

FOR EACH ENTRY THE JUDGES WILL CONSIDER:

1. STORY BEGINNING

Does the writer engage the reader's attention immediately? Is tone, setting, and character established quickly?

2. CHARACTERIZATION

Are characters believable, well-rounded, memorable? Does the reader respond to the characters either positively or negatively? Does the dialogue contribute to rich, vivid, unique characterization? Are character actions and interactions consistent?

3. PLOT

Has the writer constructed a clear and convincing story with recognizable conflict, crisis and resolution? Are obstacles to be overcome challenging enough? Would the reader feel the tension mounting in the story? Is the story interesting and compelling to read?

4. THEME

Does the story contain a central or dominating theme? Does the writer make this idea concrete through the characters and their actions?

5. SETTING AND ATMOSPHERE

Are historical and geographic details sufficient and accurately developed to give the story realistic atmosphere and setting? Can the reader visualize the places being described?

6. STYLE

Is writing fresh and free of clichés? Are viewpoint changes and pacing handled smoothly?

7. MECHANICS

Is grammar and punctuation correct? Spelling accurate? Is manuscript formatted as required by rules and guidelines of the contest? Does the story word count fit within contest guidelines? Are words used correctly? Do typographical errors mar enjoyment of the story?

8. WRITING QUALITY

Does the quality of the author's writing enhance the story? Do specific details appeal to the reader's senses and hold their attention? Does the author use precise, active verbs? Are metaphors and similes skillfully used?

9. PASSION

Does the story engage the reader's emotions? Has the reader come to care deeply about the characters and what happens to them?

The judges will make specific comments on each of the above criteria to help you on your writing journey. Thank you for your participation. We look forward to receiving your entry.