth Programs office also reserves the right to suspend a chaperone from future competitions if it is discovered that the chaperone did not properly supervise their readers and a violation occurred during their supervision.

The Youth Programs office may also put a school on probation for a specified period of time after a serious violation by one of the school's readers or chaperones. If another violation occurs during the probationary period by the same school, we reserve the right to remove the school from the competition and/or suspend that school from future competitions.

If the Youth Programs office finds out after the competition that a reader has violated the Participation Contract during the competition period, it reserves the right to suspend the reader from the future competitions if the violation is deemed serious enough.

The Youth Programs office also reserves the right to bill a school for damage incurred by a reader on their team. It is the school's responsibility to pay for the bill to be able to participate in future Battle of the Books competitions.

The Youth Programs team reserves the right to determine appropriate consequences for any violations committed by a member of a team. When possible, the Youth Programs will work with the chaperone(s) and/or administrative members of the reader(s)'s school to determine the appropriate consequences.

23. TIMELINE OF 2026-2027 COMPETITION

Registration period: Concludes on Friday, September 18, 2026 @ 6:00pm EST

Distribute books to players: Monday, September 21, 2026

Blue Division Reading Levels Form Due: Monday, September 21, 2026

Preliminary Availability Time Slots Form Due: Friday, October 9, 2026

Team Registration form, Fee(s) due: Friday, October 23, 2026

Preliminary Competition: November 3-5, 2026

- Bison Preliminary competition: Tuesday, November 3, 2026
- Buff Preliminary competition: Wednesday, November 4, 2026
- Blue Preliminary competition: Thursday, November 5, 2026
 - Bison Final teams and Buff/Blue Playoff teams will be announced on Friday, November 6, 2026

Playoff Competition: November 17 - December 4, 2026

- Bison Finals: November 17-19, 2026
 - Bison Championship Match will be livestreamed: Thursday, November 19, 2026 @ 1:30 PM EST
- Buff Playoffs: November 30-December 2, 2026
- Blue Playoffs: December 2-4, 2026
 - Announce Buff and Blue National teams: Friday, December 11, 2026

National Teams Only: Team Picture, Nationals Information form, and Accommodation Requests

Due: Friday, February 5, 2027

Distribute Nationals books to players: Monday, February 8, 2027

National Competition: Friday, April 9 to Monday, April 12, 2027

(Arrival day/registration is on Friday & departure day is on Monday)

CHANGES TO THE RULES AND GUIDELINES

These Rules and Guidelines are subject to change by Youth Programs staff as necessary to maintain a fair and enjoyable competition. Mid-season changes will be kept to an absolute minimum.

APPENDIX A: Glossary

Match

A match is one of the individual games in the competition, where one team competes against another. Each match consists of two or three chapters, depending on the stage of competition.

Objection

Readers can object to a question or its official answer, which may only be made by readers competing in the match. The Gallaudet Librarians will listen to the objection and decide whether to accept it.

Quarterfinals

Teams in the Quarterfinals play to advance to the Semifinals. The number of questions in the Bison Finals and the National Buff/Blue Quarterfinal Match is in a 9-9-3 format.

Semifinals

Teams in the Semifinals play to advance to the Championship Match. The losers of this match will be awarded Third or Fourth Place honors, as determined by the losing team that amassed the most points in the Semifinal Match. The number of questions in the Semifinal Match is in a 9-9-3 format.

Championship Match

This Match determines which team wins the Championship. The other team places second. It consists of the same three chapters. The number of questions in the Championship match is in a 12-12-3 format.

Chapter

One of several divisions within a match. The Preliminary competition has two numbered Chapters (Chapter One and Chapter Two). The Bison Finals, Buff/Blue Playoffs, and National Competition have two numbered Chapters (Chapter One and Chapter Two), plus a Final Chapter.

Chapter One

For the Buff/Blue Divisions has 12 team discussion questions during the Preliminaries, Playoffs, and National Championship Match. During the National Round-Robin, Chapter One has 6 team discussion questions. During the National Quarterfinal and Semifinal matches, Chapter One has 9 team discussion questions.

For the Bison Division, Chapter One has 9 team discussion questions during the Preliminaries and Quarterfinal and Semifinal Matches in the Finals. During the Finals Championship Match, Chapter One has 12 team discussion questions.

Chapter Two

During the Preliminaries consists of team discussion questions. During the Playoffs, Finals, and Nationals, Chapter Two becomes questions played by individuals.

Chapter Two for the Buff/Blue Divisions has 12 team discussion questions during the Preliminaries, and then 12 questions played by individuals during the Playoffs, and National Championship Match. During the National Round-Robin, Chapter Two has 6 questions played by

individuals. During the National Quarterfinal and Semifinal matches, Chapter Two has 9 questions played by individuals.

For the Bison Division, Chapter Two has 9 team discussion questions during the Preliminaries and 9 questions played by individuals in the Quarterfinal and Semifinal Matches during the Finals. In the Finals Championship Match, Chapter Two has 12 questions played by individuals.

Final Chapter

All Playoff, Final, and National Matches consist of 3 individual presentation questions. Readers have two-minutes to write notes (optional) and present their answers to the Librarians. Librarians will score each presentation with 0-5 points.

Round-robin

A system of scheduling matches such that each team plays in the rotation against the other teams. Thus, if there are six (6) teams in a division, each team will play five (5) matches, one against each of the five other teams.

Reader

The name given to our middle school Battle of the Books participants.

Chaperone

The adult responsible for guiding and supporting a team throughout the Battle of the Books season. Chaperones may be teachers, librarians, parents, or other school staff.

Librarians

Battle of the Books judges. Our Librarians mainly consist of Gallaudet faculty and staff and/or members of the Battle of the Books Executive Committee. Librarians are responsible for determining if answers are correct, granting points, listening to objections, and determining Final Chapter presentation scores, among other responsibilities.

APPENDIX B: Match Format Summary

For your convenience, see the following charts that show the number of matches and questions per chapter in the Preliminary, Playoffs, and National competitions across all three divisions:

BISON DIVISION				
	# of Chapter One Questions	# of Chapter Two Questions	# of Final Chapter Questions	# of matches
Preliminaries	9	9	x	3
Finals: Quarterfinals	9	9	3	1-3 (depending if team advances or not)
Finals: Semifinals	9	9	3	
Finals: Championship	12	12	3	

BLUE DIVISION				
	# of Chapter One Questions	# of Chapter Two Questions	# of Final Chapter Questions	# of matches
Preliminaries	12	12	x	3
Playoffs	12	12	3	1
Nationals: Round Robin	6	6	3	5
Nationals: Quarterfinals	9	9	3	1-3 (depending if team advances or not)
Nationals: Semifinals	9	9	3	
Nationals: Championship	12	12	3	

BUFF DIVISION				
	# of Chapter One Questions	# of Chapter Two Questions	# of Final Chapter Questions	# of matches
Preliminaries	12	12	x	3
Playoffs	12	12	3	1
Nationals: Round Robin	6	6	3	5
Nationals: Quarterfinals	9	9	3	1-3 (depending if team advances or not)
Nationals: Semifinals	9	9	3	
Nationals: Championship	12	12	3	

APPENDIX C: National Championship Teams

COMPETITION YEAR	BUFF DIVISION	BLUE DIVISION	BISON DIVISION
2025-2026	Rocky Mountain Deaf School	Northwest School for Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Children	California School for the Deaf, Riverside
2024-2025	Rocky Mountain Deaf School	Metro Deaf School	Indiana School for the Deaf
2023-2024	Metro Deaf School	Indiana School for the Deaf	Venado Middle School
2022-2023	Heathlands School	Washington School for the Deaf	Illinois School for the Deaf
2021-2022	Wisconsin School for the Deaf	Indiana School for the Deaf	Venado Middle School
2020-2021	California School for the Deaf, Fremont	TOPS K-8	Heathlands School
2019-2020	Indiana School for the Deaf	Wisconsin School for the Deaf	Kendall Demonstration Elementary School
2018-2019	Kendall Demonstration Elementary School	Venado Middle School	Venado Middle School
2017-2018	Texas School for the Deaf	Kendall Demonstration Elementary School	Wisconsin School for the Deaf
2016-2017	California School for the Deaf, Fremont	New Mexico School for the Deaf	Maryland School for the Deaf
2015-2016	Phoenix Day School for the Deaf	California School for the Deaf, Fremont	Rhode Island School for the Deaf
2014-2015	Phoenix Day School for the Deaf	Wisconsin School for the Deaf	California School for the Deaf, Fremont

2013-2014	Kendall Demonstration Elementary School	Kentucky School for the Deaf	Louisiana School for the Deaf & Illinois School for the Deaf
2012-2013	Texas School for the Deaf	Kansas School for the Deaf	Texas School for the Deaf