

CILIP CARNEGIE SHORTLIST ACTIVITY SHEET

Four short activities for reading groups to enjoy together



1. RING MY BELL

For this game you'll need:

- A bell, hooter or horn
- An egg timer

Get everyone in your group to bring in their favourite shortlisted Carnegie title. All sit in a circle.

One person becomes adjudicator and is in charge of ringing the bell (or sounding the horn or hooter) and starting and stopping the egg timer.

The person whose name is nearest to A in the alphabet 'takes the chair'. He or she has one minute to talk about their chosen book and why they loved it so much.

Every time the speaker hesitates (e.g. says 'um', 'err', stumbles, or stops talking), the bell (or horn or buzzer) is sounded by the adjudicator and the timer is turned over. The next person to their left takes the chair.

The winner is the first person left speaking when the egg timer eventually runs out.

2. MESSAGE IN A BOTTLE

Imagine you're stuck on a desert island with just a few essential supplies plus your favourite book from this year's Carnegie shortlist!

Write a message to put in a bottle telling someone all about your favourite book from Carnegie 08 shortlist.

Tell him or her about the plot and the characters. Write about the things you liked and, of course, don't forget to be honest and say if there was anything you didn't like about the book.

Lastly, say why you would recommend this book to anyone who might rescue you!

If you do this as a group exercise, you can all put your messages into bottles and put them in the middle of a table. Then take turns to open up and reading out each other's messages.

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3. TIME TUNNELL

Most of this year's shortlisted books are historical novels. The purpose of this activity is to find out why we're so fascinated by the past, and try and work out what it is about the past that we find so intriguing.

Using one of this year's shortlisted titles, imagine you've stepped into a time tunnel and turned up as one of the minor characters in one of the historical novels.

Write a short piece about who you are and how you live based on what you have read in the book. It could be a poem, or a piece of prose – it's up to you.

You can also talk about the other characters in the book, how you interact with them and how you feel towards them. Maybe they frustrate you, annoy you, or maybe they inspire more romantic feelings?

Think about the historical detail in the novel you are writing about. Try and see how the author gives a real flavour of the time and see if you can inject the same sort of authenticity to your piece.

4. COVER STORY

Choose a book from one of this year's Carnegie shortlisted titles and come up with a design for an alternative cover. You can do this activity on your own, or as a group.

Think about the story and what it meant to you. Perhaps there was a particular incident or passage in the book that you feels sums it all up. Or maybe you want to give the book a more generic cover to entice potential readers?

Consider all the different elements used on book jackets. What purpose do they serve?
Also, think about covers you like and what makes a good cover.

Do you want your cover to be illustrated or do you prefer a photographic approach? Maybe you can create a montage using images from magazines, the internet and other sources. It could be a collage using items that are relevant to the story perhaps? Or a painting or picture that you've seen elsewhere that you think suits the mood of the story?

Think about what text needs to go on the cover. Do you want to feature quotes from critics? Or mention previous books the author has written? Also, do you want to mention awards he or she has won in the past?

Finally, you may also want to write a 'blurb'; for the book of the cover, a short paragraph that sums up the book and recommends it to potential readers.

When you've finished your cover, compare and contrast it with the original. Which one do you prefer and why?