

## **(Pura) Belpré Award terms and criteria**

### **Terms**

Two medals shall be awarded annually at the Annual Conference of the American Library Association, one to a Latino author of an outstanding children's book and one to a Latino illustrator for creating an outstanding children's picture book. Each of these must be an original work that portrays, affirms and celebrates the Latino cultural experience.

The award-winning books must be published in the United States or Puerto Rico during the preceding year.

Recipients of the Pura Belpré medal must be residents or citizens of the United States or Puerto Rico.

The committee in its deliberations is to consider only the books eligible for the award, as specified in the terms.

Fiction and nonfiction books for children published in Spanish, English, or bilingual formats are eligible.

Honor books may be named.

If suitable candidates are not found, the awards will not be presented in that year.

### **Definitions**

Author of an outstanding children's book indicates the creator of the text of a book. It also implies that the committee shall consider all forms of writing—fiction, non-fiction, and poetry—that have the Latino cultural experience as a theme. Reprints and compilations are not eligible.

A "children's book" shall be a book for which children are an intended potential audience. The book must display respect for children's understandings, abilities and appreciations. Children are defined as persons of ages up to and including 14, and books for this entire age range are to be considered.

A "children's picture book," as distinguished from other books with illustrations, is one that essentially provides the child with a visual experience. A picture book has a collective unity of story line, theme, or concept, developed through the series of pictures of which the book is comprised.

"Outstanding" is defined as

marked by eminence and distinction; noted for significant achievement.

marked by excellence in quality.

marked by conspicuous excellence or eminence.

individually distinct.

Author may include co-authors. The author(s) may be awarded the medal posthumously. In the case where the co-author is not of Latino heritage, the book is ineligible for consideration.

Illustrator may include co-illustrators. The artist(s) may be awarded the medal posthumously. In the case where the co-illustrator is not of Latino heritage, the book is ineligible for consideration.

One person may be selected to receive the awards in both categories.

In defining the term, "original work," the committee may consider books that are traditional in origin, if the book is the result of original research and the retelling and interpretation are the writer's own.

Children's books "published in the United States or Puerto Rico," means that books originally published in other countries are not eligible.

"Published in the preceding year" means that the book has a publication date in the year under consideration, was available for purchase in that year, and has a copyright date no later than that year. An eligible book may have a copyright date prior to the year under consideration if it was not published until the year under consideration. The intent: that every eligible book be considered, but that no book be considered in more than one year.

"Resident" specifies that author has established and maintained residence in the United States, or Puerto Rico, as distinct from being a casual or occasional visitor.

For purposes of this award, "Latino" is defined as people whose heritage emanates from any of the Spanish-speaking cultures of the Western Hemisphere.

The term "only the books eligible for the award" specifies that the committee is not to consider the entire body of work by an author or whether the author has previously won the award. The committee's decision is to be made following deliberation about eligible books published in the preceding year.

## **Criteria for text**

In identifying the author of an “outstanding” book for children, in addition to looking for an accurate and positive portrayal of the Latino culture, the committee members need to consider the following:

Interpretation of the theme or concept

Presentation of information including accuracy, clarity, and organization

Development of a plot

Delineation of characters

Delineation of setting

Appropriateness of style

Note: Because the literary qualities to be considered will vary depending on content, the committee need not expect to find excellence in each of the above named elements. The book should, however, have distinguished qualities in all of the elements pertinent.

Excellence of presentation for an intended child audience.

In considering a book, the committee is to make its decision primarily on the text. Other aspects of a book are to be considered only if they distract from the text. Such other aspects might include illustrations, overall design of the book, etc.

The book must be a self-contained entity, not dependent on other media (i.e., digital, sound or film equipment) for its enjoyment.

The committee should keep in mind that the award is for both literary quality and presentation for children, as well as for its portrayal of the Latino cultural experience.

Particular attention will be paid to cultural authenticity.

## **Criteria for Illustrations**

In identifying the illustrator of an outstanding picture book for children, committee members need to consider the following:

Excellence of execution in the artistic technique employed

Excellence of pictorial interpretation of story, theme, or concept

Appropriateness of style of illustration to the story, theme or concept

Delineation of plot, theme, characters, setting mood or information through the pictures

Positive and authentic portrayal of Latino culture

Excellence of presentation for an intended child audience

The only limitation to graphic form is that the form must be one, which may be used in a picture book. The book must be a self-contained entity, not dependent on other media (i.e., digital, sound or film equipment) for its enjoyment.

Each book is to be considered as a picture book. The committee is to make its decision primarily on the illustrations. Other components of a book are to be considered, especially when they make a book less effective as a children's picture book. Such other components might include the written text, the overall design of the book, etc.

The committee should keep in mind that the award is for both distinguished illustrations in picture book and for excellence of pictorial presentation for children, and for the positive portrayal of the Latino cultural heritage.

Particular attention will be paid to cultural authenticity.

Note: Speak only to the terms, criteria, and definitions for this award. Avoid generalities such as, "This is a nice book"; "The illustrations are appropriate," etc., without supporting critical analysis.

### **Pura Belpré**

The award is named after Pura Belpré, the first Latina librarian for the New York Public Library, who, as a children's librarian, author, and storyteller, enriched the lives of Puerto Rican children in the United States through her pioneer work of preserving and disseminating Puerto Rican folklore stories.