

Consortium of Latin American Studies Programs (CLASP)
Américas Award for Children's and Young Adult Literature

Guidelines

MISSION STATEMENT

Up to two awards (for primary and secondary reading levels) are given in recognition of U.S. published works of fiction, poetry, folklore, or selected non-fiction (from picture books to works for young adults) that authentically and engagingly portray Latin America, the Caribbean, or Latinos in the United States. By linking the Américas, the intent is to reach beyond geographic borders, as well as multicultural-international boundaries, focusing instead upon cultural heritages within the hemisphere.

The Américas Award is intended to: 1) recognize the work of authors and illustrators who sensitively portray Latin American cultures in their work; 2) encourage the publications of such books within the United States; 3) provide teachers with potential classroom resources; and 4) offer librarians suggestions for culturally diverse collection development.

The committee may designate up to two winners in a given year. Additionally, the committee may recognize up to two honorable mentions (award finalists) and will produce a list of commended (recommended) titles. The list of all recognized titles will be distributed as an annotated bibliography.

ESTABLISHED

1993

ORGANIZATIONAL SPONSOR

The national Consortium of Latin American Studies Programs (CLASP), an organization of post-secondary Latin American Studies programs throughout the U.S., devoted to teaching, program development and outreach about Latin America and the Caribbean.

AWARD COORDINATORS

Center for Latin American Studies, Vanderbilt University
Stone Center for Latin American Studies, Tulane University

COORDINATION OF AWARD

1. The daily operation of the award will be based in the Centers for Latin American Studies at Tulane and Vanderbilt University, both institutional members of CLASP.
2. The location of the Américas Award Coordinators will be determined at the discretion of the CLASP Executive Committee. The Executive Committee of CLASP reserves the right to terminate the relationship, with a minimum of one year's notice.

REVIEW COMMITTEE

1. The Review Committee includes 5 members each serving a 3-year term. Terms are staggered so that no more than 2 members are replaced each year.
2. Committee members represent a diverse set of experiences and backgrounds including K-12 teachers, librarians, bilingual education and children's literature specialists, and outreach staff.
3. The committee should have broad geographic representation.
4. At least 4 of the 5 committee members should have good ability with written Spanish and preferably strong speaking skills as well.
5. One member of the committee with at least 1 year previous experience will serve as Chairperson.
6. It is recommended that no individual serve more than 1 year as Chairperson of the Review Committee, in an effort to balance responsibilities among committee members.
7. The committee also will include 1 non-voting ex-officio member (former committee member).

CHAIRPERSON RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Work with Award Coordinators to fill open positions on the Review Committee.
2. Work with Coordinators to establish committee review deadlines/conference call schedules.

3. Correspond with Review Committee with regularity both to encourage ongoing conversation and to move the process forward.
4. Solicit nominations from committee members for potential commended titles (which will form the basis for the conference call discussions).
5. Provide leadership to committee in review discussions and in development of the final annual list of commended titles/award winners.
6. Write the annotations or delegate the writing to members of the Review Committee.
7. Notify the new Américas winners.
8. Seek opportunities, whenever possible, to promote the award's visibility.

COORDINATORS RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Circulate the award announcement to publishers and others.
2. Assure that the committee members receive all books submitted for award consideration.
3. Provide the Review Committee with periodic updates of submissions.
4. Work with Chairperson to establish the review schedule and to arrange conference calls..
5. Produce and circulate the final annotated list.
6. Handle award correspondence, including with publishers, award recipients, and the general public.
7. Maintain the Américas Award web site and mail database.
8. Coordinate the award presentation, in collaboration with award site staff.
9. Support the work of the Review Committee and the Chairperson.

BOOK ELIGIBILITY

1. The publication date must match that of the award year (i.e. only titles published in 2011 will be considered for the 2011 award cycle).

[The award year designation is the year in which the award is announced--that is, the year following the year of publication: for example, the 2012 Américas Award will recognize titles published during 2011.]

2. The title may be for primary or secondary reading levels.
3. Language of publication may be English, Spanish, Portuguese, or any language indigenous to the Americas.
4. The book must be published in the United States, or by a publisher with offices within the U.S.
5. Submissions may be fiction, poetry, folklore, or selected non-fiction.
 - 5.a. The committee will make a determination as to eligible non-fiction. Generally the committee considers titles that include a narrative element. Fact books are not eligible.
6. A book will only be considered in its first year of publication in the United States. A book originally published in the U.S. in English with a translated edition in a subsequent year will only be eligible in the year of the first edition.
 - 6.a. A book first published in Latin America in a previous year, then published in the United States in translation, may compete for the award in the year of its U.S. publication.

SUBMISSION PROCESS

1. Nominations may be accepted from any individual with an interest in the mission of the award. To date, nominations have generally been made by publishers.
2. To nominate a title, publishers are invited to submit review copies to the seven committee members (8 Review Committee members, ex-officio member, Award Coordinators) by January 15 of the year following the publication year (i.e. by January 15, 2012 for titles published in 2011).
3. There is no entry fee for nominations.

AWARD CRITERIA

In determining the award, books will be judged by the following criteria:

1. Distinctive literary quality
 - 1.a. Is the story distinctive in its development of characters, setting, plot and other narrative elements?
 - 1.b. Is the story engaging?

2. Cultural contextualization
 - 2.a. Does the book accurately and sensitively represent the cultural setting?
 - 2.b. Does the book convey sufficient cultural detail that the reader will gain greater understanding about Latin American, Caribbean or Latino cultures?
3. Exceptional integration of text, illustration and design
 - 3.a. The Américas Award recognizes the book (as opposed to the individual author or illustrator). Therefore, is the book appealing as a whole?
4. Potential for classroom use
 - 4.a. Does the book lend itself for use in multiple subject areas at the primary or secondary level?

REVIEW PROCESS

1. Books will be shipped directly by the publishers to each Review Committee member (approximately 50-60 titles to be reviewed per year). Review copies will become the property of the reviewer.
2. Periodically, the Award Coordinator will produce an updated submission list for members to verify books received. (Committee members should contact the Coordinator regarding any missing titles.)
3. After all books have been received and read, Committee members will submit a list of 6-8 titles to the Chairperson that they consider most fully satisfy the Award criteria.
4. The Chairperson will collate the lists and circulate the results via email.
5. Approximately 3-4 conference calls, initiated by the Chairperson, will be scheduled periodically during the review period (likely weekends). The Chairperson will notify the Review Committee in advance as to the books to be discussed in a given call. The Chairperson will assign committee members to present each title.
6. Before finalizing the commended list, the committee will again review all remaining submissions to verify that all titles that merit discussion have been included in the conversation.
7. After discussion of titles, committee members will provide the Chairperson with their top three overall titles (in rank order) for award consideration.

8. The award recipients, honorable mentions and commended titles will be determined by consensus. If consensus is not possible, the choices will be based upon a simple majority of the members.
9. The committee reserves the right to not make an award if it determines that no submissions sufficiently meet the criteria.

SCHEDULE

1. The new Review Committee will be established during July-August.
2. The announcement of the current year's competition will be mailed by the Award Coordinators prior to September 1.
3. The Chairperson will schedule a preliminary conference call early in the review process (fall) for committee introductions and to review guidelines.
4. The book submission deadline is January 15 of each year for titles published during the preceding year.
5. Committee members should complete reading and comments by March 1.
6. The series of 3-4 conference calls should be completed prior to April 15. The last conference call will be used to finalize the commended list and honor books, and to determine award winners.
7. The Award announcement and annotations will be prepared and publicized no later than May 1.
8. The Américas Award presentation at the Library of Congress is planned for Hispanic Heritage Month, between September 15-October 15 (depending on committee member, recipient and LC schedules).

AWARD ANNOUNCEMENT

1. The award results will be announced no later than May 1 each year.
2. The Review Committee Chairperson will personally contact each winner (authors, illustrators, publishers).
3. The Award Coordinators will send appropriate letters to winning authors, illustrators, publishers, and all who submitted titles for the competition.
4. The annotated list will be circulated to all of the above; to a mailing list of those

interested in the award results; and posted on the CLASP web site (www.claspprograms.org).

5. The Coordinators and Review Committee will proactively promote the Américas Award commended list as a resource for classroom and/or for library collection development.

AWARD PRESENTATION

1. The formal award presentation will be held each fall at a site determined by the Award Coordinators, Review Committee, and CLASP Executive Committee.
2. The event will be organized by the Award Coordinators, working in collaboration with LC staff.
3. The Award Coordinators will work with publishers of the award winners to cover travel expenses to the award ceremony.
4. The award consists of \$500 (from CLASP), a framed certificate, and a gift symbolic of the weaving of stories.

Please share comments with Denise Woltering (dwolteri@tulane.edu or 504.862.3143) or Claire González (claire.p.gonzalez@vanderbilt.edu Or 615.343.1837).

Updated: 11-10-11