



Thumbs Up! Award Guidelines

Purpose: The purpose of the Thumbs Up! Award is to recognize and promote an outstanding contribution to teen literature that has both literary quality and teen appeal for those 13 to 18 years of age.

Background: The Thumbs Up! Award was established in 1986 by the Teen Services Division of the Michigan Library Association. The award is given annually to one book originally published in English between January 1 and December 31 that has captured the attention of youth librarians throughout the State of Michigan for its ability to communicate through literature to teens.

Qualifications:

- The Thumbs Up! Award will be given annually to the author of an original work for teens, fiction or nonfiction, published in English for the first time from January 1 – December 31. *“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*
- A teen, for the award’s purpose, is someone between 13 and 18 years of age. The book must appeal to this age group, both in respect to its characters and setting, as well as in terms of subject and theme.
- Selections will be made based on the suggested guidelines for the Young Adult Library Services Association’s Michael L Printz award. The guidelines include story, setting, theme, voice, accuracy, illustrations (if any), style, characters, and design.
- An author may include co-authors or editor(s).
- MLA recognizes, enhances and promotes the values of equity, diversity, inclusion, accessibility and belonging. Eligible books will also be evaluated for authenticity and representation of the diversity of human culture and experiences.

Eligibility:

- Any book that is published for teens, ages 13-18, in English for the first time from January 1 – December 31, may be nominated for the award.

Book Selection Process:

- Titles for the reading list are pulled from starred reviews in library journals (ex. Horn Book, Kirkus, School Library Journal) that have received at least two (2) stars.
- Michigan Librarians may freely submit nominations. Publishers may submit nominations of books that meet the criteria, but they will be required to submit a nomination form online as well as two (2) copies of the book for the workgroup to review.
- Nominations may be submitted from January 1 through December 31.
- The year of the award will match the year that it is selected and announced. It will be presented at that year’s MLA Youth Literary Awards event.
- The workgroup narrows the reading list to their Top Ten Titles and selects the winner and any honor books from the Top Ten Titles.
- The workgroup may choose to recognize up to four (4) honor books.

Presentation of Award: The author of the award-winning title will be invited to accept the award at the virtual MLA Youth Literary Awards announcement.