

Oxford Big Read

2025

Winners and Finalists
from Japan

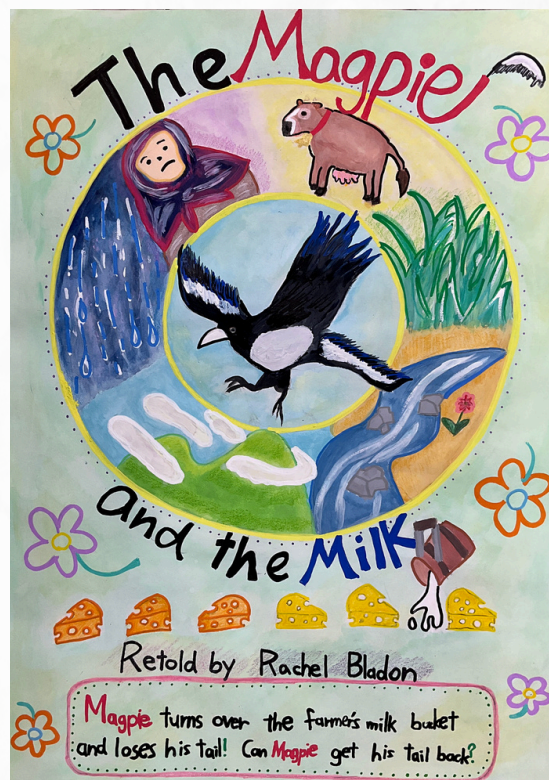
Institution Entry

Category 1 (ages 5-8)

Design a new book jacket for the book read, and include the title, author, illustration, and two sentences about the book.



Winner



Name: Hina Watanabe

School: KOEN Girls' Elementary School

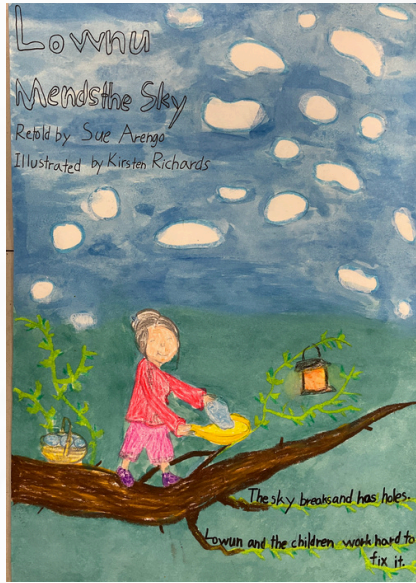
Title: The Magpie and the Milk



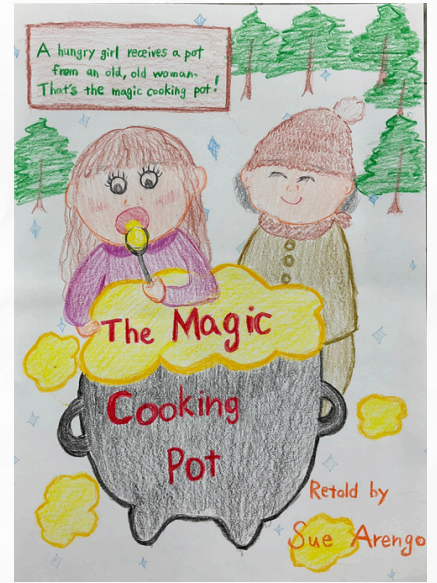
Finalists



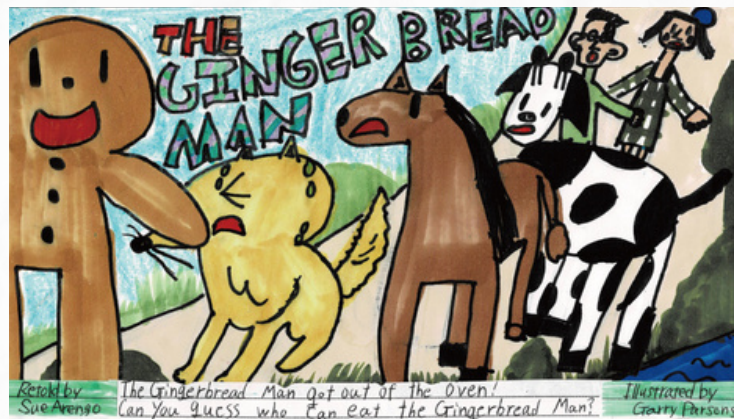
Name: Konatsu Ito
School: Magic Key Kids Academy
Title: At the Pool



Name: Rin Hasegawa
School: KOEN Girls' Elementary School
Title: Lownu Mends the Sky



Name: Suzuka Aoki
School: KOEN Girls' Elementary School
Title: The Magic Cooking Pot



Name: Sae Honda
School: So-Fun Online
Title: The Gingerbread Man



Name: Rika Nagamatsu
School: Showa Elementary School
Title: Castle Adventure

Category 2 (ages 9-12)

Poster

Design a poster that represents your understanding of the book read or a key scene from it. Include a few lines explaining what your illustration depicts and why it is significant. (100 WORDS minimum, 300 WORDS maximum).

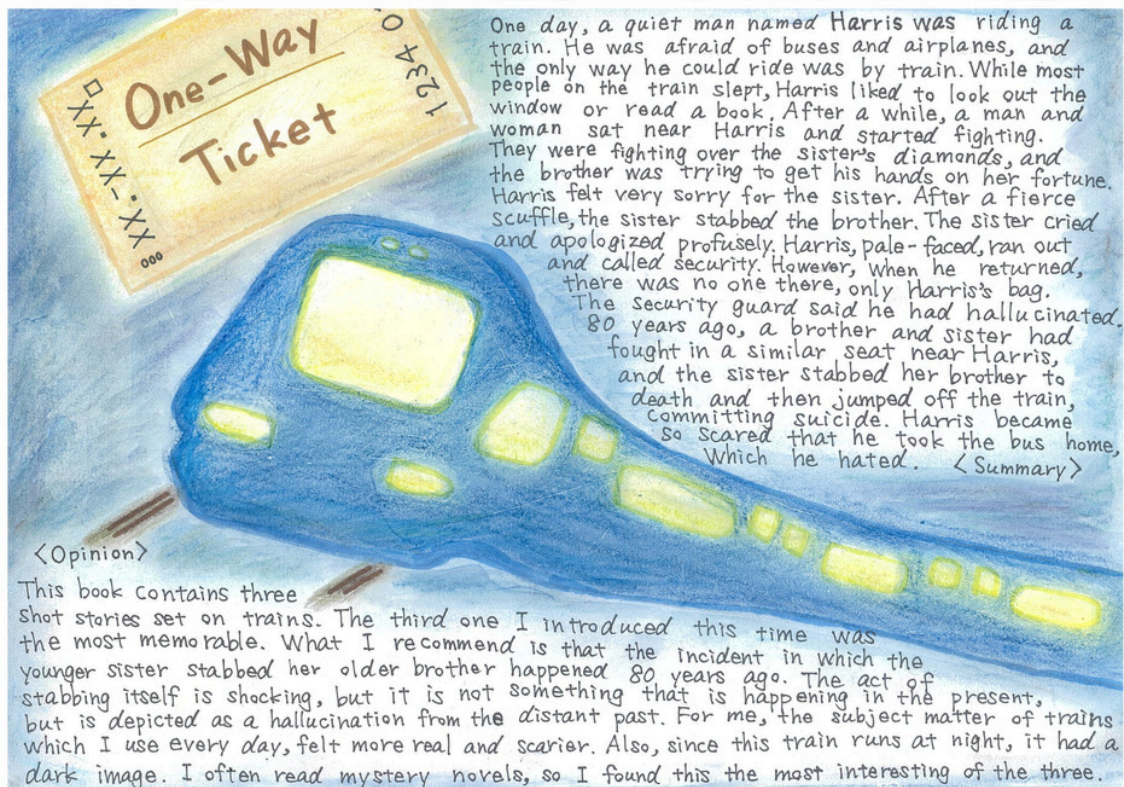
OR

Book Report/Review

Write something interesting about the book read, and include the title, author, kind of story, setting, and main characters. What did you like, what did you dislike, and if the story can be changed, what would it be? (100 WORDS MINIMUM, 300 WORDS MAXIMUM).



Winner



Name: Mana Ichimura

School: Senzoku Gakuen

Title: One-Way Ticket



Finalists

Le Rapport Misérable

The book I read is a short version of the historical drama, 'Les Misérables', by Jeanine Bassett. The story, just like the title, has a fair amount of misery and depression, but also has a surprising amount of joy and hope.

The story takes place in Paris, and is based on the June Rebellion from the early 1800s. The story is focused on the life of Jean Valjean, and his journey from a prisoner, to a factory owner, to a proud hero and father.

To be completely honest, I found this story confusing because of the massive time skips and because I am not familiar with French names and places. But, overall I enjoyed the plot. Especially how Jean Valjean was able to change his life for the better, even though the whole world was against him. I found this extremely inspiring.

If I could change anything in this story, I would change the fact that it is very male-focused. The women have important roles, yet the plot only revolves around the men and their actions. So I would give the women more depth and attention.

Despite the difficulty I had with reading the French words, I enjoyed it greatly and want to attempt reading the full version. I think readers my age will enjoy this story because it shows hope and determination even through hardships.

by Sakura Narita

Castle Adventure

Summary
The magic took the three children and their Grandma from the chilly room to a room in the castle where the black witch, the red witch, and the green witch lived. There was a frog there. The frog was the king of the castle, but he had been turned into a frog by the nasty witches and was asking for help. So Grandma and the children caught the witches. Then the Grandma and child looked at the witch book. And the frog turned into people. The witches turned into frogs. The frog had a way. The magic. Then the Grandma and the children went to the child's room.

Recommendation
I love this book because the Grandma's behavior is so funny. Grandma said she came like the wicked witch, putting a net over it with and saying, 'the witch.' Her bad acts made me laugh. She is a super Grandma.

Opinion
It is exhilarating to see Grandma and the children capture the witches to save the king who has been turned into a frog. This fun moment also is also beautiful for myself. This is a book that gives you the courage to stand up to bad things.

Name: Sakura Narita
School: Kobe Ryukoku Junior and Senior High School
Title: Les Miserables

Name: Kisa Uchida
School: Senzoku Gakuen
Title: Castle Adventure

(Summary)
Dorothy lived in Kansas with Aunt Em and Uncle Henry. One day a cyclone hit their house, and Dorothy and Toto were blown away. When Dorothy arrived at the country of Oz, she killed the Witch of the East. And Dorothy put the Witch's red shoes on. Dorothy was going to find the Wizard of Oz to get back home.

Dorothy met a Scarecrow, a Tin Man, and a Cowardly Lion in the yellow brick road. The Scarecrow wants some brains, the Tin Man wants a heart and the Lion wants to be brave. Dorothy went to the Emerald City with them, and they met the Wizard of Oz. He said kill the Witch of the West, first, so I can help you.

Dorothy threw the water at the Witch of the West and killed her. She picked up the Witch's black hat.

Actually the Wizard of Oz was not a true Wizard, the Wizard gave presents for them.

To tell the truth they didn't need magic, but they were happy by the presents. Dorothy and the Wizard were going home to Kansas by balloon. Dorothy wasn't in time. But Dorothy could get back home by magic red shoes.

(Explain of illustration)
This hat and shoes are important things in the Wizard of Oz. Because the items changed Dorothy's destiny (Opinion)
My favorite scene is Dorothy got back home to Kansas and Dorothy met Aunt Em and Uncle Henry again. Dorothy didn't give up in Oz so Dorothy could get back home to Kansas. I empathize with the words that 'East, west-home's best.'

I also think my home is the best. I highly recommend this book, so please read it.

The Phantom of the Opera

Summary
This is biggest spectacle in the Paris. It is very big and beautiful building. However, there was a rumor about this Opera House. It's said that there is a ghost. One day a letter arrived at the Opera House. Then something terrible happens, because there are a ghost. The ghost's name is Erik. He could do a lot of clever things in the Opera House with ropes, mirrors, and secret doors. Where'll happen to people in Paris? And what kind of question will be the perfect question of the story?

In this book, Erik overcomes the postcard glass.

Opinion
I haven't read horror stories but I felt it was very interesting. I enjoyed reading this. I was scared at first, but at the end of the book, when Erik's poor and feelings became clear, I felt sorry for Erik. So, in particular my favorite scene is where the Persian spoke about Erik. If I were in Erik's position, I don't think I could do like Erik in this story. It was interesting, but it was romantic and interesting.

Name: Chiharu Kawatake
School: Tokyo Gakugei University International Secondary School
Title: The Wizard of Oz

Name: Sumire Miura
School: Tokyo Gakugei University International Secondary School
Title: The Phantom of the Opera

Usain Bolt

My Opinion

I think Usain Bolt exercised every day since he was little. That is why he grew so tall and muscular. He ran barefoot outside, and he also helped carry water from the river to his house every day. Another reason why Usain was able to break the world record is that he always ran more happily than anyone else.

many things about Usain. For example, Olympics four times, he became the World Junior Champion at 15, and he broke the world record at 21. What surprised me the most was that Usain made a false start in the 100m race at the World Championships in Daegu in 2011.

I was also amazed that he won 19 gold medals, 2 silver medals, and 1 bronze medal. Usain Bolt taught me that even the fastest man in the world sometimes makes mistakes, but he never gives up. That is why he is so great, and I want to be like him, and keep trying my best.

- 1 I was surprised by
- 2 he participated in the
- 3 World Junior Champion
- 4 at 21. What surprised me
- 5 false start in the 100m race at the World Championships in Daegu in 2011.
- 6 I was also amazed that he won 19 gold medals, 2 silver medals, and 1 bronze medal.
- 7 Usain Bolt taught me that even the fastest man in
- 8 makes mistakes, but he never gives up. That is why he is so great, and
- 9 I want to be like him, and keep trying my best.

Name: Haruhito Kikuchi
School: Sagami Women's University Elementary School
Title: Usain Bolt

Category 3 (ages 13-15)

Write a critical review of the book read, including the title, author, genre, setting, and main characters, and also draw a sketch of your favourite character or scene.

OR

Compare and contrast two books.



Winner



Name: Lion Hayashi

School: Kyoto Seibo Gakuin High School

Title: Hachiko



Finalists

The Town Mouse and the Country Mouse

Story: One day, Country Mouse invited Town Mouse to his home. He said "Life is good in the country, Town Mouse said "Yes, but I like the town better. Let's go there. Come with me and see." The two mice headed for the town. How did Country Mouse feel about the town?

Variety is the spice of life.

Town Mouse's favorite foods are: cheese, cakes, cookies, meat and sandwiches. He likes warm and dry town. He likes noisy and bright nights. He loves exciting days.

Country Mouse's favorite foods are: apples, grapes, oranges, cherries, and mushrooms. He likes safe countryside. He likes quiet and dark nights. He loves calm days.

I think the main theme of this story is **DIVERSITY**. It's important to respect each other's interests. The two mice don't reject each other even if they feel differently. They are good friends. I learned that even if we have different environment and different way of thinking, we can get along as long as we respect each other. I also want to interact with various people and learn about different values. I want to be myself while accepting other people's ideas.

However... My favorite part of this story is "it's good to be home again." I also love my home very much.

ONCE upon a time

Name: Taro Higuchi
School: Toho Junior High School
Title: The Town Mouse and the Country Mouse

Thumbelina

Summary

One day, a girl was born from a magical flower to a woman who wanted a child. She was as small as the thumb. So the woman named her Thumbelina. Thumbelina was very cute and kind. But one night, she was forced to take the foraway place, where she went to go. On her journey, she met many animals. Some are nice, some are not. She wanted to find the place where she could become happy. What happened to Thumbelina? Please enjoy to read this story and find it out.

My favorite scene

My favorite scene is that the swallow saved and she could fled foraway on his back just before she was forced to marry with the mole. I have two reasons: First, it shows real friendship. Even though they faced difficulties, they cared for each other. I think it also shows that helping others can bring a happiness to both people. It teaches me that kindness and friendship are very important to our life. Second, we can feel freedom. Thumbelina had a hard time for a long time. Now she could go somewhere new with the swallow. She was not alone anymore and could start her new life. When I saw this scene, I felt the freedom that I could do everything I want.

Points of recommend

1. This book teaches us the power of kindness. Thumbelina helped the injured swallow, and the swallow saved her from the mole in return. This shows that kindness you give to others will find its way back to you.
2. You may understand the importance of having your own will. Thumbelina gets into various trouble. She never gave up to become happy, even when the mole and the frog forcefully pressured her into marriage. I find that thinking carefully about what we really want is very important to our life.

Name: Senka Yamazaki
School: Toho Junior High School
Title: Thumbelina

THE ELEPHANT MAN

Summary

When I saw this title, I wondered what the book was about. "Androids do not dream" I thought. But this story was interesting. It was written over half a century ago. The possibility of war between AI is a hot topic of discussion now. There was also a news that AI acted on its own without listening to what people say. AI might be useful in our lives but it could be harmful.

This story makes us think about "What is a human being" and "How should humans interact with AI?". What does the title "Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?" means? Find out by reading the book! I strongly recommend this book to everyone who will be heavily involved with AI in the future.

Name: Akari Miyasaka
School: Kudan Secondary School
Title: The Elephant Man

THE WITCHES OF PENDLE

Summary

This story is based on the real "Pendle Witch Trials" that occurred in early 17th-century England. The narrator is a woman named Jennet Device, who is now imprisoned in Lancaster Castle. She now recalls her childhood memories as she sits on the cold stone floor. When Jennet was nine years old, she grew up in poor family. Her mother had a violent temper, and her father had already died. The villagers of Pendle avoided and feared her family because rumors had spread that they were witches who cursed people. Meanwhile, Mr. Nowell, a local magistrate, led a witch hunt. Jennet was also summoned to court. The young Jennet believed that if she obeyed Mr. Nowell, he would save her from hunger and loneliness. Or perhaps she might thought members of her family were witches because of their behavior. She continued to this. The testimony was regarded as definitive evidence, and her mother, siblings, and grandmother were all hanged. But why is Jennet in prison now? She had never cursed anyone. Twenty years have passed since her family's trial, and now she herself is accused of being a witch. Ironically, this time she was accused because of the testimony of a young child. She saw her own part in these trials. Filled with fear and despair, she now waits for court's verdict.

Opinion

I chose this book because my dream is to become a judge in the future, and I was interested in its story, which is based on a witch trial. Until now, I believed that the most important thing for a judge was having a thorough knowledge of the law. However, after reading this story, I came to realize that a judge also needs the strength to look at the facts and make decisions without being influenced by emotions or assumptions. The reason is that I learned how terrifying it is when people are judged based on assumptions and fear. In the story, many people believed that members of Jennet's family were witches. They considered only Jennet's favorable testimony important and didn't look for other evidence. As a result, Jennet's family was found guilty. I thought that a judge needs great courage to look for evidence that goes against what so many people believe. That is why a judge must have strength to discern the facts and make right decision. I will never forget this story. I will continue to work hard and become a judge who can perceive the facts at all times.

Name: Rio Sano
School: Chiba Prefectural Chiba Junior High School
Title: The Witches of Pendle

Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?

Summary

After the world war Terminus, San Francisco lies under a cloud of deadly radioactive dust. For that, most of the people emigrated to the Mars. A lot of Androids worked on the Mars as servants. Rick Deckard works for the police of San Francisco, and he is also an Android killer. He kills the Androids who escaped from the Mars. The problem is that they look like an ordinary human. They're intelligent and dangerous. The only way to recognize Androids is to take the "Voigt-Kampff Empathy Test" and check the person has the empathic ability or not. In this world, the human's status is determined by whether or not you own a real animal. Because real animals are rare, they are very expensive. He can earn a thousand dollars for each kill. There are 6 Androids on his list. Will he be able to kill all the Androids? What will he do after his mission?

Recommendation

When I saw this title, I wondered what the book was about. "Androids do not dream" I thought. But this story was interesting. It was written over half a century ago. The possibility of war between AI is a hot topic of discussion now. There was also a news that AI acted on its own without listening to what people say. AI might be useful in our lives but it could be harmful.

This story makes us think about "What is a human being" and "How should humans interact with AI?". What does the title "Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?" means? Find out by reading the book! I strongly recommend this book to everyone who will be heavily involved with AI in the future.

Name: Mio Kato
School: Shibuya Junior High School
Title: Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?

Category 4 (ages 16-17)

Write a critical review of the book read, including the title, author, genre, setting, and main characters, and also draw a sketch of your favourite character or scene.

OR

Compare and contrast two books.



Winner



Name: Liia Rapoport

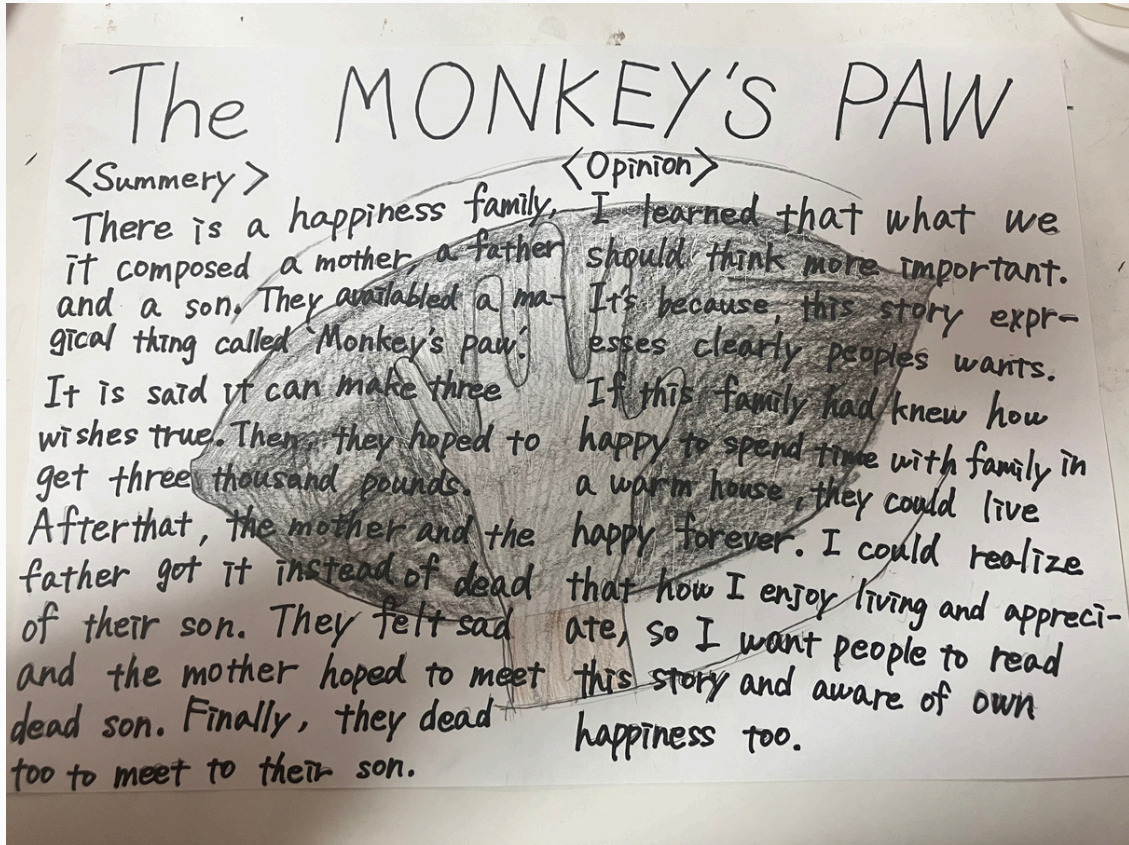
School: Asahijuku Secondary School

Title: Kidnapped

Category 4 (ages 16-17)



Winner



Name: Hitomi Kouno

School: Dokkyo Saitama High School

Title: The Monkey's Paw

Thank you for bringing your creativity and
energy to this year's Oxford Big Read!

— *The Oxford Big Read Judges*

