

**LSTA/Oregon
Association of
School Libraries
Oregon Battle of
the Books
2009-2010
Handbook**



Website: <http://oboblsta.pbworks.com/>



The OBOB Project is supported in part by the Institute of Museum and Library Services through the Library Services and Technology Act, administered by the Oregon State Library.

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Introduction

The Oregon Battle of the Books is a statewide reading motivation and comprehension program sponsored by the Oregon Association of School Libraries in conjunction with a Library Services and Technology Act grant. Students, regardless of ability, are exposed to quality literature representing a variety of literary styles and viewpoints. The goals of the program are to encourage and recognize students who enjoy reading, broaden reading interests, increase reading comprehension, and promote academic excellence.

Lists of books are chosen and questions are written for elementary and middle school. Students read the books, discuss them, quiz each other on the contents, and then compete in teams of four students to correctly answer questions based on the books in a "quiz show" format. Questions may begin with the words "In which book..." so that the answer will be a title and author or there may be "Content" questions with the title of the book supplied. Teams may participate at local, district, regional and state levels of competition.

New lists of sixteen titles for each level are compiled each year by the selection committee based on the "Criteria for the Selection of Titles." An attempt is made to vary the titles chosen according to genre and difficulty so that readers may encounter a broad range of books.

History

The original idea for Battle of the Books came from a radio program sponsored by the Chicago Public Library in the early 1940's. Prior to 2006, several schools in Oregon had their own Battle of the Books competitions. In 2006, OASL President Allen Kopf formed a committee to submit a grant to LSTA for a statewide Battle of the Books program. Upon receipt of the grant, the committee moved forward with the statewide plan to be implemented in the 2007-2008 school year. The OBOB Committee is now in the 2009-2010 year with support of the LSTA 3rd year grant.

Organization

Oregon Battle of the Books is organized locally by the participating school system, regionally (OASL Regions) by a regional committee, and statewide by the OASL Oregon Battle of the Books Committee (OBOB).

The OBOB Committee will oversee the collection and distribution of information, questions, and book lists. At this time, the OASL OBOB Committee is assuming regional committees will be responsible for the regional competitions, while the OBOB Committee will oversee the state competition.

Player and Team Guidelines

- All students participating must be in grades 3-5, 6-8 or 9-12 for the current school year.
- Each team must have a sponsor from their school who is a school library media specialist, library paraprofessional or other school staff member.
- The composition of the team members may not change once the regional battles have started.
- The regional competitions do not require participation in a district/county/ESD competition. The state battles require participation in the regional competitions.
- Each school may send only one team to the regional competition (grant recipients must attend the regional competitions) and each region may send their top two teams to the state competition.
- Teams are usually made up of four members with one optional alternate, for a total of five members.
- There may be only one alternate. This alternate may take the place of a player for a battle. When the alternate is used, the alternate must remain in competition for the entire battle. No other substitutions may be made.
- No other person may assist in answering any question directed to a team, including the team's coach. The judge will disqualify a team determined to be receiving outside help.
- In the event of a situation that is not specifically addressed in the OBOB rules, the decision of the judges is final.
- The OBOB Committee has the authority to refuse to allow a team to participate in the event of unsportsmanlike behavior or other extenuating circumstances.

Coach Guidelines and Responsibilities

- Prepare the teams by reviewing procedures and rules.
- Conduct practice battles which follow OBOB protocol.
- Encourage and moderate discussions about the books.
- Encourage as many student participants and teams as possible.
- Direct teams in writing their own practice questions if additional questions are desired.
- Offer moral support to teams during Battles without actually offering any input to help them with their answers.
- Must secure adult supervision for the team at all regional and state competitions.
- Reinforce that the focus of this program is to celebrate the love of reading and promote good sportsmanship for both teams and spectators.
- Must bring sets of books to regional and state competition.
- Provide at least one volunteer, preferably two at regional and state and communicate with the regional manager if this is an issue.
- The coach or designee will be a judge at regional.
- Communicate and confirm attendance at regional and state.



Oregon Battle of the Books

Regional and State Battle Rules & Procedures:

1. There will be 16 questions at Local, Regional & State battles (8 "In which book" and 8 "Content"). The final match at Regional and State battles will consist of 32 questions.
2. Competitions begin with a round robin pool with the top scoring teams going into a single elimination tournament. All teams play at least twice.
3. Each team will bring a set of the OBOB books and hand them to the Moderator/Reader when they enter the room of the competition.
4. Teams are usually made up of four members with one optional alternate, for a total of five members. Of the four competing members, one will serve as the spokesperson throughout each battle. Alternate members will sit in a designated area during battles.
5. Two teams will compete during a single battle. A coin toss will be held before the start of each battle. The winning team decides where they want to sit. Efforts will be made to ensure teams can quietly discuss answers among themselves without fear of being overheard by the other competing team(s).
6. The team that sits on the left OF THE MODERATOR will always be given first chance at the odd numbered questions, and the team on the right will always be given first chance at the even questions.
7. The Moderator/Reader will review the rules with the participating teams and find out who is serving as the spokesperson for each team. Answers will be accepted only from that spokesperson; no other team member's answer shall be heard or recorded during that battle.
8. The "odd" team (on the Moderator/Reader's left) will go first and be read question number one.
9. The Moderator/Reader will shuffle the question cards, The Moderator/Reader will ask a question, prefacing the question with the name of the team it is directed to. Timing starts immediately after the question has been read for the first time. Teams will have **15 seconds** to quietly discuss the question among themselves. **Only the first answer the spokesperson gives will be accepted--the team cannot use up the time left to guess other answers.**
10. Discussion must stop as soon as time is called and the question must be answered immediately. If the spokesperson doesn't immediately begin to answer, the moderator turns to the other team and reads the question to them. When time is called the spokesperson will be given a chance to answer without hesitation.
11. During a battle, a team's spokesperson may request a repeat of a question. All repeats must take place within the time limit, which starts after the question is read for the first time.
12. In Which Book questions will be read first. Three points will be awarded for the correct title and 2 points for the correct author. Book titles and authors must be stated as listed on the official OBOB book lists and OBOB website. <http://oboblsta.pbworks.com>
13. In Content questions, 5 points are given for the complete answer. Designated two-part questions will be scored with 3 points for the first answer given and 2 points for the second answer given.
14. If a team gives an incorrect or incomplete answer, the question will be repeated to the opposing team. That team will have 15 seconds to discuss their answer. NOTE: If the "acquiring" team does not answer correctly, play does NOT pass back to the other team.
15. Regardless of who scored on the previous question, even-numbered questions will be read to the even team, and odd-numbered questions will be read to the odd team. This

- means that an "acquiring" team will get to answer two questions in a row--the one it acquired, followed by their own.
16. If a team has begun its response before time is called, they will be allowed to complete their response.
 17. If a question is being read and the spokesperson interrupts the reader, that team must answer the question immediately.
 18. At the end of a battle, the Moderator/Reader announces and allows ***15 seconds*** for challenges to be articulated through the team's spokesperson only. The teams are each limited to one challenge per round. If there are no challenges, the final score will be announced and a winner will be declared. The battle will be considered complete and no further challenges will be entertained. The teams will be sent on to their next battle.
 19. Accepting the score: Teams will accept and confirm the score. When the battle is over and team spokespersons initial score sheet boxes that indicate they accept the results of the battle and were provided an opportunity for challenges.
 20. An answer is considered correct even if mispronounced, as long as the judge can discern it.
 21. Multiple questions may appear on certain titles and some titles may not be asked about at all.
 22. Teams may not use a title/author list or any notes.
 23. In the event of a CHALLENGE, this procedure will be followed:
 - The challenging team will have TWO minutes to find and mark the page numbers (with a post-it note) where the answer can be found in the book they named.
 - The timekeeper will begin timing after the Moderator/Reader recognizes the challenge and copies of the book are given to the challenging team.
 - The official timer will announce the end of the TWO minute time period and discussion must stop. (no countdown)
 - The challenging team's spokesperson will show the judge the exact wording that supports their challenge.
 - The judge determines whether the challenge is successful or not. An answer may be considered correct by way of inference. If the judge accepts the challenge as successful, and the other conditions for gaining a score were fulfilled, the points shall be awarded and the scores amended.
 - Only one team will be awarded the points for a correct answer.
 - The judge and scorekeeper will amend the points. Amending points may mean points are removed from the team who was presented the question and awarded to the challenging team.
 - The judge's decision is final.
 24. Bracket seeding for Quarter Finals is based on total points earned in pool play. Wins in the preliminary rounds do not determine which teams move on to the semi-finals. Each team plays two times during pool play. The top qualifying teams: If there is a tie for the last spot in bracket play there will be a tiebreaker battle.
 25. At the regional and state competitions, a tiebreaker battle may be played to break a tie between two or more teams. The tiebreaker rules are the same as above. As soon as one team has more points after an even number of questions have been read, that team is declared the winner. If the score is still tied after 10 tiebreaker questions, the official may call a tie. Challenges ARE allowed at the end of a tiebreaker battle with the usual challenge time in effect.

The following must be available for each battle:

A packet of OBOB questions	A copy of the Official Handbook
A copy of each of the OBOB Battle Books	A coin for the coin toss
A copy of the Official Book List	Sufficient score sheets
	A stopwatch and clipboard

Battle Officials

The Moderator, Scorekeeper, Timekeeper, Judge will work collaboratively to provide a fair and enjoyable battle.

Moderator/Reader

- Reviews rules and expectations.
- Runs battle, reading questions and consistently using answers on the cards.
- If a question is misread at the regional or state competitions, a new question may be given.
- Will supervise behavior of participants and spectators.
- At the end of a battle, the Moderator/Reader will ask the scorekeeper to verify the final score with the Judge and then take it to the OBOB official in charge.
- Moderator/Reader will announce challenge opportunity.
- Spectators whose behavior is a distraction or inappropriate may be asked to leave the room. When battles are in progress no one enters the room.
- During battles all electronic devices including video cameras must be off.

Judge

- The judge and moderator reader work closely together and should stand next to each other to collaborate during battle. The battle official decisions will be final.
- Will determine if the correct answer has been given within the prescribed time limit.
- Keeps a paper copy of the scores.
- Will make certain no help on answers to the questions is given by others outside the team.
- Will hear any complaint issued in an approved manner, confer with any and all appropriate officials, and render judgment on the matter.
- The battle officials' decision shall be final.

Scorekeeper

- Will keep the official score on a visual projection device or chalk/whiteboard, in a way which is visible to the audience.

Timekeeper

- Oversees coin toss.
- Will use a stopwatch and indicate when specific time periods have expired.

Frequently Asked Questions

How does a student participate?

A student participates by reading from the book list provided for that year's Oregon Battle of the Books and discussing those titles and competing in battles with their teammates. Make sure your school is registered by the deadline of October 15th, 2009.

Who competes at the Regional OBOB battles?

Any school registered in OBOB may send one team per division. Grant recipients must participate.

Where do the students get the books?

School libraries should have copies of each book on the list. Public libraries, book fairs, and local book stores will also be apprised of the titles and will most likely have them available.

When do the students read the books?

The school battles should be completed by the end of February. Reading through the summer is completely optional, but available to students. Students should have plenty of time to read the books during the school year.

What is a "battle?"

A typical "battle" is a tournament or game, somewhat like Jeopardy, in which student teams earn points by answering questions about the books on the book list.

Can we change our school team after the regional battle?

Can we add or change members?

Your 5 member team, (4 members and alternate) may not change after the names have been sent in to the Regional Coordinator as listed on the OBOB website.

Team names need to be submitted to the Regional Coordinator two weeks prior to regional competition.

When is it OK for alternates to participate in the regional/state level competition?

An alternate may only replace a team member between Battles, never during a battle. Players may not be

substituted once a Battle has begun EXCEPT in the event of an illness or emergency.

Do students have to read all the books?

No. Many students read only about half of the books. There are a few readers who complete the whole list, but there are some who might only be able to read five of the books.

Do I need other schools to have a battle or can I just have only one at my school?

It is best to start small. The first time you conduct a battle, we recommend that you do it alone at your school site. However, it is always good to have other schools in your district or in your area conduct their own battles.

How do I get started?

A place to start is by joining OASL (go to our website: www.oasl.info)! Have your school purchase books from the book list and develop an in-house reading incentive system to encourage students to read these books. Request questions for your competition by registering your school in OBOB (via our website) and begin to find sponsors and helpers to support and conduct your local battle at your site or region.

May I use the OBOB logo?

The logo is available for any Oregon Battle of the Books promotional activity, with the proviso that the Oregon Association of School Libraries must be given credit for their sponsorship.

Should the logo be used by any commercial entity, the sponsorship credit must be printed somewhere on the same page on which the logo is used.

Who else is participating in Oregon?

Participants are listed on the OBOB website.

Who can I contact to get help with how to get started and answer many of my questions?

You can contact one of the OBOB participants in your area.

Do we need to have awards for the winning teams?

We suggest that you find ways to honor all participants.

How can I find out more information?

Information is posted on our OBOB Webpage. If you have questions, please contact us! <http://oboblsta.pbworks.com/>

Criteria for the selection of titles

Number of titles:

16 titles

Grade level/reading level:

Balanced grade / reading level.

Interest level:

Consider a variety of subject areas, plots, settings and styles.

Balanced in interest for boys and girls.

List must include a variety of genres, including realistic fiction, nonfiction, fantasy, science fiction, historical fiction, mystery, multicultural, and Oregon represented in some way.

Quality of the books:

Select high quality, well-reviewed, age-appropriate titles.

Award winners such as the Newbery, Young Readers Choice, etc., will be considered.

Books on previous lists:

Titles may have been used as OBOB titles previously.

However, titles must not be repeated within at least four years of being on the list.

Availability of titles:

Books should be currently available in paperback format whenever possible.

Intellectual freedom:

In accordance with the Library Bill of Rights and its interpretations, titles that otherwise meet the selection criteria will not be excluded:

"because of the origin, background or views of those contributing to their creation," or

"because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval;" or

"because of actual or suspected parental objections" or

"in an effort to avoid controversy with parents."

Other considerations:

It must be kept in mind that the Oregon Battle of the Books is not meant to be a required program in the schools. A child's participation is *voluntary*. This being the case, it should be expected that different criteria are used for the selection of these titles than those used in selecting materials for required activities in individual school districts.

Oregon Battle of Books Question Guidelines

Writing and Submitting Questions

After the book list is finalized, titles are assigned to individuals or groups who write the questions. Completed sets of questions must be submitted to the OBOB Committee by **September 15 (Sep 1 or sooner is preferred)** so that they can be edited and made available in a timely manner.

Writing the Questions

Question writers will be given an Excel template to use for the questions.

- Prepare for writing questions by first reading and then rereading the book to write the questions. It is also important to consider the other books on the list when writing questions to avoid conflicts.
- Please write **40 questions of each type** of question per book:
 - Approx. 10 will be used at each the School & District level
 - Approx. 10 will be used at the Regional level.
 - Approx. 10 will be used at the State level.
- Half of the questions will begin with, "**In which book...**" The other half will state the title and ask a specific **content question**. Similar questions will be used in alternate competitions.
- All questions are written in **present tense** (does/do or is/are).
- Limit questions to a maximum of **twenty words** each, including the words "In which book."
- Cite a page number for each question. Simply enter the page number into the appropriate column. Do not add "p." or a # symbol. Some questions may not have a page number as the answer may come from the whole book, a chapter, foreword, etc. Those questions should be identified with the appropriate section. (The answer should be verified in the event of a challenge.) You do not need to write in more than one page number. Just one that proves the answer.
- Use correct grammar. It is not acceptable to say, "In which book does a character ride their horse?"
- Use direct quotes only when they are an integral part of the story - for example, a phrase repeated throughout the book. If direct quotes are used, make sure they are unedited!
- Try to avoid "killer" questions. (These are questions that require a photographic memory.)
- Use significant events, character development, major themes, and unique settings in time or place.
- Make the question as direct as possible. Do not use archaic and unique words unless they appear in the book and are necessary to the clarity of the question. **Do not use the word "protagonist"**. "Character" or "main character" works better for this competition.
- Avoid obvious questions.

"In Which Book" Questions:

- For **IWB questions**, avoid indicating the gender of the character if possible. Do not use the he/she pronoun, instead, reword the sentence (i.e. "In which book does a character ride a horse?" or "... is a horse ridden by its owner?")
- For **IWB questions**, do not use key words from the title within the questions.
- Avoid questions whose answers might easily be found in more than one book.

"Content" Questions:

- Content questions should have a single answer. Do not start the question with the words "How" or "Why" as the answers elicit a more open and varied response that becomes difficult to judge.
- **Two-part Content Questions** should start with the phrase: "**Two parts:**" Write the variations of acceptable answers in keyword format with the connecting word "**AND**" between the two answers.
- Answers to Content Questions should be concise and include acceptable variations of wording with the word "**OR**" included to make it clear to the reader that any of the stated answers is acceptable.
- In writing **Content Questions**, if the answer is to be a person, the question should be framed so that a name is the answer, i.e. "**What is the name** of the character who climbed the mountain?" List the appropriate answers – "John Smith" OR "John" OR "Mr. Smith". All of those answers should be acceptable, so they should be written in to the answer column.

Submitting the Questions

You will be given a template in Excel to submit your questions to the committee. Put both question formats on the same document but place in separate lists. Write 50 questions in each format. For "In which book" questions, write the question first, and then fill in the page number. For example:

Questions - All questions should be 20 words or less...please write 40 of each type. Content Questions start on line 47. Please remember to use present tense.		Content Answer (not used in IWB)
IWB Questions: Start each question with the words "In which book". The answer will be the title and author so no need to add that here. Note the page number of the answer (just the number, without the "p.") Do not write the title in at this time as it will be inserted during card formatting.	Page	
In which book does a couple celebrate their honeymoon by driving around a grandstand track several times?	68	<i>(nothing here in IWB questions)</i>

The question committee will determine what level of battle the question will be used. After the final formatting, a typical question will be printed on a card to look like this:

Grade 6-9 REGIONAL 2009 Oregon Battle of the Books

In which book does a couple celebrate their honeymoon by driving around a grandstand track several times?

Journey to Topaz by Yoshiko Uchida

p. 68

For Content questions:

Type out the question, the page number of the answer, and the answer(s) to the question. The reader will start out each content question with the title of the book. You should not insert the title into the beginning of the question. The question would then read:

Questions - All questions should be 20 words or less...please write 40 of each type	Page	
Content Questions: The title will be inserted when formatting the question card. Do not add the title on this list. Note the page number and the brief content answers in keyword format. Questions are no longer than 20 words. Do not start questions with the words "How" or "Why" as it leads to interpretation which creates too many challenges. Start two part questions with the words "Two parts:." Thanks!		Content Answer - Use Keyword answers and connect answer variations with the word "OR" in caps
What did Gram call the Airstream trailer?	3	Baby Beluga

The question committee will determine what level of battle the question will be used in. After the final formatting, a typical question will look like this:

Grade 3-5 LOCAL 2007 Oregon Battle of the Books

Title - Becoming Naomi Leon

Question: What did Gram call the Airstream trailer?

Answer: Baby Beluga

p. 3

Author - Pam Munoz Ryan

Promotional Ideas

- A wide variety of ideas have been submitted for promoting the program and motivating students to read. Several ideas are outlined below.
- Involve parents, teachers, administrators and the public as much as possible.
- Use video recordings from local Battles in previous years.
- Do group orientations for students, staff and parents.
- Do booktalks using Battle books.
- Make bookmarks from each levels official book list.
- Organize bookmark contests with students.
- Design visible displays or bulletin boards publicizing the program.
- Saturate school bulletins, district newsletters, and other handouts with program information.
- Encourage teachers to read books or portions of books aloud to students.
- Hold contests to redesign book covers, design a school logo for Battle of the Books, prepare for the toughest questions, etc.
- Have students create large posters of book covers to display.
- Develop a variety of study guides or literature units related to the Battle books that include games, crossword puzzles, "first line" quizzes, etc.
- Create a large display including title/author lists, participants names, and places to chart each student's progress.
- Hold a party or a library sleep-over for students who read all of the books on their list.
- Purchase Unabridged audio recordings
- Take team pictures and prominently display them.
- Teams create murals about OBOB books to place on display in the lobby.
- All school read: pick one book from the OBOB selection for the WHOLE school to read.
- Classroom teachers meet, read, and discuss the OBOB books.
- OBOB blog for school community.
- Book stores: ask for promotional area.
- Free book giveaway: focus on OBOB titles for summer reading.
- Distribute bookmarks.
- Create a school logo contest which any student is able to enter. Use requirements such as: Oregon Battle of the Books, School, and year listed, specific size needed for logo. Students can be the judges for greater investment and the winner's logo is included on the school t-shirt the teams wear to Regionals/State. This has been done with a color printer/iron on transfer with success. The logo winner also receives a t-shirt.

The list is only limited by your own creativity and time! Students who participate in the Oregon Battle of the Books are usually easy to motivate and are enthusiastic. (Do not forget to save a copy of everything you do as a guide for next year).

How to Manage Public Relations

The real key to a publicity campaign is planning. Keep a schedule or timeline for yourself as a reminder of when to notify the parents of impending competitions, when to call the media, when to submit newsletters for district publications, when to bring in your camera to record momentous events, etc. Please include in publicity items that the Oregon Battle of the Books is sponsored by the Oregon Association of School Libraries.

- Local newspapers, local radio and television stations, as well as statewide publications, are anxious to read and hear about what is occurring in the schools. Even if you have to take the pictures and write the articles, record the interviews, or set up the video gear yourself, it will be worth the effort. Communications with the parents and the community about this popular school program will also open channels that can later be utilized when support for this and other worthy programs may be needed.
- Do a presentation on the Oregon Battle of the Books for open house.
- Get local merchants to display not only the books, but also rules and prizes.
- Invite local dignitaries to moderate battles.
- Sends out regular letters to parents, as well as news releases.
- Send individual invitations to school board and city council members to attend Oregon Battle of the Books finals in their communities. (Also, invite school board/city council members to be officials!)
- Create a link at your local school to OBOB webpages.
- Connect public library webpages to the OBOB webpages.
- Connect with Youth Services at local public libraries for support (displays, promotion, etc.)
- Present at a PTO/PTA, board meeting.
- Present a mock battle at a board meeting and other various locations.

The Oregon Battle of the Books Committee will be keeping historical data and will be in contact with the media. Please send digital photographs as well as local news reports to the Oregon Battle of the Books Chair for use in statewide publicity.

Just remember to communicate with those around you who might otherwise miss out on important events. Also, save everything you do - every invitation you send, every letter home, every news item, every photo you take, every time line you prepare. You may wish to reuse items, or remind yourself about ideas from year to year.

Appendix Sample Battle of Books Questions

The following sample questions are examples of appropriate wording for question writers. Both In Which Book and Content questions may be written for the same portions of a book. Questions in the competition will include additional information from the book on each card. For more specific information, see the formatting description in the OBOB handbook and the card samples in the Appendix.

Sample “In which book” questions (answered with the book’s title and author):

In which book does one of the characters write a love note as a prank?

Little Women by Louisa May Alcott p. _

In which book does a character receive a postcard with a skyscraper on the front?

Play to the Angel by Maurine Dahlberg p. _

In which book is a tombstone used for something other than marking a grave?

The Wright Brothers by Russell Freedman p. _

In which book does a child get to work alongside adults as an assistant in a hospital?

Close Encounters of a Third World Kind by Jennifer J. Stewart p. _

In which book does the main character live on a 12 acre rock surrounded by water?

Al Capone Does My Shirts by Jennifer Choldenko p. _

In which book does a family participate in “Las Posadas”?

Becoming Naomi Leon by Pam Munoz Ryan p. _

In which book is a character saving money to buy a gorilla??

Clementine by Sara Pennypacker p. _

In which book does a character lose both his parents in a boating accident?

The Fellowship of the Ring by J. R. R. Tolkien p. _

Sample Content questions (answered with specific information from the book):

Little Women

What does Amy do to destroy Jo’s book?

Answer: Burn it in the fireplace

p. _ Author: Louisa May Alcott

Play to the Angel

What prized possession does Greta’s mother plan to sell?

Answer: a piano

p. _ Author: Maurine Dahlberg

The Wright Brothers

What did the Wright Brothers do with a damaged tombstone?

Answer: they built a printing press

p. _ Author: Russell Freedman

Close Encounters of a Third World Kind

Two Parts: What two jobs are assigned to Annie?

Answer: Care for her sister and help in the hospital

p. _ Author: Jennifer J. Stewart

Al Capone Does My Shirts

What is the name of the island where Moose Flanagan lives?

Answer: Alcatraz

p. _ Author: Jennifer Choldenko

Becoming Naomi Leon

What festival do Naomi and Owen attend?

Answer: “Las Posadas”

p. _ Author: Pam Munoz Ryan

Clementine by

Two Parts: What are the two things that Clementine fears?

Answer: pointy things AND boomerangs

p. _ Author: Sara Pennypacker