

2026 Arizona Authors Literary Contest

CONTEST AND SUBMISSION 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 all living authors and their duly authorized agents. Agents who submit entries on behalf of authors bear total responsibility for such submissions. In no case shall the Arizona Authors Association be held liable for any consequences resulting from unauthorized submissions, misrepresentations, or author/agent disputes.

To become a registered contestant, please:

1. Pay the entry fee via one of the methods available on the [Contest Page](#).
2. Send an email within 24 hours of payment to arizonaauthorsassociation@gmail.com. Include the following items:
 - Author's Name
 - Author's Mailing Address including City and State (so that we may mail a prize, if any).
 - Phone Number (used only to clarify address issues, if any).
 - Category and Subcategory (see list below)
 - .Doc, .Docx, or PDF file of your entry as an attachment to the email. (We no longer accept file sizes above 25MB, so please attach your entry directly to your email.)

If your payment was made using a different email than the one used for your entry, please include that information so that we may match your entry to your payment. Likewise, if you mailed a check to our mailing address, be sure to include that information. We will notify you to confirm your entry within 72 hours after we receive both your entry and payment.

We will not open attachments until your payment has been processed.

GENERAL RULES

1. Each title may be entered once. Submissions of different titles from the same author require separate emails if the total file size exceeds 25 mb, but you may pay in one sum. All electronic 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. **FILE SIZE:** Attach your file directly to your email. Do not send via Google Docs, Dropbox, or other programs meant for larger file sizes, since many of our judges do not use them. If you have trouble attaching your pdf, try sending a doc or docx file, or use Adobe's file size [compressor](#) to reduce the size.
3. 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. Prizes or awards earned from other contests do not affect an entry's eligibility in this contest.
4. 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 uncited content, even from an author's own published work, may result in disqualification. Once the submission is complete and sent to the judges, it cannot be edited or altered, but it may be withdrawn upon request.

UNPUBLISHED ENTRIES

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

There are **four subcategories** in the Unpublished category:

Poetry/Prose (Poetry and Prose up to 50 lines.)

Short Fiction (5,000 words or less)

Short Nonfiction (5000 words or less)

Novels/Novellas/Plays (Submit a 2-page synopsis **PLUS** the first twenty-five pages of your finished work. Combine both parts into one document and attach it to your email.)

Previously published quotes are allowed within an unpublished entry, provided each quote is properly cited with author, title and date of publication.

All unpublished entries must be double-spaced with a 12 point Times New Roman, Courier or Ariel 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 between stanzas do not count as lines. Unpublished Novel/Novella/ Play entries must include a 2-page **synopsis** and the **first 25 pages** of the completed manuscript (combine both into one document).

Unpublished winners automatically consign **FIRST** serial rights to the Arizona Authors Association. We will include all winning unpublished entries in the *2027 Arizona Authors Literary Magazine*, due out in November, 2026. If a winning unpublished entry in the Novel, Novella and Play category exceeds 5000 words, only a portion will be published. If the entry is published elsewhere before November 30, 2026, any prize won will be forfeited.

PUBLISHED ENTRIES

(Published books of at least 100 pages.)

There are **four subcategories** in the Published category:

Published Fiction (Originally published in 2025 or 2026.)

Published Nonfiction (Originally published in 2025 or 2026.)

Oldie But Goldie (OBG) Published Fiction (Originally published after 1975 but before 2025.)

Oldie But Goldie (OBG) Published Nonfiction (Originally published after 1975 but before 2025.)

Books entered into the Published Fiction or Nonfiction categories must bear a 2025 or 2026 **original** copyright date. Published entries may employ the spacing, size, etc., of the original published work, or the author may choose to create a new file. Any new file's written content must be identical to the author's published unabridged version of the book.

An Oldie but Goldie (OBG) published book 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 in the Oldie but Goldie category. Entries may employ the spacing, size, etc., of the original published work, or the author may choose to create a new file. Any new file's written content must be identical to the author's published unabridged version of the book.

PUBLISHED YOUTH ENTRIES

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

There are **three subcategories** in the Youth category:

Children's Books (Published in 2025 or 2026 specifically for children under 12 years of age.)

Teen/Young Adult (Published in 2025 or 2026 specifically for youths aged 12 and up.)

Oldie But Goldie Youth (Fiction or Nonfiction books originally published after 1975 but before 2025.

This category includes all titles 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.

Published Youth entries may employ the spacing, size, etc., of the original published work or the author may choose to create a new file. Any new file's content must be identical to the author's published unabridged version of the book.

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

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 category 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 sent to our official email address, where at least two Board Members will independently match their tallies. Authors 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 in November, 2026. Winners not attending the event will be notified via email of their prize within 72 hours. No general contest notifications or results, other than those listed in this paragraph, will be sent to non-winning contestants.

All winning prizes will be sent directly to the author of the entry, except in the case of a single entry with multiple authors. In such cases, the authorized agent will bear sole responsibility for receiving and distributing any winning prize to authors.

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 full reading and evaluation.

Good Luck To All Of Our Contestants!