

**Children's Book Council of Australia**  
**Shadow Judging Criteria unpacked**



**SUN PROJECT**  
 illuminating children's literature



CBCA Judges' Criteria	Older/Younger Readers	Early Childhood
<b>General criteria for all categories</b>		
Judges assess how the setting and sense of place contribute to the storyline.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Describe the world of your story. How does the author make it a world you could recognise and or believe in? How do you know that?</li> <li>How is the world established? What does the author do to give you a sense of where the character lives?</li> <li>Discuss how the author draws you into their setting.</li> <li>Speculate and justify why one author is able to create a stronger sense of setting in the Shortlist.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Describe the world of your story. Make connections to places you can recognise or have been to.</li> <li>Consider how the author draws you into their setting.</li> <li>Speculate on which setting in the 6 Shortlisted books feels the most 'real'. Why do you think that?</li> </ul>
Judges look for strong main and minor characters with convincing dialogue that readers can identify with.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Describe how you see the characters. Suggest ways from the text that the author has developed the personalities of the characters through the book.</li> <li>How well did you understand the characters: their motivations and actions?</li> <li>Explain how you felt about the characters.</li> <li>Explain how the author made the characters real for you or not.</li> <li>Speculate on how the author made you feel that your experiences were being reflected in</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Describe how you see the characters. Suggest ways from the text that the author has developed the personalities of the characters through the book. What words help us to understand the characters' personalities?</li> <li>How do you feel about the characters? How are they like some people you know in real life?</li> <li>Consider the actions of the characters. Share times when you have acted or felt like the character. Why did you act or think this way?</li> </ul>

CBCA Judges' Criteria	Older/Younger Readers	Early Childhood
	<p>the thoughts, actions and motivations of the characters in the book.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss how the author allowed you to connect with the lives of the characters.</li> <li>• Evaluate the language of the dialogue: Reflect on how a character of this age would speak. Assess how well the author has used authentic dialogue with their characters and their ages. How well could you identify with the characters' dialogue and why was this?</li> <li>• If you were left wondering about the character/s, what does this say to you?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluate the language of the dialogue: Reflect on how a character of this age would speak. How well could you identify with the characters' dialogue and why was this?</li> <li>• What questions would you still like to ask the characters? what wasn't resolved in your mind about a character?</li> </ul>
<p>Judges assess the plot and consider its pace and The mood that is established.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How is the book paced? Describe how the author keeps the plot moving.</li> <li>• Explain how the author has presented the narrative: Does it go backward and forward in time? In chronological sequence? Deliberate on how well the pacing works to enrich the reading experience.</li> <li>• What other narrative techniques do you notice the author has used to keep the story moving?</li> <li>• Are there a single, dual or multiple points of view presented? Consider how this adds to/detracts from the reading experience and impacts on the telling of the story. Justify how different points of view help the reader to understand the characters. How does who is telling the story impact on your feelings about the story?</li> <li>• Share how readers felt after reading the book: satisfied, unsettled, frustrated, inspired, adventurous or something else. How do you know that?</li> <li>• Justify how the mood of the book contributed to your overall feeling about the book.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How is the book paced? Consider the events and how they keep the plot moving.</li> <li>• Explain how the author has presented the narrative: Does it go backward and forward in time? In chronological sequence?</li> <li>• Are there a single, dual or multiple points of view presented? Who is telling the story?</li> <li>• Share how readers felt after reading the book: satisfied, unsettled, frustrated, inspired, adventurous or something else. How do you know that?</li> <li>• Justify how the mood of the book contributed to your overall feeling about the book.</li> </ul>
<p>Judges consider how the action and resolution are achieved. They focus on the writing and assess</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explain how your opinion/understanding has changed by walking in the shoes of the</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explain how your understanding has changed by walking in the shoes of the characters.</li> </ul>

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<p>that it is credible and appropriate. They look to see how the writing extends the reader's experience and helps them understand more about themselves and their world.</p>	<p>characters. Consider how the author has shared a different lived experience with the reader and how you, the reader, might now feel.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reflect on the ending. Would you consider other options? Can you justify these thoughts?</li> </ul>	<p>Consider how the author has shared a different lived experience with the reader and how you, the reader, might now feel.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reflect on the ending and how it made you feel.</li> </ul>
<p>Judges look to see that ideas are well crafted, generated and selected to explore recognisable themes or develop a fresh perspective.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Speculate on some of the themes explored in the books. Are there common themes across the Shortlist? Consider how the authors have approached themes in the books. Comment on how they are similar or different.</li> <li>• Consider any "big ideas" to think about in this book. How were they presented to the reader? What questions about people or life did you find in your own thoughts while or after you were reading?</li> <li>• How is diversity represented in the book? Consider the importance of diverse representation. Why is it important for readers to see themselves reflected in books? Speculate on or research the background of the author. Do you think it is important to have authentic voices with similar lived experiences to the characters in their books? Evaluate how successful this is in adding to the reading experience.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Speculate on what the author is sharing with the reader. Are there common themes across the Shortlist?</li> <li>• Consider connections to the themes and to a reader's own life.</li> <li>• Consider the "big ideas" to think about in this book. How were they presented to the reader?</li> <li>• How is diversity represented in the book? Consider the importance of diverse representation. Why is it important for readers to see themselves reflected in books?</li> </ul>
<p>Judges consider the age appropriateness of the text.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss what 'age-appropriate' means. What is the author's purpose? Who is the intended audience?</li> <li>• Consider the intended target audience and assess how well the book works to reflect the interests and language of the intended age.</li> <li>• Speculate on whether there were any challenges, that may need to be discussed, for a reader of this book.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss what 'age-appropriate' means. Who would enjoy the book most? Why?</li> <li>• Consider the intended target audience and assess how well the book works to reflect the interests and language of the intended age. Do readers understand the themes, language and plot?</li> <li>• Speculate on whether there were any challenges, that may need to be discussed, for a reader of this book.</li> </ul>

CBCA Judges' Criteria	Older/Younger Readers	Early Childhood
Judges look for consistency in the author's use of effective words and phrases. They consider whether the sentences are natural and creative. They examine if the language is appropriate to the theme and characters. For younger readers, judges give weight to how well the story can be read aloud.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider the style of the writing. Is it poetic, dynamic, casual or something else? Explain how the style of the writing adds to the reader's experience and fits the characters, plot and message of the book.</li> <li>Consider the language choice and how appropriate it is to the age of the characters, the intended audience and the setting in time and place. Evaluate how well it works in the book.</li> <li>Discuss how the language chosen adds to the reading experience; Is it easy to read? Lyrical? Rhythmic? How has the author written it this way?</li> <li>Did you enjoy the way the story was told and who the author chose to narrate the story? Were there any WOW words, phrases or paragraphs?</li> <li>Books extend our understanding of people and their experiences. Do you think this book did that for you? How do you know that?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider the style of the writing. Is it poetic, dynamic, casual or something else? Explain how the style of the writing adds to the reader's experience and fits the characters, plot and message of the book.</li> <li>Consider the language choice and how appropriate it is to the age of the characters, the intended audience and the setting in time and place. Evaluate how well it works in the book.</li> <li>Discuss how the language chosen adds to the reading experience; Is it easy to read? Lyrical? Rhythmic? Does it sound good when read aloud?</li> <li>Did you enjoy the way the story was told and who the author chose to narrate the story? Were there any WOW words, phrases or paragraphs?</li> <li>What did you learn from the characters in the story?</li> </ul>
Judges consider design: All elements of highest quality combine to make an excellent production. The endpapers reflect the storyline. Fonts, style and size are highly appropriate for the targeted reader.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Comment on the front cover and its appeal.</li> <li>Share thoughts on what the cover suggests about the book and possible content. This could be discussed both before and after reading.</li> <li>How might you visualise a different cover for the book?</li> <li>Consider how well the font, page design, end papers and illustrations suit the story. Justify thoughts with examples from the book.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Comment on the front cover and its appeal.</li> <li>Share thoughts on what the cover suggests about the book and possible content. This could be discussed both before and after reading.</li> <li>How might you visualise a different cover for the book?</li> <li>Consider how well the font, page design, end papers and illustrations suit the story. Justify thoughts with examples from the book.</li> </ul>

Picture Book	Simplified	Primary/Secondary
Books in which the text and illustrations work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What do the pictures tell us about where the story takes place?</li> <li>Explain why you think this.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Search for literary elements in the illustrations. Explain how the pictures add to the setting,</li> </ul>

Picture Book	Simplified	Primary/Secondary
<p>together and the story is enhanced through the illustrations. The illustrations are an integral part of or extend the meaning on the page.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider how the illustrator draws you into their setting.</li> <li>• What do the pictures tell us about the characters? Look at their size, their clothes and their faces. What might they be like? Why do you say that?</li> <li>• Look at the colours the illustrator has used to draw the characters. How do these colours help us to know what the characters are like and how they are feeling? Think about different colours and how they represent or show different emotions. Look at the colours the illustrator has used in the pictures. How do these colours help us to decide if the story is a happy, sad, scary or adventurous one?</li> <li>• Speculate on which setting in the 6 Shortlisted books feels the most 'real'. Why do you think that?</li> <li>• Find parts in the book where the writing is telling the same story as the pictures. Share times when the writing and the pictures are telling a different story. Why might an illustrator tell a different story with their pictures to the author's words?</li> <li>• Consider what extra information is given in the illustrations about a character or a setting. Look closely at faces, gestures, items, or objects in a setting. What examples can you share that help you learn more about the story? How does this help you to understand the story?</li> <li>• What questions do you still have about the characters, the story or the setting after reading the book? What ideas can you add yourself about what happened? About what a character might be thinking?</li> </ul>	<p>understanding of the characters feelings or actions, the mood.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider if the verbal and visual correspond. Can you give examples of this? Discuss whether this is sustained throughout.</li> <li>• Consider what extra information is given in the words, images or use of colour. How does this help the story? Look closely at faces, gestures, items, objects or the colours used in an image. What examples can you share that help you learn more about the story? How does this help you to understand the story?</li> <li>• Consider and discuss if there are any information gaps for the reader to fill with their thoughts. What information does the reader need to add for themselves?</li> </ul>
<p>Design: All elements of the highest quality; the endpapers reflect the storyline; original presentation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where have the writing and the pictures been placed on the page? Why do you think they</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider how the layout of illustrations provides a balance of space with the text. Explain how this adds to the text?</li> </ul>

Picture Book	Simplified	Primary/Secondary
	<p>are put there? How does this help to tell the story?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Look at the endpapers. What clues do they give to what the story will be about? Consider why the illustrator used these colours/images.</li> <li>Consider what you notice first in each page of pictures. Why did you notice this first? What did the illustrator do to make you notice this image/part of image first? Why do you think the illustrator wanted you to see this first? Why is this an important part of the picture?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How do the endpapers reflect or add to the storyline?</li> <li>Discuss any camera angles or viewing perspectives. What do these reveal about what the illustrator wants the viewer to see or notice? Consider what the illustrator is directing the viewer's eye towards.</li> </ul>
<p>Illustrations: The quality of medium used is excellent; the illustrations are fully entwined with the text on the page and this enhances the story; the layout of illustrations provides a balance of space and text. There is a consistent quality of illustration throughout the book. The artistic style, media and artistic elements of colour, line, shape and texture match the written text or idea.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Look at the lines and shapes drawn by the illustrator. What are they like? Are they round and swirly or straight, sharp and heavy? How do sharp, straight and jagged lines make you feel? What about round, swirly lines? How do the lines match the storyline?</li> <li>Look at how the illustrator drew the pictures. What did they use? Paint, pencil, paper? How does the medium used by the illustrator help tell the story?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Describe whether the artistic style, media and elements of colour, line, shape and texture match or enhance the written words. Why do you think that?</li> <li>Consider the quality of the illustrations throughout the book? How is this quality maintained?</li> </ul>

### Eve Pownall Information Book

The contemporary view regarding information books for children and young people has moved towards accessibility of information, engaging readers, and stimulating interest in the subject of the book. Creators of books in this category may recognise that disciplinary knowledge is dynamic and evolving. The active role of the reader is encouraged and both evidence and space for further research regarding the current knowledge of the topic can be discussed.

The source material needs to be included in the publication and creator notes may add additional information about the research process. Illustrations or graphics should be appealing, integrated, and extend understanding of the topic.

This category includes picture books described as non-fiction picture books or information picture books. These books present accurate information and tell a story. Non-fiction information books integrate information and art, and these books may foster a connection with the topic, prompt a sense of wonder, and ignite curiosity.

Quality literature in this category will inform and inspire readers, engage them with the content and encourage further exploration. The intention of books in this category is to attract readers to the topic, allow them to interact with the content, and give pleasure in the discovery of new knowledge.

CBCA Judges' Criteria	Shadow Judges' Criteria	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Books which introduce or extend awareness and knowledge on a given topic.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How does the book set up opportunities for discussion?</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The information in the book is considered accurate and reliable given the current state of knowledge.</li> <li>The format of the book should be engaging and stimulate interest in the topic. In this way the books both delight and inform.</li> <li>The book should include references to source material and consideration given to the peritext or 'back matter' which can include a section on the writer's research or notes and decision making.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How can you judge that the information is accurate and reliable?</li> <li>Does the book keep your interest and encourage you to find out more information?</li> <li>Does the book included references and or notes that support the content in the book?</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Graphics should be high quality, relevant and appealing. Illustrations should be integrated and enhance understanding of the topic.</li> <li>Consider how well the book encourages exploration through the layering of close-up and long-shot illustrations, cut-aways and insets.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In what ways are the illustrations engaging and how do they add understanding of the topic?</li> </ul>	