
Creative Writing Division Rules

Entries submitted into the Creative Writing Division will be judged based upon the merit of the original work, creative content, message clarity, use of language, originality of topic or idea, and overall strength.

All gold medal winners from the national competition in the creative writing division will be invited to attend a writing seminar at the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival.

Note: All gold, bronze, and silver creative writing winning entries will be printed in a booklet post-competition **unless otherwise indicated by the Veteran to the national chairperson, Madge Scherer by February 1.**

1. Entries in the creative writing division must have been completed after April 1, 2020.
2. All entries submitted into the Creative Writing Division must be original compositions written solely by the eligible Veteran who is submitting the entry.
3. Entries must be submitted as Word documents in 12-point font. Do not send PDF attachments.
4. Entries must be submitted as text only. Do not send documents with pictures or graphics. Only the text of the entry will be judged.
5. If an entry has won a gold medal in the creative writing division at the national level in any category it MAY NOT BE re-submitted into the Creative Writing division in a subsequent year.
6. Judges reserve the right to move an entry to the appropriate category or disqualify the entry if rules are not followed.
7. Collections of poems, essays, stories, etc. submitted as one entry will not be allowed.

Note: VA staff contact persons will be notified via E-mail with the competition results.

Creative Writing Categories

1. **Poetry Rhyming** - A verse composition, **no longer than 48 lines** in length. Poetry humorous entries should be submitted into the Humor category.
2. **Poetry Non-Rhyming** - A composition, **no longer than 48 lines** in length. Poetry humorous entries should be submitted into the Humor category.
3. **Personal Essay** - A non-fiction composition based on something the writer has experienced or felt. Entries in this category must not exceed 850 words.
4. **Humor** - All types of works which employ humor as the primary component should be submitted in this category. **Poetry entries should be no longer than 48 lines and prose entries must not exceed 850 words.**
5. **Short, Short Story** - A short story, no longer than 1,000 words in length. The story must have a beginning, middle, and an end.
6. **Short Script** - Part of a short script for one or more characters, documenting the movement, actions, expression, and dialogue of the characters. Entries in this category must be no longer than 850 words in length.
7. **Military Experience Poetry** – Poetry entries related to military experience should be submitted in this category. Entries must be **no longer than 48 lines in length.**
8. **Military Experience (not poetry)** – Entries (not poetry) related to military experience should be submitted in this category. **Entries in this category must not exceed 850 words.**
9. **Special Recognition** - Individual or group. Entries by Veterans who exhibit creative expression through use of creative writing while possessing significant physical or psychological limitations. The intent of this category is to reinforce the concept of the arts as therapy, where individuals use artistic expression to facilitate successful treatment outcomes. **Poetry entries should be no longer than 48 lines and prose entries must not exceed 850 words.**

Entries in this category **MUST** also include:

- **A Word document containing a typed statement/narrative** (25 to 225 words) composed by a VA staff person or the Veteran explaining why the Veteran is deserving of special recognition. **Entries submitted without a write-up will not be judged.**

- Consent form 10-3203 and 10-5345 (included in this handbook) must be signed and dated by the Veteran. The staff contact person submitting the entry for the Veteran should safeguard the signed consent forms at their VA facility.