CREATIVE WRITING CONTEST

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your words. your story. your voice.

GRADES 3-12

FICTION | POETRY | NON-FICTION

Submission Deadline
January 15, 2027
Recognition Ceremony
April 18, 2027

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

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. Students will find that writing can open a lifetime of opportunities and a needed lifelong skill. Whatever you do, **KEEP WRITING!**

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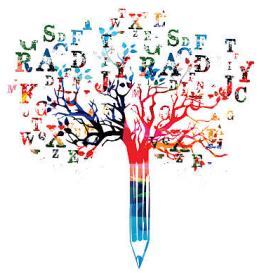
SWWC STUDENT ENRICHMENT

Contact: Andrea Anderson,
Student Enrichment Coordinator

507-537-2257

www.swwc.org/cw

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How to Enter the Creative Writing Contest

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

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

We welcome all students in southwest Minnesota, who enjoy 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- Entries **must be** the student's original work and previously unpublished.
- AI generated entries will be disqualified.
- Entries must be proofread for punctuation, spelling and grammar by teacher or parent.
- Submit entries by using the online entry form.
- 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 will need to pay at the time of submission.
- Schools can also pay at the time of submission or be billed after submission deadline. Note there is now a $15 charge for paper invoices.
- 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 student name on the entry piece itself. Title the document with title of the entry piece, dash, students first and last name, not teacher or parent name.
- Type in a word document
- No double spacing between sentences
- Left justified
- 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
- 12 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.

Tarik Dobbs



Guest Speaker

Tarik Dobbs (هم/هو) is a writer and artist. Dobbs runs poetry online and is assistant professor of English in creative writing (poetry) at Southwest Minnesota State University. Dobb's poems have appeared in American Poetry Review. Poem-a-Day, and Poetry Magazine, among others. Dobbs is the author of Nazar boy (2024), and a winner of the 2026 GLCA New Writers Award in Poetry.

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 18, 2027, for all finalists, their families and teachers. Results of the student's placement will be revealed at the ceremony. Attire is dressy casual. NO pjs, and NO sweatpants. Additional details will be emailed to finalists at a later date.
This year's guest speaker is **Tarik Dobbs**, writer and artist.

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Changes Needed?
Please notify Andrea of any changes to your email or if its time to be removed from the contact list.

SWWC
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