

Fun & Friendly  
Competition:  
**Trivia Night 101**

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MEG MALONE, BURNHAM MEMORIAL LIBRARY



# Question One:

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This Vermont children's author is a two-time National Book Award winner, being given the honor in 1977 and 1979. Interestingly though, *Bridge to Terabithia* (arguably her most famous book) was *not* one of the titles that won.

**Category:** National Book Awards, Nov. 2023

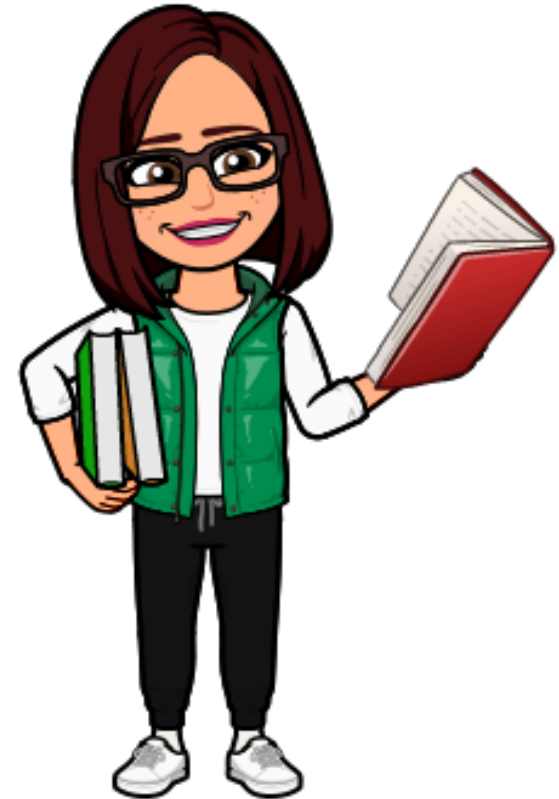
# Why Trivia? (Meg-specific)

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**Personal reason:** Because I am a BIG NERD

Became a librarian in 2020, needed virtual program ideas

- Adapted this from regular Zoom trivia I did with friends during COVID lockdown



# Why Trivia? (General Library Reasons)

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Fits well with broader library goals/values

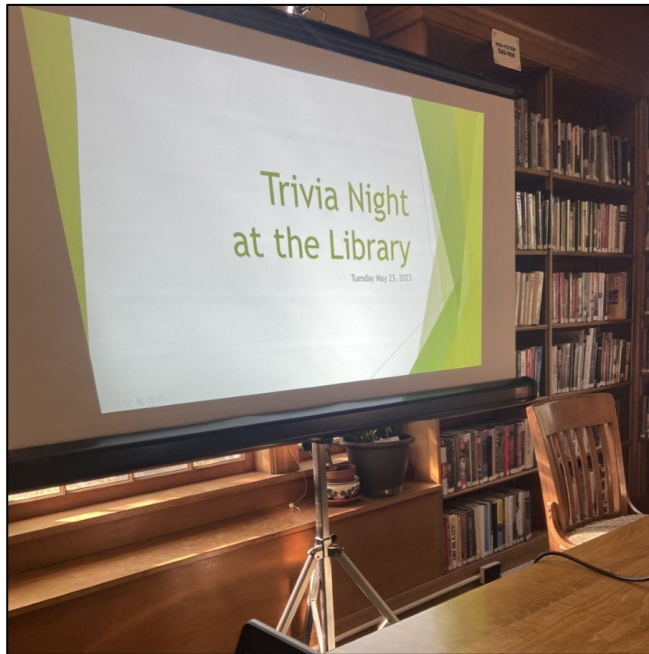
- Lifelong learning!
- Research!
- Social community!
- Entertainment!





# Why Trivia? (General Library Reasons)

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All ages appeal

- Especially intergenerational programming

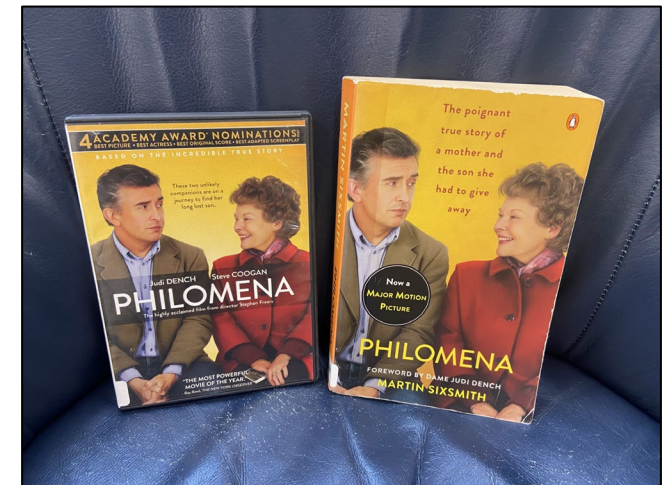
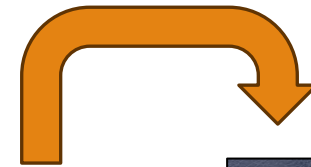
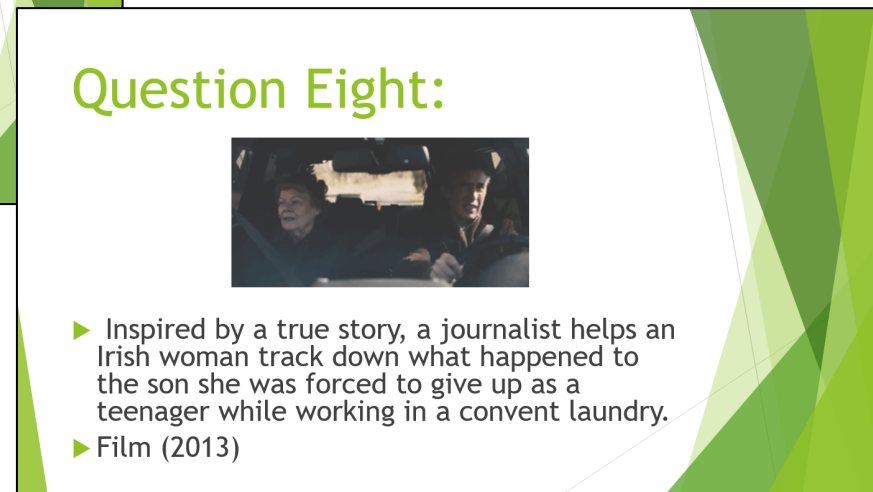
Low-cost, high-interest

- A “bang for your buck” option for small libraries

# Why Trivia? (General Library Reasons)

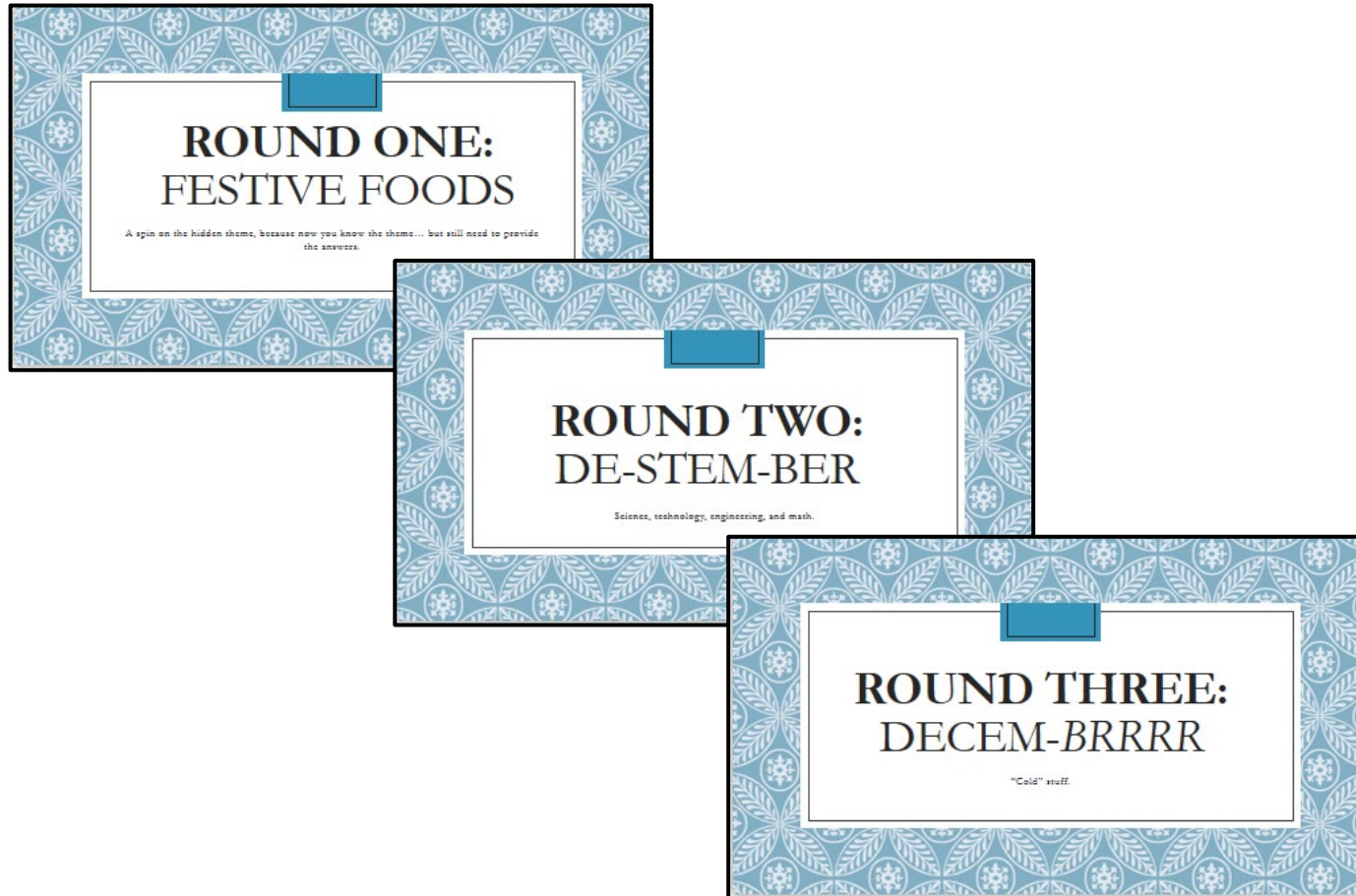
Easily customizable

- Highlight specific areas of the collection and/or upcoming events and/or community interests



# Format – The What

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Three rounds, each with a theme

- Rounds are shared on a slideshow

“Pub style”

- Go through all questions in a round
- Quick review
- Teams then submit answers

Score it

Go over answers

- Update of top teams

Next round...

# Format – The Why

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Allows for solo or small group work

- But still part of a larger social experience

Eliminates the higher-stakes competition

A less intimidating barrier to entry





# Material Needs

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Slideshow of the three rounds

Scoring sheet for host

Prize

- Preferably something you can break up for a small team (stamps, pack of pencils, etc.)

## **IN PERSON:**

Printed answer sheets & pencils

A computer with projector hook up

## **VIRTUAL:**

Google Forms for each answer round


Zoom account (or other video conferencing option) & internet

Double screens for host

- Way easier to keep track of participants, answer sheets, and the slideshow

# Staying Organized

**APRIL TRIVIA AT BURNHAM LIBRARY! 4.16.24**



**TEAM NAME:**  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Round 1:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_\_
10. \_\_\_\_\_
- BONUS: \_\_\_\_\_

**Round 2:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_\_
10. \_\_\_\_\_
11. \_\_\_\_\_
12. \_\_\_\_\_

**Round 3:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
- 1 BONUS: \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_\_
10. \_\_\_\_\_
11. \_\_\_\_\_
12. \_\_\_\_\_

TEAM NAME	ROUND 1	ROUND 2 (Rounds 1 +2)	ROUND 3	FINAL SCORE
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
9				
10				

# Basic Rules

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Review very quickly at the start of each program

My main ones:

- “Jeopardy!” rules (last names only acceptable)
- One point each usually (sometimes ½ point options... but make the adding easy)
- Be lax with spelling (if it’s close, sure)
- Remind people this is free library trivia (so be chill)
- Remind people cheating at library trivia is sad (so don’t use your phone)



# The Ideal Question

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*In [Shayne Bushfield's] view, **the last component of a truly excellent trivia question, after accuracy and importance, is that it offers multiple ways to come up with the answer.** Such questions have an element of noodling that results in a wave of delight at the eureka moment. ...*

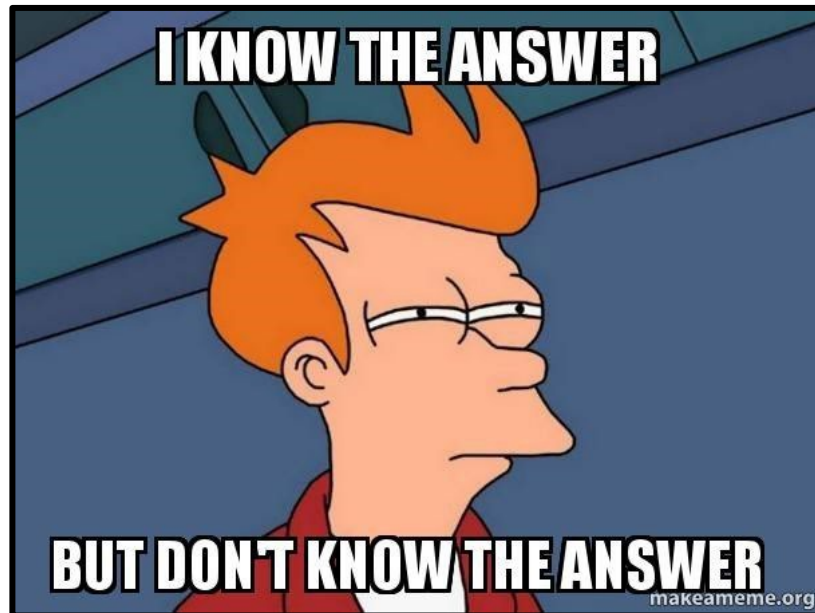
*He wants to make it seem almost as though he's at your side, saying, "You can figure this out, you know this, don't get discouraged!" **He tries to calibrate his questions such that LearnedLeague's collective batting average will be just below fifty per cent;** that way, he has said, "really good players still are challenged occasionally, and the very bottom players still get some right."*

- "The Pleasures of LearnedLeague and the Spirit of Trivia," *The New Yorker*, 5-17-21



# The Ideal Question:

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Not so easy that there's no challenge, but not so hard that the patrons check out

- You aren't supposed to get them all right!

Avoid straight-up “you know it or you don't” questions

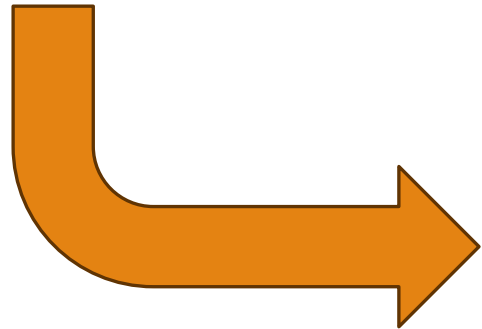
- Pepper in additional clues to help narrow down options
- At the very least, you'll walk away with more knowledge by packing context into the question!

# For Example...

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## Question One:

- ▶ Modern use of the term "trivia" first appeared in what school newspaper?



## Question One:

- ▶ The modern idea of "trivia" as a game is often attributed to Ed Goodgold and Dan Carlinsky. In 1965, Goodgold wrote a piece for the student newspaper of **this Ivy League university** that used the term; the following year, the pair published their book, titled *Trivia*.

# Pro Tip: Write Your Own Questions

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Opens ability to tailor themes to rounds

- Make sure you hit on a variety of topics that will appeal to different people

Demonstrating good research practices

- Sourcing, verifying, etc.
- Common sources: Guinness Book of World Records, news outlets, Britannica, IMDb, Wikipedia...

Can write them in a way that can help cluing

**TL;DR...** It can take more time to write your own questions, but it'll make your trivia better (and it gets easier the more you do it)

# Some Example Themes

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## Hidden Theme

- All answers tie back to some common mystery theme
- Identify it for a Bonus (also helpful to work backward to answers!)

## Timely

- Related to the current month: Halloween, Pride, “April Showers,” etc.
- News headlines for a mix of current events

## Anything you think is interesting

- The Olympics, National Book Awards, Irish movies & TV, stamps... because WHY NOT?!?!





# Some (Next Level) Example Themes

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## Slightly more challenging...

### Rhyme Time

- The answers always rhyme (even if they are nonsensical/bizarre)
- *Discounted pricing on leafy green vegetables*
  - (Kale sale)

### Before and After

- The answers are joined together by a common word that ends one phrase and starts the next
- *Batman's alter ego who won the Stanley Cup four times*
  - (Bruce **Wayne** Gretzky)

# Hosting Energy

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## Be casual

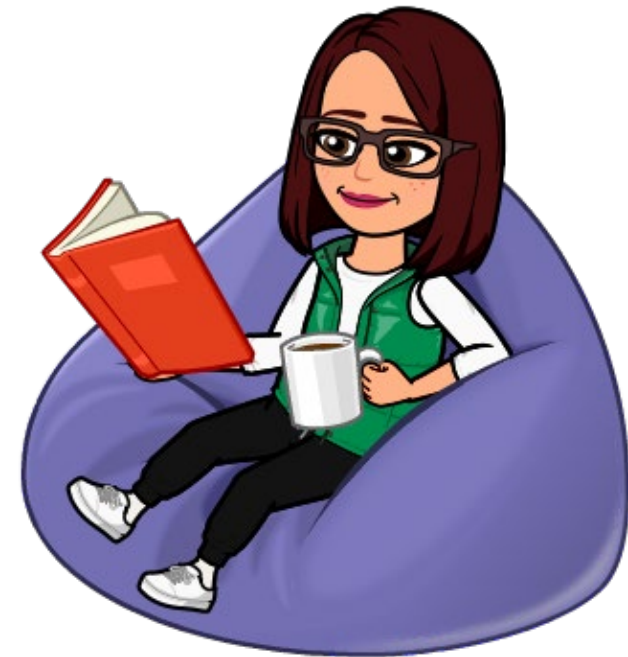
- Keep it conversational, joke around

## Be encouraging

- Comment on strong performances in a round
- Remind people that this is meant to be a LEARNING opportunity, not going to know everything

## Be prepared

- It makes everything else easier



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**Category:** National Book Awards, Nov. 2023

**Katherine Paterson**

# Contact Me

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To get copies of scoring resources, my past games...

To share random pop culture thoughts...

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