

2026 Arizona Authors Literary Contest Rules

Please read carefully. Any entries not following the rules may be disqualified without notification. The Arizona Authors Literary Contest opens at 12:01 am MST on January 1, 2026, and closes at 11:59 pm MST on June 1, 2026. Except for current Arizona Authors Association Board Members, the contest is open to any person who authors an entry or is chosen by the living author(s) as an authorized agent.

To become a registered contestant, please:

1. Pay the entry fee via one of the methods available on the [Contest Page](#). If the payment is submitted by someone else, be sure to include a note so that we may match the payment to the submission.
2. Send an email with your **name, mailing address, phone number**, and the **category AND subcategory** of your entry (see below). **Attach your .DOC, .DOCX, or PDF entry** and send it within 48 hours of payment to: arizonaauthorsassociation@gmail.com. We no longer accept large files sent through links such as Dropbox or Google Docs. If you have trouble attaching your pdf to the email, try sending a doc file or use Adobe's file size [compressor](#) to reduce the file size before sending it to us.

If you mail a check to us via USPS, include that information in your email. We will not open attachments until your payment has been processed. Once your entry is complete, we will email you within 72 hours to confirm your status as a registered contestant.

CATEGORY ONE: PUBLISHED

Subcategories:

1. Published Fiction
2. Published Nonfiction
3. Oldie But Goldie Fiction
4. Oldie But Goldie Nonfiction

CATEGORY TWO: PUBLISHED YOUTH

Subcategories:

1. Youth Under 12
2. Youth 12-18
3. Oldie But Goldie Youth (all Youth 18 or under)

CATEGORY THREE: UNPUBLISHED

Subcategories:

1. Unpublished Short Fiction
2. Unpublished Short Nonfiction
3. Unpublished Poetry
4. Unpublished Novels/Novellas/Plays

GENERAL RULES

1. Each title may be entered once. Submissions of different titles from the same author require separate emails. All online payments must be received by 11:59 pm MST June 1, 2026. Any payment sent through the US Postal Service must be postmarked by June 1, 2026.
2. Any entry that has won a prize in the Arizona Authors Literary Contest, in any category or year, is ineligible to win again. Nonwinning entries from previous years are welcome.

3. The Arizona Authors Association Board of Directors may disqualify any entry that contains, in its majority opinion, egregiously objectionable or substantially AI-generated material. Entries may include quotes from published sources with citations (original author, title, and date of publication), but plagiarized content may result in disqualification. Once a submission is complete and sent to the judges, it cannot be refunded, edited or altered, but it may be withdrawn upon request.

PUBLISHED ENTRIES

(Published books of at least 100 pages.)

Books entered into the Published Fiction or Nonfiction subcategories must bear a 2025 or 2026 **original** copyright date. Books entered into the Oldie but Goldie (OBG) subcategories must bear an **original** copyright date after 1975 but before 2025. If your book's latest edition bears a 2025 or 2026 copyright date but its original copyright date precedes 2025, it must be entered as an Oldie but Goldie. Please attach books to your email entry in pdf, doc, or docx file formats that are under 25MB in size.

PUBLISHED YOUTH ENTRIES

(Published books of at least 25 pages written for children, teens and young adults.)

All entries **except** Oldie but Goldie Youth must bear a 2025 or 2026 original copyright date. An Oldie but Goldie Youth entry must bear an original copyright date after 1975 but before 2025. Please attach books to your email entry in pdf, doc, or docx file formats that are under 25MB in size.

Note: The age of the author is not a factor in determining scores.

UNPUBLISHED ENTRIES

(**Never** published in any form, including personal web pages.)

All unpublished entries must be double-spaced with a 12 point Times New Roman, Courier or Arial font for the body of the text, and no more than a 16 point font for headers. Submit entries in standard 8.5"x11" format with one-inch margins. Place page numbers and title in the header or footer.

Unpublished Short Fiction or Short Nonfiction entries cannot exceed 5,000 words. Unpublished Poetry/Prose cannot exceed 50 lines. A "line" is defined as one single line on a standard 8.5"x11" page. Spaces do not count as lines. Unpublished Novel/Novella/ Play entries must include a **synopsis** (400-600 words), followed by the first 5000 words of the completed manuscript in **one** pdf, doc, or docx file (the entire manuscript must be available later upon request, if needed to break a tie).

Unpublished winners automatically consign FIRST publication rights to the Arizona Authors Association. We will include every unpublished winning entry in the *2027 Arizona Authors Literary Magazine*, due out in November 2026. We reserve the right to edit the content, fonts, and format of any entry.

Selecting Winners:

Each entry will normally be rated by between three and five judges selected from within the Arizona Authors Association membership. We may at times include nonmember judges such as teachers, editors, or publishers. All judges use standard scoring sheets based **solely** on literary merit. Categories may be canceled if no entries within such categories exceed the minimum score needed to qualify for a win.

A book of more than 100 pages in any subcategory may earn up to five bonus points for extensive research or authenticity that, in the opinion of the judges, greatly enhances the value of the title. All judges' scores will be tallied by at least two Board Members. Authors and agents entering the contest agree to hold the Arizona Authors Association and its Board of Directors harmless in any disputes arising from entries, awards, submissions or payments.

Finalists will be chosen in mid-September, and the list of finalists will be sent to all registered contestants. Winners will be announced at the Literary Awards Event held no later than November, 2026. Winners not attending the event will be notified via email of their prize.

Optional Critiques/Evaluations

You may purchase a full reading and 2-page critique/evaluation of a self-published novel or memoir, or an unpublished work. Whether or not you order an appraisal **will not affect** your chance of winning a prize. The critique will be sent to the author's email address no later than 60 days after the request was submitted. Please be patient. Even short books require many hours of reading and review. The cost is \$60, a fraction of industry standard for a reading and evaluation.

Good Luck To All Of Our Contestants!