

**How to Create Compelling Booktalks ~ NRWC 2018**  
Prepared by Anna Monders ~ Jackson County Library Services

- I. Introduction: What are booktalks? / Why do we do them? / JCLS booktalk program  
See [http://jclsbooktalkblog.org/anna\\_monders\\_booktalks](http://jclsbooktalkblog.org/anna_monders_booktalks) and <http://jcls.org/booktalks>
  
- II. Booktalk Examples & discussion
  - A. *Dark Life* and *Tell Me*: Cliff hangers  
(see <http://jclsbooktalkblog.org/2016/03/27/booktalk-for-tell-me-by-joan-bauer>. *Dark Life* post coming soon.)
  - B. *The Mighty Odds*: Interaction  
(see <http://jclsbooktalkblog.org/2017/04/18/booktalk-for-the-mighty-odds-by-amy-ignatow/>)
  - C. *Ghost* and *The Seventh Most Important Thing*: Quoting from text  
(see <http://jclsbooktalkblog.org/2017/04/04/booktalk-for-ghost-by-jason-reynolds/> and <http://jclsbooktalkblog.org/2016/09/07/booktalk-for-the-seventh-most-important-thing-by-shelley-pearsall/>)
  - D. *A Night Divided* and *Pugs of the Frozen North*: World Building  
(see <http://jclsbooktalkblog.org/2016/10/06/booktalk-for-a-night-divided-by-jennifer-nielsen/> and <http://jclsbooktalkblog.org/2017/05/23/booktalk-for-pugs-of-the-frozen-north-by-philip-reeve/>)
  - E. *Pugs* (above) and *Hilo*: highly illustrated and graphic novels  
(see <http://jclsbooktalkblog.org/2017/04/25/booktalk-for-hilo-the-boy-who-crashed-to-earth-by-judd-winick/>)
  - F. *Masters of Disguise* and *Super Shark Encyclopedia*: nonfiction  
(see <http://jclsbooktalkblog.org/2016/06/14/booktalk-for-super-shark-encyclopedia-by-derek-harvey/> and <http://jclsbooktalkblog.org/2016/11/04/booktalk-for-masters-of-disguise-by-rebecca-johnson/>)
  
- III. Building a Booktalk – What to write, and how much (100-300 words) – see following handout
  - A. Four primary questions:
    - i. What change happens at the beginning to set the story in motion?
    - ii. What does the main character want more than anything?
    - iii. What obstacles does the MC face?
    - iv. What sets your MC apart (2-3 strong details)?
  - B. Additional questions:
    - i. What action does the main character take?
    - ii. What else do the readers need to know about the world
    - iii. Identify a dramatic scene and retell in 100 words
    - iv. For factual nonfiction: 1-3 facts with high “wow” factor
  
- IV. Preparation and Presentation
  - A. Selecting titles – read with eye for a good hook, balanced, engaging
  - B. Preparing – write, practice, revise, practice
  - C. Public speaking – practice, record yourself, attach script cards to back of book, storytelling
  - D. Discipline issues– aim for storytelling, use a microphone, or a quieter voice, cut the duds from the list, use more interaction (or less), cut it short, don’t take it personally
  - E. Resources: The Booktalk Blog: <http://jclsbooktalkblog.org/>  
Also article by Vanessa Irvin: Book Tweets and Snappy Reads: Booktalking to Engage Millennial Teens. <http://www.yalsa.ala.org/jrly/2015/11/book-tweets-and-snappy-reads-booktalking-to-engage-millennial-teens/>
  
- V. Q&A – Feel free to contact me at [amonders@jcls.org](mailto:amonders@jcls.org) or 541-774-6410

# Building a booktalk

## Primary Questions to consider:

1. What change happens at the beginning of the book to set the story in motion?

What other big change happens as a result?

2. What does the main character want more than anything?

Initial desire:

Main desire:

Additional desire:

3. Obstacles the main character faces. What (or who) is getting in the way of what the main character wants?

4. What sets your main character apart? (2-3 strong details)

Interests/hobbies/quirks:

Strengths/talents/superpowers:

Fears/weaknesses:

Physical appearance:

Family situation:

Past events that have shaped them:

Other:

