

Terms and criteria

Randolph Caldecott Medal

Terms

1. The Medal shall be awarded annually to the artist of the most distinguished American picture book for children published by an American publisher in the United States in English during the preceding year. There are no limitations as to the character of the picture book except that the illustrations be original work. Honor books may be named. These shall be books that are also truly distinguished.
2. The award is restricted to artists who are citizens or residents of the United States. Books published in a U.S. territory or U.S. commonwealth are eligible.
3. The committee in its deliberations is to consider only books eligible for the award, as specified in the terms.



Definitions

1. A "picture book for children" 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.
2. A "picture book for children" is one for which children are an intended potential audience. The book displays respect for children's understandings, abilities, and appreciations. Children are defined as persons of ages up to and including fourteen and picture books for this entire age range are to be considered.
3. "Distinguished" is defined as:
 - a. Marked by eminence and distinction; noted for significant achievement.
 - b. Marked by excellence in quality.
 - c. Marked by conspicuous excellence or eminence.
 - d. Individually distinct. The artist is the illustrator or co-illustrators. The artist may be awarded the medal posthumously.
4. The term "original work" may have several meanings. For purposes of these awards, it is defined as follows:

"Original work" means that the illustrations were created by this artist and no one else. Further, "original work" means that the illustrations are presented here for the first time and have not been previously published elsewhere in this or any other form. Illustrations reprinted or compiled from other sources are not eligible.

5. "American picture book in the United States" means that books first published in previous years in other countries are not eligible. Books published simultaneously in the U.S. and another country may be eligible. Books published in a U.S. territory or U.S. commonwealth are eligible.
6. "In English" means that the committee considers only books written and published in English. This requirement DOES NOT limit the use of words or phrases in another language where appropriate in context.
7. "Published...in the preceding year" means that the book has a publication date in that year, was available for purchase in that year, and has a copyright date no later than that year. A book might have a copyright date prior to the year under consideration but, for various reasons, was not published until the year under consideration. If a book is published prior to its year of copyright as stated in the book, it shall be considered in its year of copyright as stated in the book. The intent of the definition is that every book be eligible for consideration, but that no book be considered in more than one year.
8. "Resident" specifies that author has established and maintains a residence in the United States, U.S. territory, or U.S. commonwealth as distinct from being a casual or occasional visitor.
9. The term, "only the books eligible for the award," specifies that the committee is not to consider the entire body of the work by an artist or whether the artist has previously won the award. The committee's decision is to be made following deliberation about books of the specified calendar year.

Criteria

1. In identifying a "distinguished American picture book for children," defined as illustration, committee members need to consider:
 - a. Excellence of execution in the artistic technique employed;
 - b. Excellence of pictorial interpretation of story, theme, or concept;
 - c. Appropriateness of style of illustration to the story, theme or concept;
 - d. Delineation of plot, theme, characters, setting, mood or information through the pictures;
 - e. Excellence of presentation in recognition of a child audience.
2. 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., sound, film or computer program) for its enjoyment.
3. Each book is to be considered as a picture book. The committee is to make its decision primarily on the illustration, but 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.

Note: The committee should keep in mind that the award is for distinguished illustrations in a picture book and for excellence of pictorial presentation for children. The award is not for didactic intent or for popularity.