



Ethos Literacy

## ETHOS LITERACY ANNUAL SHORT SHORT STORY WRITING CONTEST RULES & JUDGING CRITERIA

### Topics

The story must relate in some way to one of these topics:

- chicken(s)
- detour
- purple
- something lost

### General

- The story must be your original idea and work.
- If your story is not your original idea and work, your story will not be accepted and the submission fee is forfeited.
- We expect prose, not poetry.
- The contest is open to writers 14 years and older.
- Writers residing outside the United States can participate.
- Stories must be written in English.
- Submission indicates acceptance of the Contest Rules.

### Word Limits

- The story cannot be longer than 100 words.
- Incorrectly hyphenated words will be counted as two words. Example: old-man.
- Numerals will be considered to be a word.
- The title is not included in the word limit.

### Prizes

- Best of Contest: \$200 cash prize (1 awarded)
- Best of Topic : Writer's Prize (4 awarded)
- Best Youth Story (writers 14 - 17 years old): Writer's Prize (1 awarded)

### Entry Fees

- \$15 per story
- Register and pay your fees: Click [Here](#)

### Deadline

- March 2, 2026 at 11:59 pm MST.
- Contest participants will be notified of the results in March or April 2026.

### Submission

When you register, we will send you a link to a submission form.

## **Communications**

- We will communicate with you through email.
- Our email address is [shortstory@ethosliteracy.org](mailto:shortstory@ethosliteracy.org).
- Please remember to check your spam folder.

## **Judging Criteria**

- Does the story address the topic in an imaginative, creative, or unexpected way?
- Does the author create a clear and coherent story where something happens?
- Does the story contain a theme or idea?
- Does the quality of the writing enhance the story?
- Did the have a memorable impact on the reader?

## **Judging Mechanics**

- Judging will be blind.
- Stories will be judged in two rounds.
- In the first round, Community Volunteers will score the stories using a rubric.
- The top scoring story in each topic and youth author category will be submitted to Ethos Literacy's Board of Directors for the second round of judging.
- In the second round, the Board of Directors will judge the stories using the judging criteria. The Board will break tied scores (if any) and will choose the Best in Contest Winner.
- Scoring sheets will not be made available for review by authors.
- The judges' decisions are final.

## **Publication**

- Ethos Literacy will publish the winning and honorable mention stories in a e-magazine which will be published on its website, social media platforms, and in an electronic newsletter.
- Authors agree Ethos Literacy may publish the stories and disseminate them.

## **Prohibitions**

- Ethos Literacy staff, board members and their immediate families are prohibited from participating in the contest.
- Judges and their immediate families are prohibited from participating in the contest.
- Immediate family are parents, siblings, spouses and children.

## **Copyright**

The author retains copyright to the work.