CREATIVE WRITING CONTEST

SWWC Student Enrichment and Southwest Minnesota State University Presents the 22nd Annual

Categories:

- ♦ Fiction
- ♦ Poetry
- ♦ Non-Fiction

For students in grades 3-12
Limited to Southwest Minnesota students

Submission Deadline
January 16, 2026
Recognition Ceremony
April 12, 2026

The more you write, the better writer you become. Through writing students learn about themselves and their abilities as a writer. Students in our regions have amazing stories that deserve to be read and showcased. Entering this contest is a great way to expose their talents, skills and creativity and get people reading their work. You will find that writing can open a lifetime of opportunities and a needed lifelong skill.
Whatever you do, KEEP WRITING!

Scan Me

SWWC
STUDENT ENRICHMENT

Contact: Andrea Anderson,
Student Enrichment Coordinator

507-537-2257

www.swwc.org/cw

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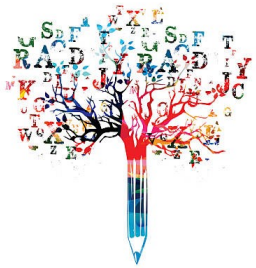

How to Enter the Creative Writing Contest

Following the Contest Rules AND Contest Guidelines listed below.
Create a poem, fiction or non-fiction story.
The category descriptions are listed on the website.
Submit your writings online by going to www.swwc.org/cw

Improve your chances to win by reading "Taboos—Common Writing Errors to Avoid" available on the website

We welcome all students in southwest Minnesota, who enjoys writing, to enter this contest. Please make sure to follow the rules and guidelines listed below, so your entry is not overlooked. Your entry cannot be selected unless you keep writing and keep submitting entries. There are many chances to be selected as a finalist.

Contest Rules:

(must follow or your entry may get overlooked)

- Entries **must be** the student's original work and previously unpublished.
- **Entries must be proofread for punctuation, spelling and grammar by teacher or parent.**
- Submit entries by using the online entry form.
- **Do NOT** put names on the entry piece itself. Title the document with title of the entry piece - students first and last name. Not teacher name.
- A max of three poems, three fiction and three non-fiction entries can be uploaded per student.
- Fee per entry
  $3 per three poems
  $3 per fiction entry
  $3 per non-fiction entry
- Parents pay by using a PayPal account. MUST USE this email swscpaypal@swsc.org or it will NOT go through, enter dollar amount, in subject area, enter "Creative Writing & the student's name".
- Schools can also pay through a PayPal account or will be billed after the registration deadline.
- All finalists entries will be published in an anthology. Please refrain from explicit language or content.
- Keep an electronic version of each entry piece for your records.
- For reference purpose; a PDF of past year's anthologies are on the website.

Entry Guidelines

(must follow or your entry may get overlooked)

- Title each entry piece
- **DO NOT** put your name on entries
- Type in a word document
- 12 pt. Times New Roman font
- 1 inch margins
- No pictures, images or graphics

- **POETRY**: limit 3
  - Grades 3-12
  - Single-Spaced
  - One poem per page
  - Any poem style or set-up
- **FICTION**: limit 3
  - Grades 3-12
  - Double-Spaced
  - Numbered pages
  - 10 page Maximum
- **NON-FICTION**: limit 3
  - Grades 5-12
  - Double-Spaced
  - Numbered pages
  - 6 page Maximum

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Judging Process

The judges have the most difficult decision of selecting top entries.

Entries are screened by SMSU creative writing students who score according to a rubric.

Each entry is scored by multiple student judges.

The entries with the highest scores are submitted to the final judges, faculty in the SMSU Creative Writing Program.

Recognition Awards

- Students are eligible to receive only one $2,000 Creative Writing Scholarship per year (junior/senior year). If they won multiple awards for a maximum of two scholarships, one scholarship may be used during their freshman year and the second one during their sophomore year. The student must be enrolled as a full-time, degree seeking student (with a minimum of 12 credits/ semester) at SMSU.
- Gift certificates are given to the 1st place finishers for each category and each grade level.
- Medals are given to the top three place finishers in each category and from each grade level.
- 1 free copy of the anthology for all place finishers.
- A recognition award will be presented to the school with the most place finishers.

Michael Kleber-Diggs

Guest Speaker

Michael Kleber-Diggs (KLEE-burr digs) is a poet, essayist, literary critic, and arts educator. He teaches creative writing at Augsburg University. His poems and essays often explore themes of intimacy, community, empathy, and grace, practices he believes are simultaneously distinct and interdependent. You can learn more about Michael at michaelkleberdiggs.com

Recognition Ceremony

After the results are determined, the top three place finalists in each category will receive an invitation to a Recognition Ceremony, which will require an RSVP.

The Ceremony will be held on Sunday afternoon, April 12, 2026 for all finalists, their families and teachers. Results of the students placement will be revealed at the ceremony. Attire is dressy casual. NO pjs, or sweet pants, please. Additional details will be emailed to finalists at a later date. This year's guest speaker is **Michael Kleber-Diggs**, a poet, literary critic and art educator from Minneapolis.

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SWWC SERVICE COOPERATIVE

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Changes Needed?
Please notify us of any changes to your email or if you would like to be removed from our contact list.

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