



## **35th Annual Minnesota Book Awards**

### **Handbook for Preliminary Round Judges**

#### **Document Purpose**

The following guidelines describe the work judges are expected to do to prepare for Selection Saturday and how panels are to function in selecting the finalists.

#### **Overview and Logistics**

Thank you for agreeing to be a preliminary round judge for the 35th annual Minnesota Book Awards.

The responsibility of preliminary round judges is to review all titles submitted for consideration in their category, then come together as a group on Selection Saturday to choose four finalists in that category. Each panel has three judges. Every preliminary round judge must be available to attend the Selection Saturday session taking place on:

**Saturday, January 28, 2023, 10:00 a.m.**

Platform: Zoom (*links will be shared in January*)

- Panels will adjourn at varying times, but no later than 2:30 p.m. -

If you determine that there may be a potential conflict with attending the January session, please contact David Katz ([david@thefriends.org](mailto:david@thefriends.org) / 651-266-6492) right away.

Note: The Friends of the Saint Paul Public Library loans each judge copies of all books submitted within their category. Ultimately, all books submitted to the Minnesota Book Awards – finalist or otherwise – will be donated to libraries throughout Minnesota.

Program staff will share details on how to return these materials to The Friends (at no cost to you) after the January 28 panels adjourn.

**[continued]**

## **Conflict(s) of Interest Policy**

Minnesota Book Awards policy dictates that writers who have books submitted for award consideration in a given year may not serve as judges that same year. Further, employees of publishers may only serve as judges for categories in which the publisher in question is not submitting a book that cycle. These policies are designed to avoid both actual and perceived conflicts of interest.

It is inevitable that on some panels a judge will turn out to have an unanticipated personal connection to a book under consideration. If a book submitted in the category you are reviewing is the work of someone you have a *close* relationship with - or otherwise feel unsuited to objectively evaluate - please note this conflict for others on the panel and abstain from discussions around that particular book.

If you have some connection to the author or work under consideration, but do *not* believe it will influence your judgment of the work, you should disclose that connection before sharing your thoughts on the book during the session.

Be sure to contact David Katz ([david@thefriends.org](mailto:david@thefriends.org)) with any conflict of interest questions or situations well in advance of January 28.

## **Confidentiality**

Participants in the Minnesota Book Awards process are asked to adhere to a professional code of conduct. Judges should not discuss books under consideration with anyone except other award panelists, and that discussion should be limited to the Selection Saturday meeting.

We also ask that judges refrain from posting any information about their role with the Minnesota Book Awards until after the winners have been publicly announced in May. Abiding by this policy is essential to demonstrating respect for the authors and publishers of titles submitted for award consideration, and to representing the awards process with integrity.

## **Contact with Other Judges**

Judges are not to have contact with each other prior to Selection Saturday regarding anything related to the submitted books or the judging process. The panel process is designed to offer fair and thoughtful discussion of each book by a diverse group of individuals who are, in that process, on equal footing and given equal opportunity for input. Discussion of the books in advance of the meeting can skew the panel discussion, even if this is unintended. Thank you for holding your thoughts and conversations for January 28!

## Book Eligibility and Category Assignments

Sometimes a book is submitted in one category when it would be more competitive in another. While The Friends staff attempts to ensure proper category placement before books go out to the judges, the judges in their careful review may identify one or more books that need to be moved to another category.

Any recommendations to have a book moved to another category should be communicated to David Katz no later than Monday, January 2 to allow plenty of time for the book to be redistributed to and reviewed by the panel to which it is being reassigned. The goal is to remove all need for any of the January 28 discussions to be focused on eligibility or category placement questions.

As a reminder, the nine award categories are as follows:

**Children's Picture Book** – a picture book for young children, typically combining text and illustration in telling the story. (Minnesota authors and illustrators are both eligible in this category. Fiction, nonfiction, and poetry books are all eligible.)

**General Nonfiction** – a full-length book of nonfiction, including, but not limited to, history, biography, science, nature, and cookbooks

**Genre Fiction** – a book of fiction written in a popular genre or style, including mystery, detective, fantasy, romance, graphic novel, and science fiction

**Memoir & Creative Nonfiction** – a work of nonfiction which is primarily autobiographical in theme, or which includes a significant amount of personal material and/or imaginative reworking

**Middle Grade Literature** – a book written for a middle grade audience, generally ages 8-12 (fiction, nonfiction, poetry, and graphic novels are eligible)

**Minnesota Nonfiction** – a book of nonfiction with a topic on Minnesota history, nature, social customs, or nostalgia

**Novel & Short Story** – a novel, novella or short story collection by a single author or author team

**Poetry** – a book-length single poem or collection of poetry by a single author or author team

**Young Adult Literature** – a book written for a teen audience (fiction, nonfiction, poetry, and graphic novels are eligible)

Any questions or concerns about the eligibility of individual books or the review process should be directed to David Katz ([david@thefriends.org](mailto:david@thefriends.org) / 651-366-6492).

## **Guidelines for Reviewing Books for the Minnesota Book Awards**

### **I. Be Mindful of the Minnesota Book Awards Criteria at All Times**

The three overarching criteria, for all categories of submissions, are:

#### **1) Craft / Craftsmanship (50%)**

Considerations include language use\*, narrative tightness, thematic throughlines, and the overall quality of the writing. In addition, the illustration, editing, and layout involved in the book's creation may be important criteria in certain categories.

\*Keep in mind that language is a fluid medium and can be used in ways that are different than what has been taught by the dominant culture. Do not overlook books that use language in ways that reflect multiple linguistic traditions.

#### **2) Originality (30%)**

Originality in concept and execution is the second primary consideration in selecting finalists. Finalist titles should demonstrate innovative qualities, which in many cases will be specific to their genre or category.

For example: Originality in Minnesota Nonfiction might be exemplified by the exploration of a little-known topic or an historically marginalized perspective. Originality in Children's Literature may take the form of novel narrative choices, an inventive approach to illustrations, or adept treatment of subject matter not typically represented in Children's Literature.

#### **3) Resonance (20%)**

Is the book likely to resonate with its intended audience(s)? Does the book succeed at reaching those readers on a variety of levels?

In cases where a book seems to be geared primarily towards a specific reader profile, does it leave room for readers outside that target audience to find value in the subject matter?

For example: If a nonfiction book is not written for academic insiders, does the author minimize jargon, offer sufficient background, and offer a consistently engaging narrative? In the case of a memoir, does that work of creative nonfiction open a door into a different life for the reader? Does it make the specific feel, in some way, universal?

## **Evaluation Forms**

Included with each shipment of books will be a corresponding number of evaluation forms. The form is intended as an aid to keep these criteria top of mind as you read through each title. It contains both optional and required fields.

At a minimum, we ask that you consistently and fully fill out the quantitative rankings at the bottom of the page. Please remember to rate each book on its own merits – not in comparison to its competitors. Remember that not all nominees with ranking “high” in Craft can be selected as finalists. Likewise, due to criteria weighting, a book with “moderate” Resonance might be selected as a finalist if it is deemed to have excellent Craft.

Note: While these 1-10 metrics may be of value to you in determining which nominees you feel are the strongest contenders, you are in no way bound by these scores when you meet with your judging panel. In fact, table discussion routinely yields insights that may make you reevaluate entries.

For detailed instructions on how to use the form, which feedback can be used by the Minnesota Book Awards, and for what purposes, reference the detailed instructions on the back of the evaluation form. Direct any questions not covered there to Minnesota Book Awards Coordinator David Katz ([david@thefriends.org](mailto:david@thefriends.org)).

## **II. Focus on the Book Itself**

Knowledge of an author’s other works, awards or fame can predispose any reader to appreciate or to discount a given book. Try to approach each book free of expectations.

While it is laudable to want to honor new and lesser-known writers, the idea that it is someone’s “turn” to be set aside or to be acknowledged should be rejected in favor of an honest evaluation of the books in hand. The fact that an author has won previous awards shouldn’t count against them; by the same token, it shouldn’t automatically raise their book in the panel’s estimation.

Reading reviews in journals will be a part of some judges’ professional work, while other judges won’t come into automatic contact with such reviews. It is expected that you will not engage any material other than the book itself when judging its merit. If you read reviews of the books under consideration, remember that it is your perspective on the book that matters and that will be relevant in the discussion at the panel meeting – not the perspective of any reviews.

### **III. Honor Local/Regional Subjects Alongside “Global” Topics; Consistently Reward High Quality Content**

In every category, there will be a range of projects in competition. It may be the natural tendency of some judges to prefer large-scale, impressive books from major publishers over more modest work from small, independent presses. Similarly, some judges may personally favor smaller presses and/or books which are more niche in topic.

It is important to evaluate each book on its own terms, and not penalize a book for taking on a subject that is modest in scope or “close to home” —or, on the other hand, to penalize books of larger scale with larger production budgets.

### **IV. Read Beyond Your Taste**

There will likely be books in the mix that, because of their subject or genre, appeal to you more or less than others. Try to set aside your preferences as an individual reader and focus on how successfully the author has made all elements of the book work together; the book’s craft and originality; and its success at engaging its target audience.

For example: Consider the case of a memoir that incorporates novel-like writing conventions to explore the interior lives of characters other than the author/narrator. When evaluating that entry, look beyond your personal favor or dislike for that writing convention. Instead, ask yourself questions like: Is this approach helping the book to accomplish its artistic aim? Is it done in a way that is believable, in spite of the imaginative stretch required? Is the author “breaking the rules” in a way that feels consistent with book’s style and themes?

### **V. Examine Your Bias/Social Identity and Judging**

Every judge comes into their panel discussion as a person with multiple identity lenses. Similarly, you are examining books written by people who are coming at their work with important identities, and those are likely to find some manner of expression in their book. It is important – especially if you hold a collection of identities that are traditionally considered part of the dominant culture – to take some time before engaging with a text to examine the way your social identities affect your opinions around a book. Those identities include, but are not limited to: race, ethnicity, religion, gender, and sexual orientation.

For example: A story may be told from inside a culture or tradition that employs different narrative rules than those most widely understood to be “correct” according to traditional publishing criteria, most school curricula, etc. As best as you are able, try to recognize and try to recognize if this might be the case and relate to the story with an altered lens.

\*In order to better understand your several and intersecting identities, we encourage all judges to take a brief look at the attached “Identity Wheel” exercise. (This rubric comes from [AMAZEworks](#), Minnesota-based consulting specialists in Diversity, Equity & Inclusion, and was shared with The Friends as part of staff DEI work.)

## **VI. Respectful Deliberation**

As already noted, confidentiality is integral to the panel judging process. It is not appropriate to share information about your panel’s discussion with individuals outside the panel process. Even once the finalist slate is made publicly known, we ask you not to disclose details about why a given nominee was or was not selected.

During the panel meeting, the discussion should stay focused on the three stated criteria. Personal information about authors, others associated with books under consideration, or previous works by the author is not relevant to the discussion.

## **VII. Prepare for Discussion**

The goal of the Selection Saturday panel discussion is to come to a consensus around the selection of four finalists. On the way to reaching that agreement, differences of opinion are an inevitable and important part of the process.

Each panel has been intentionally created to reflect a diversity of backgrounds and perspectives. Because you will be selecting four finalists in your category, that group of books can and should reflect the range of opinions and sensibilities on your panel.

We ask you to reach a group consensus. Once the other panelists share their perceptions of the books, you may end up seeing new value in one or more books that didn’t initially impress you. As a result, you may end up endorsing one or more such books as finalists despite the fact that they didn’t originally appeal to you strongly.

As you read, make notes on the forms provided by The Friends of specific things that work or don’t work, things that you especially appreciate or have trouble with, etc. General comments (“I liked the book.” “I hated the book.”) are not useful in a critical, evaluative discussion. Make notes, including page numbers and other specifics, so that you’ll be able to express your reaction to each book in a strong and clear way.

While secondhand accounts may affect one’s interest in reading or not reading a book, these are considered outside the scope of the Selection Saturday panel discussion. For example: If your daughter loved the book, or if it received a starred review in a journal, that fact should not hold sway in the discussion.

For the panel meeting to be successful, each person in the group needs to have the chance to contribute. Prepare both to contribute and to listen. We also invite you to help the facilitator (described in more detail below) hold your panel accountable to the process and criteria outlined in this handbook. For example: If a fellow judge deviates to discuss an author's prior works or personal life, do not hesitate to steer the conversation back on track with a reminder that only the book in contention is grounds for discussion.

### **VIII. The Role of the Facilitator and Reaching Consensus**

Each panel is assigned a facilitator who will be present throughout the discussion. Facilitators do not participate in the deliberations, nor express their opinions about any of the books under consideration, nor attempt to influence the panel's choice of finalists in any way.

Instead, the facilitator role is intended to ensure discussions adhere to Minnesota Book Awards judging guidelines, help the panel move towards a consensus, and provide strategies to break an impasse if the discussion gets stuck. The facilitator also has the mandate to disrupt any behavior in the panel that is not respectful.

The Friends of the Saint Paul Public Library recommend that each panel begin by narrowing the field quickly to only those books considered in contention for a finalist slot. It is often helpful to use the chat in Zoom to list your top five, so each co-panelist has a visual of alignments and which books might require further conversation.

Each panel is encouraged to first try to reach a consensus via organic means, giving each title thoughtful consideration and discussing its merits and flaws in a manner that is respectful both to the book and to the perspectives and opinions of all the judges. Where there are disagreements there must also be respect in order for the process to unfold as it should. Keeping these things in mind and following the discussion guidelines above should allow each panel to complete the process successfully.

In many cases, agreement on the selection of finalists is reached easily. However, if a panel gets stuck and is challenged by the agreement-making process, the facilitator may suggest a strategy to help the panel in making its final decisions. One way that an impasse can be resolved is to apply a simple voting system, allowing each judge to rank their top four books in order and giving first choice title 4 points, second choice 3 points, third choice 2 points and fourth choice 1 point. When these cumulative numbers are tallied, finalists may emerge—or titles may be eliminated, bringing the panel a step closer to its choice of finalists. (This process can, of course, be modified to address the number of books still under consideration.)



## **IX. How Many Finalists?**

As the guidelines state, each panel is to choose four finalists in their category – no more, no less! Ideally, each title identified as a finalist should be a book that all judges on the panel would be satisfied to see chosen as the winner. Often a panel recognizes a natural division between the books that the full panel feels are exceptional and those that fall somewhat short. In other situations, a panel may be sharply divided in its choices, and the resulting list of finalists may include books only some panelists are passionate about. Both are valid scenarios. Endorsing your panel’s list of finalists doesn’t mean that the list mirrors the choices you would have made on your own. Rather, it means that you agree that those choices reflect the overall feeling (unanimous or varied) of the group.

## **X. Once Selections Are Made**

Once your panel has made its selections and these have been recorded, it is crucial that this information be kept confidential until the time specified by The Friends of the Saint Paul Public Library. Within one day following Selection Saturday, all finalists will be contacted, the list of finalists will be posted on The Friends’ website, and the press will be notified. Thank you for your help in maintaining the integrity of the judging process by keeping the finalist information confidential until the authors have been contacted and the public announcement has been made.

**(continued)**

## **Minnesota Book Awards**

### **Category Specific Guidelines and Questions for Evaluating Books**

The following guidelines and questions are provided as further tools for judges to use in evaluating the submitted books within their specific category.

**Children’s Picture Book** – a picture book for young children, typically combining text and illustration in telling the story. (Minnesota authors *and* illustrators are both eligible in this category. Fiction, nonfiction, and poetry books are all eligible.)

Judges should ask the following questions:

- Is the book of outstanding quality? Does it stand out as an original effort?
- Will the text be compelling and engaging to children?
- Are representations of human characters authentic and affirming?
- Is the work memorable and distinctive? Does it invite rereading?
- If the book includes illustrations, are they of outstanding quality? Are they well-integrated with the book’s text and appropriate for the target audience?
- If the book is nonfiction, is it accurate and informative (and its material verifiable)? Are sources provided (if and where you feel they should be)?
- If the book is nonfiction, does it offer new information or take a fresh, appealing approach to traditional material?

A challenge with the Children’s Picture Book category is the range of subject matter and styles it includes. Panelists should prepare for a wide range of material, and take care not to undervalue the work aimed at an audience with specialized interests. The success of the book in serving its *intended* audience is the issue, not the size of that audience.

**General Nonfiction** – a full-length book of nonfiction, including, but not limited to, history, biography, science, nature, and cookbooks. Judges should ask the following questions, as applicable:

- Is the work well-researched and appropriately documented?
- Is the writing compelling and appealing?
- Does the work take a new, useful, and illuminating approach to its subject?
- Does the author seem knowledgeable about important and influential work in his/her subject area?
- Are the design and editing of the book appropriate to the book’s intended purpose? Are any non-text elements (drawings, photographs, maps, etc.) well-chosen and effectively integrated with the text?
- Are any resources provided to the reader for further reference or research (and if not, should there be)?
- Is there an index? If not, should there be one? If so, is it well organized? Does it include the main subjects, individuals and events relevant to the book’s topic?

In asking all these questions, also take into account the targeted audience and probable audience appeal. A history book for a lay audience may not need extensive references, whereas one for a scholarly audience probably should include references and footnotes.

If a book feels derivative of other work, it is likely that it fails to meet the Book Awards' "originality" criterion. While rare, instances of plagiarism may arise (as they do on the lists of major publishers, despite editors' and fact checkers' best efforts). If a judge suspects that this may be the case with any Book Award entry, they should contact David Katz, Book Awards Coordinator, right away so that the question can be pursued. In gray area cases, where it is clear an author has borrowed material or where a book's shape closely resembles the shape of another work (without acknowledgment), the best course for a panelist is to make the case that the book falls short on the basis of the originality criterion, and to identify the specific nature of the book's resemblance to other work during the group's panel discussion.

If a judge believes that a book includes false or misleading information, they should alert the Book Awards Coordinator of this concern in advance of Selection Saturday. At the panel meeting, problematic sections of a book should be identified, and the judge who has concerns about the text should be prepared with specific information to support their contentions.

The General Nonfiction category includes a wide variety of work. Panelists should prepare for an "apples and oranges" situation and focus as best they can on how each individual book fulfills the criteria of outstanding craftsmanship, originality, and strong resonance with the intended audience. While respect for specialized audiences is important, the work should still be highly readable.

There is often a high number of submissions in this category. It merits noting that if a work clearly misses the mark in terms of its writing quality, preliminary round panelists should feel free to set it aside (once they have read enough to feel secure in their judgment).

Since comparing books to one another can be challenging, it is important for judges to evaluate each book on its own terms. As an example, a cookbook that a judge recognizes as the best possible cookbook of its kind may therefore prevail over a parenting book that feels *mostly successful*, even if the judge is more drawn to the latter type of book. Use the evaluation form to track your observations and appraisals as you reach each book.

Note to preliminary round judges: Nonfiction books which are focused on a Minnesota topic will typically be a better fit in the Minnesota Nonfiction category. Panelists should be alert early on in the review process for any books which they feel should be moved to the Minnesota Nonfiction category. Make any such recommendation to the Minnesota Book Awards Coordinator as soon as possible.

**Genre Fiction** – a book of fiction written in a popular genre or style, including mystery, detective, fantasy, graphic novel, romance, and science fiction. Judges should ask the following questions:

- Does the book reflect mastery of the conventions of its particular genre or popular style?
- Is the author adept at development of theme, plot, dialogue, setting, character?
- Does the book succeed in capturing the attention and interest of the reader by means of an innovative plot and interesting characters? Is it compelling and engaging?
- If the genre is known for hitting particular beats and tropes, does the author use those marks in fresh and appealing ways – or turn away from expectation in an original manner?

Wide reader appeal and command of the genre in question are key attributes of award-winning books in this category. Yet, quality of writing remains paramount.

Note to preliminary round judges: There may be works that straddle the boundary between Genre Fiction and Novel (the latter really meaning *a novel not written in a genre*). Panelists should be alert early on in the review process to any books which they feel should be moved to the Novel & Short Story category. Make that recommendation to the Minnesota Book Awards Coordinator as soon as possible.

**Memoir & Creative Nonfiction** – a work of nonfiction which is primarily autobiographical in theme, or which includes a significant amount of personal material and/or imaginative reworking.

This category, which combines subcategories that are understood and defined differently by different readers, presents unique issues for panelists to consider. One way to think about the work in this category is in terms of the relative role that factual information plays in each:

- Autobiography has a factual through line. Its main substance is the chronological life of its subject. It bears the same responsibility to and has the same degree of dependence on verifiable, factual material as any biography—and has the added challenge of needing to be told in a compelling first-person voice.
- Memoir has greater freedom in its structure, the throughline of which is likely to be the intellectual, spiritual, or emotional development of the writer. Still, it bears the same burden of veracity that autobiography bears in relation to its nonfiction content. In other words, where a memoir deals with the subject’s inner life, it has much in common with fiction — its effectiveness being dependent on the imaginative pull of its narrative. But where it concerns itself with actual events and with the actions of named individuals, it is subject to the expectations and “rules” of nonfiction. Where fictionalizing has taken place, readers need to judge whether this has been done

responsibly – especially in cases where the portrayal of actual persons is strongly or negatively drawn.

- Creative Nonfiction is a realm in which fact and fiction blend according to the author’s design, and in which the reader, for this reason, may not be able to untangle the two. The key is that this “blending” is acknowledged in the book’s title, in its introduction, or by other means, so that the reader is in essence agreeing to walk on uncertain ground. Note: work in this subcategory may or may not be written in the first person, but includes sufficient *imaginative material* or *reflection* on a question to be better placed here than in General Nonfiction.

To judge whether a work in the Memoir & Creative Nonfiction category is award-worthy, judges should ask the following questions:

- Is there a distinctive, memorable voice in the work?
- Is the work both timely and likely to have lasting interest?
- Does the work have integrity in relation to its claims of truth or fact?
- Does the book illuminate the writer’s experience as well as that of a broader community?
- Does it leave room for the reader, even if it is clearly a very personal reflection on events or a topic?

**Middle Grade Literature** – a book written for a middle grade audience, generally ages 8-12. (Fiction, nonfiction, poetry, and graphic novels are eligible.)

- Is the book of outstanding quality? Does it stand out as an original work?
- Will the book be compelling and engaging to middle grade readers?
- If the book is nonfiction, is it accurate and informative, its material verifiable and original? Are sources provided (if and where they should be)?
- Is the book memorable and distinctive – likely to change the way the reader views themselves or the world?
- Does the book take its audience seriously? Successful books for children in this age group should center the agency of their young protagonists.
- If the book contains illustrations or photos, do they enhance the experience of the book in a meaningful way?

This category, like Children’s Picture Book and Young Adult, is a *genre-defying* category. You will be asked to judge how-to guides about home science experiments alongside epic fantasy quests and realistic portrayals of everyday life. It is important to consider the impact and resonance of the book for a young reader, regardless of the book’s genre and content.

**Minnesota Nonfiction** – a book of nonfiction with a topic on Minnesota history, nature, social customs or nostalgia.

This panel should use the set of questions and guidelines outlined in the General Nonfiction category. Judges in this category should *also* ask:

- Does the book illuminate a previously unexplored aspect of Minnesota culture or heritage? If the book explores well-trodden ground, does it provide new context and depth?
- Does it contribute to a reader’s collective understanding of past and/or current life in Minnesota? Does it expand the notion of what being “Minnesotan” means? (i.e. Is it inclusive when it needs to be?)

Note to preliminary round judges: In order to be eligible in this category, the book’s primary topic(s) must center Minnesota. Nonfiction books which have Minnesota references but aren’t specifically about a Minnesota topic will be a better fit in General Nonfiction. Panelists should be alert early on in the review process for any books which they feel should be moved to the General Nonfiction category. Any such recommendations should be made to the Minnesota Book Awards Coordinator as soon as possible.

**Novel & Short Story** – a novel, novella, or short story collection. Judges should ask the following questions:

- Is the author adept at development of theme, plot, dialogue, setting, and pacing? Do all the elements work together?
- Are the characters richly and respectfully drawn and authentic?
- Is the work innovative?
- Does it have a strong, memorable voice?
- If the book is a collection of short stories, are the selections of uniformly high quality?

Short story collections can suffer when compared with novels because they are often perceived to bring lack the sustained momentum, depth, and “heft” of longer works. Judges should make a concerted effort to give shorter fiction its due. Consider what editor Laurie Steed says makes for a good short story: “A good short story is a tone, a thought, a feeling,” but also contains all the elements of a good novel in a concise space.

Another problem that can occur with this category is work by very well-known authors casting a shadow over other entries. Because this is a category where there are often “stars,” special effort must be made to evaluate each work fairly and freshly. That said, it is not appropriate to set an outstanding work by a “star” author aside, simply to give a lesser-known writer exposure. (Again, the idea that it is someone’s “turn” to be set aside or to be acknowledged should be rejected in favor of honest evaluation of the books in hand.)

Note to preliminary judges: This panel should be attentive in the first few weeks to books that would more properly be considered in the Genre Fiction or Memoir & Creative Nonfiction categories. Books written in genre style (i.e. mystery, detective, romance, science fiction) belong in the first category. Works with a strong autobiographical thread or in which fictional and nonfiction elements combine should be considered in the second category. David Katz should be alerted early on in the review process if the panel feels a book better fits within another category.

**Poetry** – a book-length single poem or collection of poetry.

- Does the poet have a clear and compelling voice and vision?
- To what degree is mastery of figurative and formal technique in evidence?
- Do all the elements work together to form an integrated whole?
- Is language being played with and/or used in new and exciting ways? (Consider sound, rhythm, borrowing from other linguistic traditions, etc.)
- Is the work in some way groundbreaking?

Differences in opinion about poetic style can be intense, and it may be harder to find compromise or for opinions to be swayed in this category than on other panels. Anticipating this may be helpful. If individual panelists are able to articulate what “craft” and “originality” mean to them in poetry, they will be better able to defend their preferences. When addressing questions of “resonance and impact,” it is understood that each work may not have the same audience of poetry readers in mind. Consider and discuss what you understand to be the target audience of each book and how well each work reaches that audience.

**Young Adult Literature** – a book written for a teen audience (fiction, nonfiction, poetry, or graphic novels are eligible)

- Is the book of outstanding quality? Does it stand out as an original work?
- Will the book be compelling and engaging to teen readers?
- If the book is nonfiction, is it accurate and informative? Is its material verifiable, and are sources provided if/where they should be? Does the book offer up new information or take a fresh, appealing approach to traditional material?
- Is the book memorable and distinctive? How likely is it to change the way the reader views themselves or the world?
- Like literature for middle grades, Young Adult fiction should center the agency of its protagonists as they explore worlds or situations that help them establish their sense of self.

Contemporary literature for young adults can include mature language and subject matter (sexuality, drug use, etc.). Some readers will question the appropriateness of such material for young adults. Individual tastes and opinions should be aired freely, but the panel’s job is to decide if the author has introduced the themes effectively, integrated them into the plot, and addressed them with authenticity, sensitivity, and compassion.

## APPENDIX

### Social Identity Groups

Social identity refers to a person's identity related to group membership and the social groups to which they belong. Social identity groups are based on the physical, social, and mental characteristics of individuals. They are sometimes obvious and clear, sometimes not obvious and unclear, often self-claimed and frequently ascribed by others. Below are examples of social identity groupings.

<u>Social Identity Groups</u>	<u>Examples (Feel free to use your own language for your identities.)</u>
Gender	Woman, Man, Transgender, Gender non-binary
Sex	Intersex, Female, Male
Race	Asian, Native American, Latino/a/x, Black, White, Bi/Multiracial
Ethnicity	Irish, Chinese, Puerto Rican, Italian, Dakota, Jewish, Guatemalan, Lebanese
Sexual Orientation	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Pan-Sexual, Heterosexual, Queer, Questioning
Religion/Spirituality	Hindu, Muslim, Buddhist, Jewish, Christian, Pagan, Agnostic, Faith/Meaning Atheist, Secular Humanist
Social Class	Poor, Working Class, Lower-Middle Class, Upper-Middle Class, Owning Class, Ruling Class
Age	Child, Young Adult, Middle-Age Adult, Elderly
(Dis)Ability	People with disabilities (cognitive, physical, emotional, etc.), Temporarily able-bodied, Temporarily disabled
Nation(s) of Origin and/or Citizenship	United States, Nigeria, Korea, Turkey, Argentina
Tribal or Indigenous Affiliation	Mohawk, Aboriginal, Navajo, Santal
First Language	Spanish, Annishinabe, Swahili, American English

#### Activity Directions:

- 1) Write your social identities for each group in the corresponding space on the wheel.
- 2) Fill in #1 - 5 in the center of the wheel.
- 3) Write **M**, **P**, or **M/P** in each space on the wheel to indicate whether this identity is more marginalized, privileged, or both depending on the context

**Marginalized Group:** Social identity groups that have been historically disenfranchised and exploited.

**Privileged Group:** Social identity groups that have been afforded certain social advantages, benefits, or degrees of prestige and respect that an individual has by virtue of belonging to certain social identity groups.



