

Short Story Judging Criteria

What are we looking for in a short story?

A team of judges will select the finalists within each division. The winning stories will be determined by a panel that includes a celebrity judge. Each story will be judged blindly based on literary merit and the criteria listed below. The judges'/committee's decisions are final.

Plot Development

- Engaging title and opening paragraph that draw the reader into the story
- Coherent story that presents an intriguing conflict and creative resolution

Supporting Details and Ideas

- Designated opening sentence is the first sentence of the story
- Well-developed, interesting ideas related to the first sentence of the story are used
- Imaginative details that advance the plot

Characterization

- Believable characters who interact in a convincing way

Paragraph Structure

- Clear organization of ideas

Grammar, Punctuation, Sentence Structure

- Correct grammar, punctuation and sentence construction
- Variety of sentence types

Vocabulary and Word Use

- Language is clear and carefully chosen
- Sophisticated word usage and vocabulary that create images for reader

Story Impact

- Memorable story that leaves a lasting impression

IMPORTANT – Students are reminded to read and review the contest rules, terms and conditions before submitting their stories.