

The Swedish Institute for Children's Books' Book Tasting 2018

What is the Book Tasting?

The Book Tasting is an annual event consisting of a written report and open lectures where the Swedish Institute for Children's Books presents statistics and analyses based on the children's and young adult (YA) books published the previous year. Ever since the first Book Tasting arranged in 1993, it has attracted much attention among Swedish researchers, publishers and librarians working with children's and YA literature. The Book Tasting also includes an exhibition in the institute's library where all the children's and YA books published the previous year are displayed. All written reports are available in Swedish on our website: www.sbi.kb.se/Bokprovning/Dokumentation

The Book Tasting 2018

The Swedish Institute for Children's Books began keeping statistics of Swedish children's and YA publishing in the early 1990s. Since then, the number of books published each year has increased by 136 percent.

In 2017, 2,532 books for children and young adults were published in Sweden, an increase of 118 works (5 percent) compared to 2016. The number of books published has increased steadily over the last years, making 2017 a record year for the eighth year in a row. This year's increase mainly consists of picturebooks and other picture-based works, with picturebooks increasing by 15 percent. While we see an increase of both Swedish and translated works, the former continues to dominate. Among the books published in 2017, 56 percent were Swedish works.

While it is difficult to give an overview of over 2,000 works, it is striking how many of the books published in 2017 engage with contemporary issues and ideas. Although this is typical of children's and YA literature in general, the books of 2017 reflect this to a greater extent than usual. They depict and comment on issues such as sexuality and gender, cyberbullying and sexual assault, xenophobia and integration, activism and veganism. The explicit aim is often to challenge majority norms and promote new perspectives.

In this year's Book Tasting we also examine the forest in children's and YA books 2017. How is the forest depicted and what are the characters' attitudes towards it? Moreover, we take a closer look at the debut writers and illustrators of 2017. Who are they and what do they write about? Another topic addressed in this year's Book Tasting is digital publishing for children and young adults. What is, for example, the difference between digital literature and e-books, or book apps and apps based on literary characters?