

# Iowa Teen Award Promotion Ideas

Want to know how other librarians in Iowa promote the reading of ITA books? Some of their ideas are specific to a school library setting, while others apply to public libraries as well. Please feel free to adapt as needed to your situation.

## *In the Spring:*

- Consider buying complete sets of the books from the IEC - Iowa Educators Consortium  
Web site:

<http://www.iec-ia.org/vnews/display.v/ART/45071eee822c1>

- Determine whether or not the books match your selection criteria and collection development goals.

Logon to the ITA Web site

<http://www.iasl-ia.org/awards.php> and follow the link to the IEC page (cited above) to buy the complete set at a terrific, deeply discounted price. A **free** poster, designed and printed by the winning jobber in the competitive bidding process overseen by the IEC, is included with each set. Buying from the winning jobber preserves the integrity of the competitive bidding process and helps ensure its continued success.

- Does your school provide a “planner”, “calendar”, “handbook” or “agenda” book to students? Add a page for the Iowa Teen Award (and other age-appropriate lists) so all students have the lists at the ready. It could be formatted as a checklist for students to keep track of what books they have read throughout the year. It could include a place for students to rate each book (a scale from 1 to 5 or 1 to 10?) that they could refer back to when it is time to vote.
- **Publish the list** (or include a link to the ITA website) in newsletters going home to parents, and on your school/library website.
- **Read the books so you can provide first-hand expertise when providing reader’s advisory.** Recommend specific titles to interested language arts/reading teachers for them to read over the summer.
- See if your teachers will give extra credit or bonus points for 1) reading an ITA book, 2) reading “x” number of ITA books, or 3) voting in ITA.
- **Contact a librarian in your area who is not participating now and help them learn how easy and beneficial it is to take part. Help them.** Give them a call periodically to see how it’s going. Remind them to collect and send in their votes by March 1.

### *In the summer/fall:*

- Buy extra copies of the books that you think (or find out as the school year begins) are always on reserve.
- Display the books in a high visibility/high traffic area. Create a special table or shelf or windowsill—whatever works best in your environment—to display the books. When they are returned, instead of shelving them in the regular collection, put them in this **special display** area until the voting is completed—or maybe even longer if interest dictates.
- Post signs or use the **ITA poster** to indicate where the books are displayed.
- Purchase and use the **ITA labels** to make it easier for students to identify (and for staff when they come back in!)
- Download the bookmark template from the website

(<http://www.iasl-ia.org/awards.php>)

Print the bookmarks and make them WIDELY available in your library, in classrooms and at the circ desk.

- Take some bookmarks to your **local bookstore(s)**. Provide them with the ITA website address so they can print more bookmarks as needed.

Use the annotations from the bookmarks to help you get started creating your own **booktalks**. Consider excerpting the annotations to create bulletin boards, signs, and customized posters for display in the library, hallways, and classrooms.

- Recruit students in classes, book clubs, or volunteer classes to **create the posters** for you using traditional pen/paint and paper or computer graphics.
- **Talk with your reading/language arts teachers** about the ITA.

Offer to booktalk the ITA books at the beginning of the year. Distribute the bookmarks. Explain how the state-wide voting works, presenting the timeline/procedure for voting and nominations, and encourage participation. **Emphasize that these books are on the list because they were nominated by teens just like them in the previous year.**

- Prepare a **PowerPoint presentation** of each title (scan the book cover and enter the title and author's name to the side, or a brief annotation, for example) so that you can booktalk the books even after all available copies are checked out.
- Prepare a **“reserve” slip** on which students can mark titles they want to read as you present the booktalks. These reservations can then be entered into your circ system as time allows after your presentation. If you really want to be fair about, mix them up and enter them in random order! **A sample is available on the ITA homepage.**
- If your school uses AR or another computer-based reading incentive program, be sure there are tests for each book.

- Provide multiple copies of each book, depending on your student population. Consider reordering additional copies after students make their reservations. Complete sets may still be available from the IEC/winning jobber, or one might consider buying paperbacks from other sources including book clubs.  
Borrow additional titles from your AEA.

**The ITA rules require that students read at least two books in order to be eligible to vote.** If you want to require them to read three, five, or more, feel free! Do what you think is best with your population to encourage the reading of these “teen-tested” young adult titles.

### *During the year:*

- Do periodic announcements to remind students that the books are available.
- Encourage kids to try to read 25 (or any other number you deem appropriate) books a year, so when they get 25 on their list, they join the **25 Book Club** (100 pages equals a book, so a 500 page book counts as 5 books.) Suggest that they see how many of these books they can read from the ITA list.
- **Revisit classes where booktalks were given in November-**December to talk with students about which books they have read so far, their favorites, their recommendations to others, etc. Try to keep things positive. Acknowledge that the books vary widely (in subject, appeal to different ages, genders, ability levels of readers, etc.) and will not all appeal to the same readers. Students will likely not have the background to understand that a book they hate may be the best thing someone else has ever read, but try to help get that idea across if possible so no one will leave feeling that their opinion is invalid. It may help to point out that every year, every title gets at least some “first-place” votes!

**Consider conducting a periodic “straw vote”** so participating students can get a sense of the relative strength of the titles at that point. Publicize the results via announcements or posters—it might encourage others to get started reading, too.

Offer students the opportunity to provide **feedback** about the books they have read. For example, they might:

- Write reviews, mini-reviews, or complete a response form you create
- Create a print or online advertisements to induce others to read the book
  - These responses could be displayed near the circ desk
  - Near the ITA display
  - On bulletin boards
  - Online at your school or library website
    - Responses could be **audiotaped and provided online as podcasts**. If you have a library chat capability or blog, a section could be created for students to post responses about the books (with “no spoilers” cautions!)

If teachers have genre requirements in their classes, **let them know which ITA books could meet those requirements.**

Remind students to **check out the books to read during extended holidays.**

Check to see which titles are available in **audio formats such as book-on-tape or CD.** Purchase and publicize the availability of alternate formats for use in classrooms, or for students to check out in advance of long car trips, etc.

If any titles have been produced as movies, create (or have interested students create) posters that compare that compare/contrast the book and the movie.

**Examine you cast ballots to extract as much information as possible about your students' reading:**

- How many first place votes were cast? What percentage of potential voters does that represent?
- How many titles did your voters readers read?
- Which titles were read most frequently?
- How many were read by people who did not vote?

***After voting is complete:***

**Find a way to reward students who read more than “x” number of books each year:**

- Hold a celebration breakfast before school
- Have a pizza party at lunch
- Create and print a poster or certificate with their picture on it holding their favorite book  
Hold a drawing from among all those who qualify (however you choose to define that) to win a really good prize...the only limit is your imagination—and the prize pool!

**Thanks to all who contributed the ideas above. You probably have many more good ideas of how to promote the reading of ITA books with your teen readers. If you are willing to share them with others, please send them to us so we can post them here.**

**Thanks in advance and let's keep 'em turning those pages!**