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## **Excellence in Poetry for Children Award Announced**

The National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) has awarded the 2011 Award for Excellence in Poetry for Children to J. Patrick Lewis.

NCTE, through the Poetry Committee, recognizes and fosters excellence in children's poetry by encouraging its publication and by exploring ways to acquaint teachers and children with poetry through such means as publications, programs, and displays. As one means of accomplishing this goal, NCTE established the Award for Excellence in Poetry for Children in 1977 to honor a living American poet for his or her aggregate work for children ages 3–13.

An American poet and prose writer noted for his children's poems and other light verse, J. Patrick Lewis earned his PhD in economics at The Ohio State University in 1974. He taught at Otterbein College in Westerville, Ohio, until 1998 when he became a full-time writer. He has published extensively in the field of economics with articles and reviews appearing in numerous academic journals. In addition to writing and publishing short stories and poems, Lewis has published over 65 children's books and has won many awards for these books.

Lewis loves sharing his stories, poetry, and humor and each year visits many elementary schools, keynotes at literature conferences, and presents teachers' workshops on introducing poetry in the classroom. His poems run the gamut from silly to serious, from free verse to form, from nonfiction to nonsense. J. Patrick Lewis will be honored at the Books for Children Luncheon and at a poetry session during the NCTE Annual Convention in Chicago, Illinois, this November.

The Award for Excellence in Poetry was given annually until 1982 and every three years until 2009. In 2008 the Poetry Committee changed the time frame to every other year with the next award being given in 2013. The criteria include literary merit (art and craft of aggregate work—as poet or anthologist); poet's or anthologist's contributions; evolution of the poet's or anthologist's work; and appeal to children.

A collection of poetry books of all winners of the Award for Excellence in Poetry for Children is sustained and preserved at the University of Minnesota Children's Literature Research Collections (CLRC) / Kerlan Collection at the Andersen Library.

For more information about the NCTE Award for Excellence in Poetry for Children, including past winners, see <http://www.ncte.org/awards/poetry>. The National Council of Teachers of English, with 50,000 individual and institutional members worldwide, is dedicated to improving the teaching and learning of English and the language arts at all levels of education. For more information, please visit <http://www.ncte.org>.

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