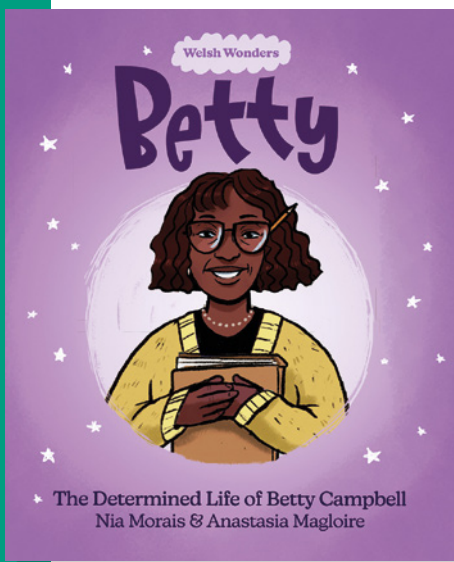
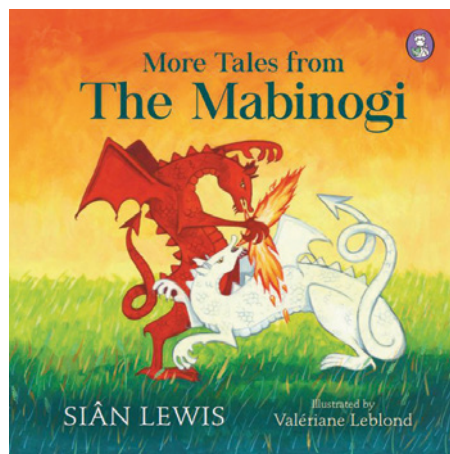
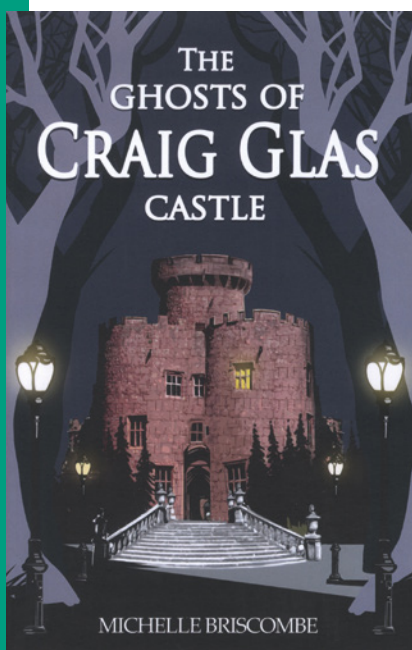


guidelines



A fun reading challenge that encourages reading for pleasure for primary-age children in Wales

BOOK SLAM 2024-25



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What is the BookSlam?

This is an annual project that encourages young readers from Years 3–6 to read for pleasure, discuss the books they read, and enjoy preparing a creative video, as a group or class, based on one of the books on the reading list.

Schools can compete in the 3 categories listed below, each category has its own reading list:

- Years 3–6 English medium
- Years 3 and 4 (Welsh medium) and Translingual schools
- Years 5 and 6 Welsh medium

Guidelines are available for the three categories above.

It's a fun reading challenge for primary-age children in Wales which:

- encourages children to get hooked on reading and enjoy good books
- cultivates positive and long-term attitudes towards reading
- supports the development of emotional literacy and nurtures key skills such as communication and analysis
- supports the requirements of the Curriculum by offering a variety of activities to individuals and groups across the Areas of Learning and Experience
- promotes and raises awareness of books, authors and illustrators
- celebrates exceptional quality in the field of children's literature

The BookSlam competition is open to Years 3 to 6, and teachers are free to choose whether they would like to participate with whole classes or with reading groups.

Schools will need to choose one book from the list to discuss and another to present as an advertisement. A county round will be held under the care of the county organisers, and the county winners will go on to the national round in the summer term (see more on page 10).

The winning school will win a special trophy and one of the following:

- 1st prize – £200 worth of books
- 2nd prize – £150 worth of books
- 3rd prize – £100 worth of books

How does it work?

Here are 8 useful steps to explain the plan and what the teachers and children need to do:

Step 1

Contact your county organiser to register for the BookSlam competition.

Step 2

Browse through the selection of titles on the reading list for readers Years 3–6 and then choose your titles from the collection. Choose one book for the discussion challenge and another for the book advertisement challenge.

Step 3

Order your books from the library or local shop (further information can be found at the end of the guide). Some of the titles are also available as e-books.

Step 4

Read and enjoy the books (as a group or class). You will receive an activity pack from the Books Council which includes ideas for activities that work across the 6 Areas of Learning and Experience, as well as Get to Know the Author profiles.

Step 5

After reading, choose members for your team / discussion group (maximum 4 members) and promotional advertisement group / creative video clip (there is no maximum number for this element of the project).

Step 6

Discuss the book in detail as a **group of 4**. It will be necessary to create / perform a presentation in the form of an **advertisement** to encourage other readers to enjoy another book from the list. Whole classes can take part in the advertisement task. Further guidance is provided below.

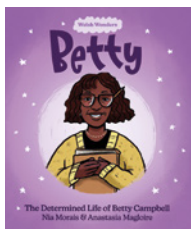
Step 7

Your county organiser will contact you to arrange a date for the county rounds. These will most likely be hosted on Teams.

Step 8

The successful teams will receive an invitation to the final round. A maximum of **8 members** will need to be selected to attend the national round of the BookSlam in the summer term – 4 for the discussion group and 4 for the additional challenges: namely writing a blurb (maximum of 2), and illustrating a cover (maximum of 2). The discussion group is welcome to discuss a different book which can be self-selected, or another book from the reading list for the national round.

2024–25 Reading List



Title: Welsh Wonders: *Betty – The Determined Life of Betty Campbell*

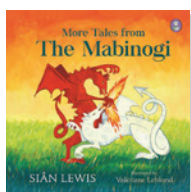
Author: Nia Morais

Publisher: Broga

Description: Read about Betty Campbell's valuable contribution to our culture as Wales' first Black headteacher. Another book in the popular Welsh Wonders series.

ISBN: 9781914303326 (1914303326)

Price: £5.99



Title: *More Tales from the Mabinogi*

Author: Siân Lewis

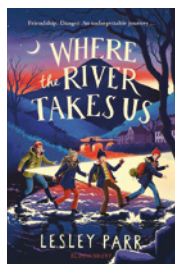
Publisher: Dragon Press

Description: The much-anticipated sequel to the Tir na n-Og award-winning book *The Four Branches of the Mabinogi* by Siân Lewis, illustrated by Valériane Leblond. The three mythical stories skilfully re-told are 'Culhwch and Olwen', 'Lludd and Llefelys' and 'Macsen's Dream'.

ISBN: 9781804163467 (1804163465)

Price: £12.99

Also available as an e-book



Title: *Where the River Takes Us*

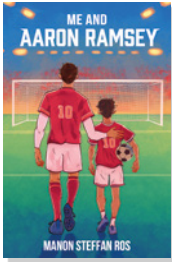
Author: Lesley Parr

Publisher: Bloomsbury

Description: From the author of *The Valley of Lost Secrets* comes a thrilling historical adventure set against a backdrop of the 1970s miners' strikes, perfect for readers aged 9+. Echoing *Stand By Me*, this thrilling middle-grade adventure gives us the most exquisite characterisation and a page-turning plot with relatable themes, making an utterly timeless and fine historical fiction.

ISBN: 9781526647771 (152664777X)

Price: £7.99



Title: *Me and Aaron Ramsey*

Author: Manon Steffan Ros

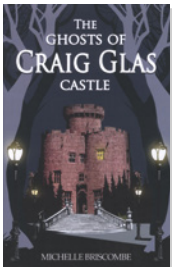
Publisher: Firefly Press

Description: *Me and Aaron Ramsey* tells the story of Sam and his dad who both love football, which is always there for them however tough real life becomes. That is, until Dad's dreams of football stardom go horribly wrong. Sam's love for the footballing legend becomes tangled with his relationship for his father as things go awry in their family life.

ISBN: 9781915444493 (1915444497)

Price: £7.99

Also available as an e-book



Title: *The Ghosts of Craig Glas Castle*

Author: Michelle Briscoe

Publisher: Candy Jar Books

Description: It's flattering when ghosts trust you with their stories – if only they'd stop talking occasionally! So, when Flora and Archie are offered a trip to Craig Glas Castle in Wales, and take a break from talking to ghosts, they can't wait to go. But not everything at the castle is what it seems and soon the best friends embark on another ghostly detective adventure.

ISBN: 9781915439307 (1915439302)

Price: £7.99



Title: *...And I Hear Dragons*

Author: Hanan Issa

Publisher: Firefly Press

Description: Groundbreaking anthology edited by 2022–2025 National Poet of Wales, Hanan Issa. A collection of diverse voices showcasing a range of experiences across Wales, focusing on identity, and dragons!

ISBN: 9781915444578 (1915444578)

Price: £7.99

County Rounds

The Discussion

- The main aim of this challenge is to show that the group can discuss the characters, events, themes and messages of the book along with the reading experience. There are examples of the type of points to consider whilst preparing for the discussion on the next page.
- **The intention is not to prepare / learn a discussion script in advance.**
- All members are expected to contribute to the discussion and respond to each other's comments, open-ended questions, and the judge's comments where appropriate.
- There will be 4 members in each discussion team.
- The discussion session with the judge will last around 8 minutes; the judge will give a minute's warning before the end of the discussion.

What will the judge be looking for?

Information

Thorough knowledge of the book's content.

The ability to delve into the book(s), story, and characters, where appropriate.

A good understanding of the book's message and themes.

Refer to wider reading beyond the requirements of the competition books, where appropriate.

Expressing Opinions

Express opinions clearly, giving honest and fair reasons.

The ability to ask, agree, disagree, answer, and challenge politely where appropriate.

Listen and build on each other's comments.

Offer comments that are relevant to other comments.

Discuss as a Group

The ability to discuss independently as a group.

An equal and balanced contribution from all members of the group.

A lively discussion.

Being able to respond to questions that arise from the discussion.

Language Accuracy and Naturalness

Demonstrate good use of vocabulary, expressions and book terminology.

50% of the marks are given for the discussion in the county round and 40% of the marks for the discussion in the national round.

County Rounds

Examples of discussion points

- Was there anything in particular that you enjoyed about/in the book?
- What caught your attention about/in the book?
- Was there anything you didn't enjoy about/in the book?
- Did you notice any patterns in the book?
- What were your first impressions of the book?
- Have you read any books like this before?
- Did you read the book more than once?
- Did you enjoy the book more or less after re-reading it? Can you explain why?
- Do you think other people should read this book more than once?
- What would you like to change about the book?
- Who do you think this book is suitable for?
- How would you describe this book to someone your age?
- Would you recommend this book to other children? Why?
- Which character did you find most interesting? In what way? Why?
- If you could meet one character from the book, who would you like to meet? Why?
- Do you think the characters are believable? Why?
- Where does the story take place? Does that matter? Could the story take place in a different location?
- Was the location important to you as you read the book?
- What have you learned by reading this book?
- What questions did you have after reading this book? Have you found answers to those questions? What were the answers?
- How do you think reading non-fiction books is different from reading fiction books?
- What do you think is the most important thing about this book?

County Rounds

Promotional Advertisement – one of the books on the list.

- The main aim of this challenge is to show creativity and understanding of the content of the book. It will be necessary to create a video clip promoting the book, ensuring that it appeals to an audience of children of the same age in order to encourage them to buy and read it.
- A maximum of 3 minutes is allowed for the video clip.
- The members who create the video clip do not have to be the same as the pupils who will take part in the discussion: the whole class can take part in this activity.
- One mark is deducted for every 30 seconds over the 3 minutes allowed.
- You can film a stage performance OR you can film in different locations – be as creative as you like!
- You can use green screen or simple video editing software video clip (in MP4 format). The quality of the editing will not be judged.

What will the judge be looking for?

- A video clip that conveys the feel of the book and encourages the target audience to read the book.
- A lively performance with various dramatic effects.
- The ability to project and convey a message clearly: loud, clear and confident voices.
- A clip that captures attention and is full of enthusiasm.
- Effective use of vocabulary to persuade and promote the themes within the book.
- The ability to work as a team: an opportunity for each individual to contribute to the video clip.
- Pupils are allowed to use simple video editing software.
- The quality of the editing will not be judged.

50% of the marks are given for the advert in the county round and 40% of the marks for the video advert in the national round.

The National Round

A great opportunity for learners to come together to discuss books, experience the thrill of attending an author's workshop and watch their adverts on the big screen! Before the day, teachers will need to choose a **maximum of 8 members** for the team. We recommend travelling to Aberystwyth in two cars to avoid hiring a mini bus.

- **4 members to discuss a book** (from the reading list or a self-selected book with a Welsh theme). The discussion is a combination of questions from the judge and free discussion from the team. The discussion will last 8 minutes.
- **2 members for drawing a new front cover for a book.** The Books Council will provide learners with a brief on the day and provide resources. This task will last 45 minutes. Please see the criteria below (page 12).
- **2 members for writing a blurb.** The Books Council will provide a brief for learners on the day. Writing resources and dictionaries will be available. This task will last 45 minutes. See the criteria below (page 11).

The teams that reach the national round (from **Years 5 and 6**) will be able to watch each other's videos during the cinema session and join in a workshop with an author.

40% of the marks are given for the video clip, 40% for the discussion, 10% for the blurb, and 10% for the cover.

The winning schools will win a special trophy and one of the following prizes:

- 1st prizes – £200 worth of books
- 2nd prize – £150 worth of books
- 3rd prize – £100 worth of books

Criteria – Design a New Blurb

Here is an example of the Criteria that will be available at the National Round.
A copy of the book, as well as resources such as paper and pens, will be provided.

We want you to write a new blurb for this book which ...

- gives a good idea of the book without saying too much
– enough to draw readers' attention!
- includes varied and interesting vocabulary
- highlights at least one important theme or message from the book
- is no more than 100 words
- encourages readers to pick up the book
- shows creativity and original ideas

You have about 45 minutes to complete this task.

Criteria – Design a New Book Cover

Here is an example of the Criteria that will be available at the National Round. A copy of the book, as well as resources such as paper and pencils, will be provided.

We want you to create a brand new book cover for this book which ...

- conveys the story but without saying too much – just enough to draw readers' attention!
- is attractive and colorful
- is creative
- highlights at least one important theme or message from the book
- shows original ideas

You have about 45 minutes to complete this task.

Timetable 2024–25

The Books Council to share a list of the books and information about the competition **September/October 2024**

Last date to register with your local organiser **5 December 2024**

County rounds to be completed by **23 May 2025**

County organisers inform the Books Council of the county results by **30 May 2025**

Schools to send videos by **6 June 2025**

National rounds:

- Years 5 and 6 BookSlam (English medium) **19 June 2025**
- Years 3 and 4 Welsh Medium and Translingual Schools **17 June 2025**
- Years 5 and 6 Welsh Medium **18 June 2025**

The finals will be held in Arad Goch, Aberystwyth, and teams will need to arrive at 9.30 in the morning.

How to order your books

- From your local bookshop or library.
- Via gwales.com. We will pay a commission to a bookshop of your choice.
- Via Shoned, Schools Officer for the Books Council of Wales. You will also be supporting your local bookshop: shoned.davies@llyfrau.cymru

Please contact us if you have any questions:

- **Email:** plant@llyfrau.cymru
- **Address:** Department of Children's Books and Reading Promotion, Books Council of Wales, Castell Brychan, Aberystwyth, Ceredigion SY23 2JB
- **Phone:** 01970 624151