

Ever noticed a shiny sticker on the front of your book and wondered what it meant? Here's an introduction to a handful of popular children's literature awards. They are a wonderful way to diversify your reader's book selection.

The Caldecott Medal

The Caldecott Medal is given annually by a committee of the Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC), a subgroup of the ALA. You might see a round sticker on the book's cover that's golden, for the Medal, or silver, which designates an Honor book (think of it like a first prize and runners-up). The Caldecott Medal celebrates the most distinguished picture book by an American creator, with a number of additional criteria like artistic excellence and that the work be clearly designed for children. Caldecott winners vary widely in their appearance, but the Medal and Honor designations should be a good indication of exceptional illustrations in a picture book.

Look for: *Going Down Home With Daddy* (Daniel Minter, Honor); *We Are Water Protectors* (Michaela Goade, Medal); *Thank You, Omu* (Oge Mora, Honor); *A Big Mooncake for Little Star* (Grace Chin, Medal); *Outside In* (Cindy Derby, Honor); and *A Different Pond* (Thi Bui, Honor).

The Newbery Medal

This award is given annually by ALSC and includes the same Medal and Honor designations as the Caldecott Medal. While the Caldecott celebrates illustrations, the Newbery goes to a book whose writing is deemed the most distinguished contribution to children's literature that year. There are additional criteria, including that the author be an American citizen or resident and that the book be clearly intended for children. ALSC considers the audience up to and including 14-year-olds, so the Newbery Medals are sometimes intended for older readers. However, picture books and graphic novels can (and have) win the Newbery. The key isn't the format of the delivery; it's the quality of the writing, and a Newbery is a very good indication of a splendidly crafted story.

Look for: *New Kid* (Jerry Craft, Medal); *Other Words for Home* (Jasmine Warga, Honor); *Hello, Universe* (Erin Entrada Kelly, Medal); *Crown: An Ode to the Fresh Cut* (Derrick Barnes, Honor); *When You Trap a Tiger* (Tae Keller, Medal); and *All Thirteen: The Incredible Cave Rescue of the Thai Boys' Soccer Team* (Christina Soontornvat, Honor).

The Coretta Scott King Awards

Given annually to both authors and illustrators, the Coretta Scott King Awards are selected by members of the Ethnic & Multicultural Information Exchange Round Table (EMIERT), a longstanding group within the ALA. Awarded to African-American creators whose work demonstrates an appreciation of African-American culture and universal human values, these awards, too, have winner and honor designations for both author and illustrator. EMIERT also gives an annual award for new talent in each category, as well as one for lifetime achievement.

Look for: *The Undefeated* (Kadir Nelson, Illustrator Award); *Look Both Ways* (Jason Reynolds, Author Honor), *What is Given From the Heart* (April Harrison, John Steptoe Award for New Talent: Illustrator); *R-E-S-P-E-C-T: Aretha Franklin, the Queen of Soul* (Frank Morrison, Illustrator Award); *Piecing Me Together* (Renée Watson, Author Award); and *King and the Dragonflies* (Kacen Callender, Author Honor).

The Pura Belpré Awards

Named after the first Latina librarian at New York Public Library, the Pura Belpré Awards are given annually to an author and an illustrator whose work portrays and affirms the Latino experience with outstanding writing or illustrations for children. Honor books are usually named in each category, and the award recipients are decided by a group within ALSC. The Belpré award-winning titles may be in English, but bilingual and Spanish books are also eligible for consideration.

Look for: *Sal and Gabi Break the Universe* (Carlos Hernandez, Author Medal); *My Papi Has a Motorcycle* (also available in Spanish as *Mi Papi Tiene Una Moto*; Zeke Peña, Illustrator Honor); *Dreamers* (also available in Spanish as *Soñadores*; Yuyi Morales, Illustrator Honor); *Juana and Lucas* (Juana Medina, Author Award); and *¡Vamos! Let's Go Eat!* (Raúl Gonzalez, Illustrator Medal).

Other Awards to Keep an Eye Out For

Many other groups award prizes to children's books, so keep an eye out for books that have received:

- The Schneider Family Book Awards, given for excellent artistic expression of the disability experience
- The American Indian Youth Literature Awards
- Rise, a feminist book list
- The Asian/Pacific American Award for Literature
- A Notables designation from ALSC, which covers each year's distinguished titles for readers up to 12 years old, fiction and non-fiction, as well as notable recordings for audiobooks
- The Stonewall Book Awards, relating to the LGBTQIA experience
- A Walter Award, given by We Need Diverse Books for middle grade and YA titles

The Sydney Taylor Book Awards, given for portrayal of the authentic Jewish experience