

September, 2021

TO: Visual Arts Teachers, Librarians, and Teachers of English and Social Studies,
Grades 3 - 12
FROM: Karen Rosner, Director of Visual Arts, Melissa Jacobs, Director of Library Services
RE: The Annual Ezra Jack Keats Bookmaking Competition

The Ezra Jack Keats Bookmaking Competition, collaboration between the NYCDOE, the Ezra Jack Keats Foundation, and Brooklyn Public Library has resulted in the creation of thousands of student-made picture books. It is named for Ezra Jack Keats, creator of over 20 children's books, including the classic Caldecott-winning *The Snowy Day*.

When students write and illustrate their own picture books, **fiction or non-fiction**, they engage in creative thinking, combine literacy with art skills, and experience pride in having created a book and told their own story. ***Exploration of both genres is encouraged, and while there are no limits on the topic a student may choose for his or her book, this year we hope teachers will help their students process some of the events and effects of the last 18 months through the books they create for this competition.***

Each school is allowed to submit ONE book into the competition. (See exceptions under Eligibility.)

All City and Borough Winners are invited to the May ceremony and presented with a medal, a Certificate of Commendation, and monetary awards. They are listed on the Ezra Jack Keats Foundation website and in the catalogue, along with the titles of their books, schools, teachers, and principals.

All Honorable Mentions are invited to the May ceremony and presented with a medal and a Certificate of Commendation. They are listed on the Ezra Jack Keats Foundation website and in the catalogue, along with the titles of their books, schools, teachers, and principals.

All School Winners receive medals and Certificates of Commendation at their schools. They are listed on the Ezra Jack Keats Foundation website and in the catalogue along with the titles of their books, schools, teachers and principals.

All City, Borough, Honorable Mention, and School Winners entries will be included in an exhibition in the spring of 2022 in the Youth Wing of Brooklyn Public Library, Central Branch.

All students who complete a book receive a Certificate of Commendation.

All students who attend the award ceremony receive a tote bag with a selection of grade appropriate books.*

All teachers/librarians who attend the award ceremony receive a tote bag with a selection of picture books.*

*These books are generously donated by Penguin Random House, the publisher of Ezra Jack Keats's books.

This memo contains:

- Competition Guidelines and Timeline
- A Word from the Selection Committee Judges
- *This is More than a Competition!* Suggested

Enrichment Also in this memo is a link to the:

- *Declaration of Originality and Author's Statement and Consent and Release Form*

c: Karen Rosner, Melissa Jacobs, Esther Friedman

GUIDELINES

School team (principal, art teacher, librarian, language arts teacher) selects **ONE** entry and completes the following steps.

Deadline:

Submission Paperwork must be received electronically by Friday, January 28, 2021

Submitted Books must be postmarked by Friday, January 28, 2021

INSTRUCTIONS

- **Complete online *Declaration of Originality and Author's Statement*** (student description of their bookmaking process) **and *Consent and Release Form***, [EJK Bookmaking Submission Forms](#)
- **Submit forms electronically.**
- **You will receive an email confirmation with a PDF attachment of your completed forms.**
(If you do not receive an email contact dvozza@ezra-jack-keat.org)
- **Print the PDF version of the *Declaration of Originality and Author's Statement* and *Consent and Release Form* and insert all necessary written signatures.**
- **Attach *Declaration of Originality and Author's Statement* and *Consent and Release Form* securely to the back inside flap of the book being submitted.**
- **Mail book to:** Office of Arts and Special Projects
Attn: Jennifer Macaluso
Ezra Jack Keats Bookmaking Competition
4360 Broadway – 4th Floor < **THIS FULL LINE MUST BE INCLUDED**
New York, New York 10033

IMPORTANT NOTE:

Books submitted without the electronic forms and the hard copies will NOT be accepted.

Eligibility:

Elementary: Grades 3-5
MiddleSchool: Grades 6-8
High School: Grades 9-12

Schools with multiple-grade categories may submit one book per category. (Example: a K – 8 school may submit a book by a 3rd grader and a book by a 7th grader.)

NOTE: Districts 75 and 79 submissions are considered along with all other submissions, and are often winners.

Criteria:

- Students may select their own themes
- Submissions must qualify as picture books
- All work must be **original**.
- No more than **two** students may collaborate on a book
- Books can be created as part of ongoing classroom instruction, or as a group extracurricular activity, under teacher and/or librarian supervision

Measurements:

Books must include at least 12 single side pages, but no more than 32. Books must be no smaller than 6"x 8" and no larger than 15" x 18"

Special Media Note:

- Books **MUST** be handmade and firmly bound by the student
- Please do not include elaborate platforms or stands for books
- All art media are excepted
- Judges will disqualify
Any pre-bound or spiral bound books, Books with plastic slip bindings Re-made and recycled books, pre-formatted material such as clip art

For Important Tips:

A Word from the Selection Committee Judges follows the Timeline.

Ezra Jack Keats Bookmaking Competition

TIMELINE / IMPORTANT DATES

Friday, January 28, 2022 Submissions Deadline

Submission electronic paperwork **MUST be received** by January 28th.
Submitted books do not have to arrive at Brooklyn Public Library by January 28th but **MUST be mailed and postmarked** by January 28th.

Early February 2022 Judging

- Judging is based on quality of writing and illustrations, layout, and general presentation
- The jury is composed of noted authors, librarians, artists, and educators.

Week of March 7, 2022 Award Notification by the Office of Arts and Special Projects

City Awards - EJK Bookmaking Medal & \$500*

- One elementary winner
- One intermediate winner
- One high school winner

Borough Awards – EJK Bookmaking Medal & \$100*

A total of fifteen awards throughout the boroughs

Honorable Mention -- EJK Bookmaking Medal

Attend Award Ceremony

School Awards – EJK Bookmaking Medal

- All school winners will receive medals with returned books

** For books with 2 collaborators, monetary awards are shared.*

May XX, 2022 Awards Ceremony

City and Borough winners honored as well as Honorable Mentions. *Details TBA*

May 2022 Exhibition

All entries exhibited at Brooklyn Public Library, Central Branch at Grand Army Plaza, in the Youth Wing. *Details TBA*

Mid June 2022 Return of Books

Books will be returned to schools **no later than June 18, 2022**



A Word from the Selection Committee Judges

Here are some key criteria used by the Selection Committee to judge each book submitted by each school for the EJK Bookmaking Competition. Along with what has been already noted in the memo, please keep the following in mind, and of course, share it with your students!

Judges' Basic Criteria

- All work must be ORIGINAL and made exclusively by students.
Judges eliminate:
 - a. Plagiarized work
 - b. Work obviously beyond grade level, and/or reflecting help from parents and/or teachers
- The use of all art media are encouraged.
- **Not allowed:** commercial computer programs or pre-formatted material such as clip art
- The following **are allowed:**
 - a. The use of computer images, **only if** art is original and not part of a pre-made program.
 - b. The use of photographs, **only if** taken or staged by the student.
 - c. Images from printed media, **only if** used as elements of a collage.
- **Not Allowed:** plastic slip bindings or pre-bound, spiral-bound or recycled books.
- **Allowed:** creatively handmade and firmly bound books made by the students.

Text/Story: Qualities Looked for By Judges

1. Concise and condensed text. Word count should be approx. 1,000 to 1,200 words!
2. A story or narrative that has a beginning, a middle and end.
3. Engaging storytelling, effective use of language
4. Correct spelling and use of grammar
5. Clear and legible printing
6. Book title and name of author on the cover of the book and on the title page

Illustrations: Qualities Looked for By Judges

1. Coherently and cohesively supports and furthers the story
2. Effective use of color
3. Appropriate use of unusual materials
4. Unified design, using illustration and text throughout, including front and back inside covers.
5. A cover illustration that offers a clue to the book's story.
6. Use of text as illustration, or as part of illustration.

Overall Considerations

1. Integrated images and text
2. Using text and image to convey the message
3. Attention paid to every page
4. Blank pages only when called for in the story
5. Each page a unified composition
6. Cohesive design concept for the whole book

THIS IS MORE THAN A COMPETITION!

Creating picture books can be embedded in the study of the picture book genre.

Here are ways to do it:

Introduce your students to a variety of books and styles of presentation so they can explore the kind of book they want to create:

Fiction

Realistic or fantasy
Animals vs. people as characters
Text or wordless
Inspired by actual events

Non-Fiction

Biographies and autobiographies
Based on an actual event
Instructional texts
List Books (i.e.: counting book)

Discuss what qualifies as a picture book.

*(Illustrations **and** text move the story along, set a mood, supply information.)*

Explore the use of a variety of media, textures, contrasts, colors, lines, shapes and uses of space in the illustrations of Ezra Jack Keats, as well as those of other noted picture book illustrators.

Study page layouts in picture books and note:

- relationship of image and text on each page
- similarities and differences from page to page
- patterns throughout the book, in text as well as in illustrations

Note the different shapes of the stories:

- **circular** begins and ends at the same place
- **linear** progresses in one direction (*e.g. alphabet book*)
- **triangular** builds to a problem that is solved
- **snapshot** reads like a photo album....each page can stand alone

Examine the qualities of the text on a page and ask questions such as:

- Is there dialogue?
- Is text made up of a word, a phrase, or one or more sentences?
- Are sentences on the page in their entirety, or continued onto the next page?

Consider how different authors treat the same topic.

Engage students in an author study and discuss the style (or various styles) of that one author/illustrator.

Visit school or public libraries. Ask for the librarian's favorites. Invite older students to visit independently.

Research the following websites for more information about Ezra Jack Keats and children's picture books:

[EJK Foundation Bookmaking Information](#)
[Ezra Jack Keats Book Award Winners](#)

[de Grummond Collection](#)
[Caldecott Medal Winners](#)
[Children's Book Council](#)