

# Ashland University Library Instructional Resource Center

## Caldecott Medal Criteria



### The Randolph Caldecott Medal

Presented by the American Library Association, Caldecott books are nominated and judged by the Newbery Medal Committee. While Newbery medal books honor authors, Caldecott medals are awarded each year to the “artist of the most distinguished American Picture Book for Children published during the preceding year.” Additionally, the artist “must be a citizen or resident of the United States, whether or not he be the author of the text.” It is possible for a book to be nominated for, and win, both the Caldecott and Newbery award.

Committee members are directed to remember the award is for “distinguished illustrations in a picture book” and not for “didactic intent or for popularity.” Specific terms and criteria have been adopted by the ALSC board and apply to the Caldecott medal. The following information is property of the American Library Association and may be found at: [www.ala.org/alsc/caldecott\\_terms.html](http://www.ala.org/alsc/caldecott_terms.html).

#### Terms and Criteria:

1. The Medal shall be awarded annually to the artist of the most distinguished American picture book for children published in the United States 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.
3. The committee in its deliberations is to consider only the 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 a 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
4. The artist is the illustrator or co-illustrators. The artist may be awarded the medal posthumously.
5. “Original Work” means that illustrations reprinted or compiled from other sources are not eligible.
6. “American picture book in the United States” specifies that books originally published in other countries are not eligible.
7. “Published ... in the preceding year” means that the book has a publication date 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 for more than one year.
8. “Resident” specifies that author has established and maintained residence in the United States as distinct from being a casual or occasional visitor.
9. The term, “only the books eligible for the Award,” specifies that the body of 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 picture in a book for children:
  - a. Committee members need to consider:
    - i. Excellence of execution in the artistic technique employed:
    - ii. Excellence of pictorial interpretation of story, theme, or concept; of appropriateness of style of illustration to the story, theme, or concept; of delineation of plot, theme, characters, setting mood or information through the pictures.
  - b. Committee members must consider 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 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.

## Selection Committee:

The Caldecott Award selection committee was established in 1938 and currently includes a chair plus fourteen members elected for a term of one year. The function statement reads: "To select from the books published the preceding year within the terms, definitions, and criteria governing the awards, the most distinguished American picture book for children."

## Who is ALSC?

ALSC is the Association for Library Services to Children. Their mission statement details "The Association for Library Service to Children develops and supports the profession of children's librarianship by enabling and encouraging its practitioners to provide the best library service to our nation's children." ALSC awards the Caldecott medal, Newbery medal, Children's Notable books, professional awards, grants, fellowships, and scholarships. More information is available on their website at [www.ala.org/alsc](http://www.ala.org/alsc)

## **Bibliography:**

2008 ALSC Literary and Related Award Winners  
<http://www.ala.org/ala/alsc/awardsscholarships/literaryawards/2008MediaAwardWinners.htm>

ALSC  
[www.ala.org/alsc](http://www.ala.org/alsc)

ALSC – Who we are  
[www.ala.org/alsc/howeare.html](http://www.ala.org/alsc/howeare.html)

American Library Association  
[www.ala.org](http://www.ala.org)

Caldecott Medal Description, History & Criteria  
[www.ala.org/alsc/cmedal.html](http://www.ala.org/alsc/cmedal.html)

Caldecott Terms and Criteria  
[www.ala.org/alsc/caldecott\\_terms.html](http://www.ala.org/alsc/caldecott_terms.html)

## **ALSC Book Awards:**

The John Newbery Medal  
[www.ala.org/alsc/newbery.html](http://www.ala.org/alsc/newbery.html)

Newbery Medal Terms and Criteria  
[http://www.ala.org/alsc/newbery\\_terms.html](http://www.ala.org/alsc/newbery_terms.html)

Coretta Scott King Award  
<http://www.ala.org/ala/emiert/corettascottkingbookaward/corettascott.htm>

The Carnegie Award  
[http://www.ala.org/alsc/carnegie\\_terms.html](http://www.ala.org/alsc/carnegie_terms.html)

The Mildred L. Batchelder Award  
<http://www.ala.org/ala/alsc/awardsscholarships/literaryawards/batchelderaward/batchelderaward.htm>

Pura Belpre Book Award  
<http://www.ala.org/ala/alsc/awardsscholarships/literaryawards/belpremedal/belpremedal.htm>

Laura Ingalls Wilder Medal  
<http://www.ala.org/ala/alsc/awardsscholarships/literaryawards/wildermedal/wildermedal.htm>

Theodor Seuss Geisel Award  
<http://www.ala.org/ala/alsc/awardsscholarships/literaryawards/geiselaward/GeiselAward.htm>

Sibert Medal  
[http://www.ala.org/ala/alsc/awardsscholarships/literaryawards/sibertmedal/Sibert\\_Medal.htm](http://www.ala.org/ala/alsc/awardsscholarships/literaryawards/sibertmedal/Sibert_Medal.htm)