



Resources for Teachers and Librarians

The activity suggestions provided below are designed to encourage children and students of all ages to become actively involved in reading, writing and illustrating.

Use these as a starting point to stimulate your own ideas for working with the New Zealand Book Awards for Children and Young Adults finalists in the classroom, in the library or at home.

Information Skills

General Activities

- Arrange a visit to the local library. Take part in the Awards activities being organised at your library.
- Write a communal story or short passage using the overhead projector, editing and correcting as you go.
- Pull a book apart — figuratively! Discuss the purpose of the ISBN, the index, table of contents, paperback versus hardcover...
- Look at non-fiction books. How do they differ from fiction titles? What contents will you typically find in a non-fiction book?
- Explore the ways your school or local library is organised. Think of five favourite books and work out where they should be shelved in the library.
- Take three paragraphs from a favourite book and re-write these in a different way (eg. in first person, in a more/less descriptive style, using simpler words, in a pupil's words).
- Discuss why different pupils choose different books — by the cover, a known author, the blurb, the last page...

- Look at the way books are catalogued in the library. Discuss the advantages of a computerised catalogue.
- Have pupils keep a record for a week of everything they read — bus timetables, food wrappers, books, TV guides, letters, internet pages. Discuss the importance of reading and comprehension.
- Invite your local librarian or historian to give a talk on the history of writing - how it developed out of an oral history tradition and where it belongs in an electronic age.
- Invite a publisher to talk about how a book is made - from writing and illustrating, through to design, production and distribution.
- Invite your local PostShop or Mail Centre manager to visit and discuss the ways information is circulated (eg. post, courier, e-mail) and the ways these have changed. Study the journey of a letter. Organise a visit to a local sorting office or mail centre.

Early Childhood

- Make a game of identifying characters in favourite books.
- Visit the local library to find books about a special topic.
- Find a particular book on the bookshelves of the library.
- Organise a “sharing books with home” scheme.

Primary & Intermediate

- Play “Consequences” with the starting phrase “I went to the bookshop to buy a book...”
- Start a class lending library - let the pupils take home books to read with their parents. Have them choose a title to take home and explain their choice.
- Have the class design and carry out a reading survey among the pupils of another class. Pool the information and see what can be established about reading patterns.
- Match authors with titles. Write blurbs for a range of one author's titles.
- Look at character names from books. Discuss why authors may have chosen them.
- Compare short story, poem and novel writing styles.

Secondary

- Analyse a passage from a finalist title. Look at style, grammar, imagery.
- Organise a debate on a controversial book - those who love it defending it against those who hate it.
- Debate the importance of reading as a life-skill.
- Plan a five minute video using a scene from a book. Choose one angle, decide what is incidental to the plot, what is essential. Draw up a storyboard and write the screenplay, trying to stay true to the style the author intended.
- Research an author on-line looking for information about background, genre, and advice for new writers (publisher's websites are often a good place to start).

Read, Write, Illustrate

General Activities

- Book reviews — organise for students to present a review of a book or books of their choice in a live radio situation.
- Design a poster to encourage reading.
- Keep a reading journal - notes on character names, ideas for stories, reviews, interesting words or phrases, sketches.
- Make a collection of biographies of famous or local people. Write and illustrate a biography.
- Have pupils write letters to authors and illustrators explaining why they like that person's work.
- Read the start of a story and have pupils develop the story, or fill out a character.
- Have pupils write a story leading to a given punch-line.
- Have pupils write about a photograph of a local event, a sports hero, a visiting band, a natural disaster...
- Invent a class plot and have every pupil write or tell the story in his or her own style.
- Tell the same story from different viewpoints - for example, as a baby, a very busy person, a poet, a blind person...
- Paint a photo - enlarge a regular photograph of a group of family or friends and use thick watercolours to paint on special effects such as science-fiction costumes or fantastical backgrounds. Write a story about the illustration.
- Take illustration to the next level - have students create 3D artworks based on favourite books. Offer your artwork for display in the local library.
- Have a pavement art morning, drawing scenes from books. Have one pupil illustrate another's story, or invite older pupils to illustrate the stories of younger children.

Early Childhood

- Design a New Zealand Book Awards for Children and Young Adults bookmark.
- Read a book aloud and have the children retell the story in their own words.
- Invite secondary students to share story time with your pupils.
- Help children make their own stories and pictures into books.

Primary and Intermediate

- Find a favourite book where you think the cover does not do justice to the story and design a better cover.
- Find a book where the story does not live up to the cover and write a better story.
- Hold a quiz focusing on New Zealand books and authors.
- Write a poem about enjoying reading.
- Paint the library or classroom windows with scenes from books.

- Write a communal story or draw a communal mural to illustrate various story scenes.
- Create an evolving poem.

Secondary

- Debate the merits of various forms of entertainment or various uses of leisure time, including reading.
- Produce a non-fiction book using the skills of various pupils to write the text, take photographs, design the cover, pose for action photographs, index, layout, print, bind, catalogue etc...
- Host a writing or illustrating workshop.
- Host a Book Conference to coincide with the New Zealand Book Awards for Children and Young Adults celebrations — invite other schools to attend. This could involve workshops, guest speakers etc and conclude with a social event.
- Design individual cartoons (analyse other cartoons, discussing ideas that work and why).
- Host theatre-sports with impromptu skits based on finalist titles.

Writers Around Us

General Activities

- Invite a New Zealand author or illustrator to your school or library. Contact either the Regional Co-ordinator for your area or contact the New Zealand Book Council about their Writers in Schools scheme.
- Prepare for the visit: Read aloud at least one of the author's books to the pupils in advance. Think of questions to ask the writer or illustrator. Illustrate scenes from their book to hang on the walls. Plan in advance activities in which the author or illustrator can participate - for example, a communal story or mural.
- Host a “Read Aloud” day and have people from your community reading to groups of pupils.
- Write a local story using imaginary or historical characters set in your immediate environment.
- Interview people in your community and write their story. This could be compiled as an “A Day in the Life of...” series.
- Choose a New Zealand book (fiction or non-fiction) that best reflects the local community or environment. Could the book have been written about your area? What things are the same, or different?
- Find out about authors and illustrators living locally. Check your *School Journal* catalogue for brief biographies of writers. Research other work by finalist writers.

Early Childhood

- Invite appropriate people from your community to share story-time (e.g. a dancer to read a book about dancing).
- Write a communal story about a typical day for your group using the names of all the children involved. Include photographs and illustrations.
- Find examples of distinctively New Zealand things or ideas in books.

Primary and Intermediate

- Collect photographs of New Zealand authors and illustrators for a scrapbook.
- Design a poster to promote the books of your favourite local author (you might even like to send copies to that author).
- On a map of New Zealand flag where various authors live. Are they disproportionately represented in some areas? What is the rural /urban mix?
- Is writing or illustrating always a full-time occupation? Find out about other jobs New Zealand authors and illustrators might have, or have done in the past.

Secondary

- Stage a role-play interview with students acting as journalists and an author - investigate the writing process.
- Collect and catalogue information on New Zealand authors and illustrators, including photographs, lists of their works, reviews and interviews.
- Choose New Zealand characters from books that students are familiar with and discuss the methods the author uses to show they are New Zealanders. Discuss whether writers write better about things with which they are familiar.

Finalist Critique

General Activities

- Arrange a display of the New Zealand Book Awards for Children and Young Adults finalist titles.
- Make up a display board with information on the finalist titles using pupils' art, book covers, reviews, etc.
- From the covers of the finalist titles try to guess what the story or subject of the book will be.
- You be the judge - have a class or group vote on the finalist titles and choose which books you would like to win the New Zealand Book Awards for Children and Young Adults this year. Enter as a judge a school to vote in the Children's Choice Award.
- Judge the books on different criteria - illustration, story, most informative, most fun to read, best production.

- Discuss the finalist titles in one category. Why would the judges have selected them? What lasting qualities do they have? What makes them particularly interesting or different?
- Guess which books the judges will choose as the winners and why.
- Debate or discuss which books should win each category.
- Discuss the characters in one or more of the finalist stories. Are they realistic or fanciful?

Analysis

Analyse the components of the books in different categories:

Picture Book

- How does the cover convey the story?
- How is the story structured?
- What role do the illustrations play in telling the story?

The Novel

- What is the plot of the book?
- How is the book structured to create impact?
- Are the characters believable?
- Is the language used believable?

Non-Fiction Book

- Is the subject well covered?
- Is it easy to find information?
- Is there a contents list and index?

Early Childhood

- Read the stories out loud.
- Encourage art activities based on the finalist stories.
- Keep a scrapbook of information about finalist titles — cut articles from local and national papers, record which books your group has read, and what the reaction to each book was.
- Choose an appropriate book from the finalists and play “let’s pretend” around the subject.
- Mark on a map of New Zealand where the authors and illustrators of the finalist books come from.

Primary and Intermediate

- Design stamps based on award finalists and display them in the library or at your local bookshop.
- Design posters to advertise the Awards- display them in the school library, or offer them to a local bookshop for display.

- Organise a Book Week concluding with a celebration parade involving other classes, the local library and bookshop.
- Check this site to find out the award winners and make an announcement to the school or library. Hold a celebration party.

Secondary

- Compare the Non-Fiction and Fiction finalist titles. What are the differences? Look at how other books in the library are classified as fiction and non-fiction.
- Have students write book reviews about finalist titles. Display these, then compile as a set.
- Have a group select a finalist book to “sell” to the rest of a class with a stand-up presentation.
- Invent advertising “strap-lines” or slogans for the New Zealand Book Awards for Children and Young Adults.