



16th FUNDA MZANTSI CHAMPIONSHIP **(Reading Festival)**

Terms and Conditions

Background

The National Library of South Africa (NLSA) through its outreach unit, Reading and Literacy Promotion, initiated the Funda Mzantsi Project to support and assist communities to establish and sustain book clubs. The project was initiated as part of the NLSA's mandate to inculcate a culture of reading amongst citizenry and in response to the reading survey conducted by the South African Book Development Council in 2007. The survey revealed that South Africa is not a reading nation.

The NLSA intervened by establishing book clubs in schools and communities. The project was piloted in the Western Cape, focusing on high school learners. The project started with only six book clubs in high schools around Cape Town. The NLSA donated books to the identified schools and learners were encouraged to read and discuss books as part of their book club programmes.

In 2010, the NLSA took a step further and initiated the Funda Mzantsi Championship as an annual competition for book clubs to be assessed on their reading and comprehension abilities. Competing book clubs enrolled with the NLSA before participation in the Championship.

In 2013 the Department of Correctional Services (Reading for Redemption Programme), upon realising the role reading played in the rehabilitation of their offenders and in view of the growing interest by their Management Centres, joined hands with the NLSA and became a strategic partner.

The FMC was first hosted in George in September 2013. In 2016 George Municipality, upon





realising the economic spin-offs of FMC in the Municipality, became a strategic partner in the co-ordination of FMC. Very successful Championships were hosted annually from 2009 to 2019. The 9th FMC attracted more than 102 book clubs and was attended by a 3 500 strong audience from across the country.

The National Library of South Africa in partnership with the Department of Correctional Services will host the 16th Funda Mzantsi Championship in a physical format from **28 Sept to 02 October 2026**. Book clubs will convene in George where the event will be hosted physically.

Objectives of Funda Mzantsi Championship

- To enhance the value chain in writing, publishing and reading in South African official languages.
- Build creative minds through reading in all languages.
- To stimulate, encourage and activate reading on a continuous basis.
- To improve reading and book reviewing skills.
- To preserve and embrace South African indigenous languages.
- To create a platform where South African cultures can be expressed.
- To sustain established book clubs.
- To employ technology as a tool to advance reading habits.
- To celebrate and embrace books written by local authors.

Rules and Regulations of Regional and Provincial Elimination Competitions

The NLSA is introducing a set of Rules and Regulations that will govern the relationship between the book clubs and the NLSA during regional and provincial competitions. By participation in regional and provincial competitions, you agree to abide by these Rules and Regulations. The NLSA reserves the rights to amend these Rules and Regulations without notice.

1. All book clubs need to register to participate in 16th Funda Mzantsi Championship





regional competitions. Only book clubs that have registered on-line on, or before, **31st July 2026** shall be allowed to participate in the regional/provincial elimination.

The FMC entry form is accessible on the NLSA website www.nlsa.ac.za.

2. For enquiries, please send an email to cfb@nlsa.ac.za, quoting your book club reference number if registered for FMC eliminations.
3. Registered Book Clubs will be subjected to a regional/provincial selection process facilitated by the Provincial Library and Language Services under the Provincial Department of Sport, Arts and Culture in order to be eligible for participation in the 16th FMC.
4. Dates and venues for the provincial/regional eliminations will be communicated directly with the registered book clubs.
5. Members of the book clubs must be 15 years of age or older as at date of registration.
6. Participating book clubs in the national **16th Funda Mzantsi Championship** shall be competing in the 12 South African official languages (including Nama language). Book clubs can select to participate in a minimum of three languages and a maximum of five languages.
7. Provincial/regional competitions will provide a list of books to be reviewed during the regional elimination.
8. Provincial/regional competitions will provide books for impromptu reading during the regional eliminations.
9. In both the regional and national competitions, participating book clubs will be assessed in four categories per language and allocated time as indicated in the table below. Book Clubs can only be represented once in a category.

Reading (Impromptu)	2 minutes
Book review and critical analysis	2 minutes
Spelling Bee	1 min
Debate	3 mins per book club



10. Entrance to compete in both the regional and national Funda Mzantsi Championship is free of charge.
11. Only confirmed book clubs with reference numbers will be permitted to participate in the regional competitions.
12. Only book club that have been in existence for more than 12 months will be eligible to participate in the 2026 FMC. Confirmation letter from a local librarian with a library stamp is required.
13. Members must participate in one book club only.
14. The participants shall be assessed by a panel of adjudicators.
15. The adjudicators' decision is final.
16. Winners shall be categorised as follows:
 - 16.1. One winner per category per language of the competition.
 - 16.2. Only first position per category per language will be considered to represent the province at the national competition.
17. Winners shall be announced at the end of the Competition.
18. In the regional competitions, the provincial task team will determine the number of participants per book club.
19. School and community book clubs may bring a maximum of six members to participate in the eliminations. This includes one book club co-ordinator.
20. Book clubs must wear their uniform during the competition. No book club shall be allowed to participate without a uniform (common attire).
21. No unruly behavior from book club members and/or audience members shall be tolerated during, and after, the eliminations. Book club members who misbehave before, during and/or after the eliminations, shall be disqualified and suspended from the Competition.

Rules and Regulations for the 12th Funda Mzantsi Championship National Competition

1. To participate in the 16th Funda Mzantsi Championship (FMC) competition, all Book Clubs MUST have registered with the National Library of South Africa by 31st July 2022 and must have won in the regional/provincial round of the competition.
2. Members of the book clubs must be 15 years of age or older as at date of registration.





3. Participating book clubs in the **16th Funda Mzantsi Championship** shall be competing in the 12 South African official languages (including Nama). Book clubs can select to participate in a minimum of three languages and a maximum of five languages.
4. The NLSA will provide a list of books to be reviewed during the national competitions.
5. The NLSA will provide books to be used for impromptu reading during the national competitions.
6. Entrance to compete in FMC national competition is free of charge.
7. Only book clubs that won at regionals shall be permitted to participate in the national competitions.
8. Members are not allowed to participate in more than one book club.
9. The participants shall be assessed by a panel of adjudicators.
10. The adjudicators' decision is final.
11. Winners shall be categorised as follows:
 - 11.1. One winner per category per language of the competition.
 - 11.2. Only first position per category per language will be considered to represent the winner in the national competition.
12. Winners shall be announced at the end of the competition.
13. School and community book clubs may bring a maximum of six members to participate in the national competitions. This number includes one book club coordinator.
14. Book clubs must wear their uniform/ common attire during the Competition. No book club shall be allowed to participate without uniform/common attire.
15. Only five book club members and one co-ordinator will be catered for.
16. No unruly behavior from book club members and/or audience members shall be tolerated during, and after, the eliminations. Book club members who misbehave before, during and/or after the eliminations, shall be disqualified and suspended from the Competition.
17. Book clubs eligible to participate at the national FMC will receive the prescribed books on or before 15 August 2026.