



SEPTEMBER 2022 – AUGUST 2023 COMPETITIONS OVERVIEW

SEPTEMBER

Gender Equality Op-Ed Competition 2022

OPINION: What does gender equality mean to you?

Did you know that globally nearly 1 in 4 girls ages 15–19 are not in school? These numbers (reported by UNICEF) tell a story of inequality. While a quarter of teen girls are without economic, academic, and professional pathways, only one tenth of boys face the same barriers to opportunity. Gender-based disadvantage greatly impacts transgender and nonbinary young people around the globe as well—in some places, female, trans, and nonbinary youth are currently *losing* rights. But here’s the thing, dear writers: Gender equality is not just a feminist or LGBTQ+ issue. Gender equality lifts up *everyone*. Study after study [shows](#) that the most gender-equal societies have the best quality of life, and the happiest, healthiest populations, full stop. This month, in collaboration with [Malala Fund](#), and in recognition of the UN’s [Day of the Girl](#) on October 11th, we’re passing you the mic. What gender issue or injustice has impacted you, your family, your community, school, or country? In an opinion piece, tell us what change you’re advocating for in order to bring about gender equality in your part of the world. Change begins with the voices of many, dear writers. The world needs to hear yours.

Writing Form: Opinion

Subject Areas: Civics, Economics, Journalism, Literature/English, Science, Social Studies

Length: 600-1000 words

Opens: Monday, September 5

Drafts due for Expert Review: Monday, September 12

Submissions Due: Tuesday, September 20

OCTOBER

Climate Change Writing Competition 2022



PERSONAL NARRATIVE: How does the climate crisis impact you?

This November, the world’s leaders will gather in Egypt to address the urgent threat of climate change. [COP27](#) is the 27th international summit intended to unite the world against the intensifying climate crisis—a crisis that, in the words of Egypt’s president, H.E. Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, poses “an existential threat that we can only overcome through concerted action and effective implementation.” Yet COP conferences have been criticized for not doing enough. Greta Thunberg called last year’s COP26 “[A two week celebration of business as usual and blah blah blah.](#)” Indeed, it has been the world’s youth rather than its politicians that have sounded the alarm. As the [UN recognizes](#) in no uncertain terms, “Young people’s unprecedented mobilization around the world shows the massive power they possess to hold decision-makers accountable. Their message is clear: the older generation has failed, and it is the young who will pay in full — with their very futures.” This month, dear writers, ahead of COP27, help us raise the voices of young people in this urgent fight. In a piece of personal narrative, tell the world’s leaders gathering in Egypt how climate change impacts *you*. How has this crisis changed your environment, your community, your sense of the future? Storytelling, after all, plays a critical role in helping us grasp the emergency through which we are all living, igniting empathy in readers and listeners—itsself a precursor to action.

Writing Form: Creative Nonfiction, Personal Narrative

Subject Areas: Creative Writing, Literature/English, Personal Development, Social Studies, Environmental Studies, Science

Length: 600-1000 words

Opens: Monday, October 3

Drafts due for Expert Review: Monday, October 10

Submissions Due: Tuesday, October 18

NOVEMBER

Novel Writing Competition 2022

EXCERPT: Create a new world.

Have you ever wanted to assume another identity? Live through a historical event? Traverse the Himalayas on foot? Novel writing is about personally inhabiting the world



of your characters. And yet a novel also requires looking inward—reflecting on your own experience and interior life to develop authentic, three-dimensional characters. This November, join thousands of other writers in the honorable pursuit of novel writing (it's National Novel Writing Month!) and then submit an excerpt to us.

Writing Form: Fiction

Subject Areas: Creative Writing, Literature/English

Length: 600-1000 words

Opens: Monday, November 7

Drafts due for Expert Review: Monday, November 14

Submissions Due: Tuesday, November 22

DECEMBER

Mini Competition: People's Choice

Stay tuned! In the coming weeks, we'll gather input from our Young Writers about their hopes for this student-inspired competition. We're looking forward to seeing what our Young Writers propose!

Opens: Monday, November 21

Drafts due for Expert Review: Monday, November 28

Submissions Due: Tuesday, December 6

JANUARY

Poetry Competition 2023

POEM: Your origins.

What remains of my childhood / are the fragmentary visions / of large patios / extending / like an oceanic green mist over the afternoon. (Oscar Gonzales)



What are your origins, dear writers? From where does your family originate? How was your community derived? What has shaped your sense of place? Your sense of home? The language on your tongue? What connects you to the earliest days of your childhood? This month, dear writers, write a poem about origins. From the country of your ancestors to the city where you were born to the place you first felt you could really be yourself, tell us, in poetry form, what “origins” mean to you.

Writing Form: Poetry

Subject Areas: Creative Writing, Literature/English, Performing Arts, Social Studies

Length: 500-word maximum

Opens: Monday, January 2

Drafts due for Expert Review: Monday, January 9

Submissions Due: Tuesday, January 17

FEBRUARY

Song Writing Competition 2023

LYRICS: Our generation’s rallying call.

“A change is gonna come.” [Sam Cooke sang](#) these words at the height of the Civil Rights Movement, putting to music a dream of millions, an anthem of change, a call to action. Music has always served as a catalyst for social change. Songs can tell stories, evoke emotion, even deliver lessons. And they can be shared widely, containing messages that, in the digital age, can be delivered with instant gratification while reverberating across generations. Dear writers, what issue is most pressing to your generation? In an original song, channel this urgency into music, to be sung and celebrated—a rallying call for listeners near and far. This month, write your own song of change, and record it if you’d like. We’ll select a winner for best lyrics and best performance.

Writing Form: Lyrics

Subject Areas: Literature/English, Performance arts, Music, Creative Writing

Length: 50-500 words

Opens: Monday, February 6

Drafts due for Expert Review: Monday, February 13

Submissions Due: Tuesday, February 21



MARCH

Opinion Writing Competition 2023

OP-ED: Your turn.

Do you ever feel like you have something to say, but nowhere to say it? A worthy opinion that needs to be shared? This month, Write the World is giving you the floor! What change would you like to see on a community, country, or global scale? From the unfair pressure on young people to lead the climate fight, to how a national law impacts teenagers, to a proposal for a new required course at your school—we want to hear your opinion about something that matters to you.

Writing Form: Opinion

Subject Areas: Civics, Economics, Journalism, Literature/English, Science, Social Studies

Length: 600-1000 words

Opens: Monday, March 6

Drafts due for Expert Review: Monday, March 13

Submissions Due: Tuesday, March 21

APRIL

Poetry & Spoken Word Competition 2023

POEM: Particles of life.

Poetry is eternal graffiti written in the heart of everyone.^[i] Poetry is the journal of a sea animal living on land, wanting to fly in the air.^[ii] Poetry is an act of peace.^[iii] Poetry is its own prayer.^[iv]

“There is not a particle of life which does not bear poetry within it,” wrote Gustave Flaubert. Poetry is in the songs we sing, the trains we ride, the forests we wander. And, when we choose to look, we’ll find it residing within ourselves. “If we are looking for something which is new and something which is vital,” writes Audrey Lorde, “we must look first into the chaos within ourselves.” In this way, writing poetry requires a two-way



magnifying glass. We must search inside ourselves in order to find a truth worthy of reflecting back to the world. This month, share with the world an original poem or piece of spoken word (poetry performed aloud). We'll award two top prizes—one for a written poem, and one for a recorded performance.

^[i] *Lawrence Ferlinghetti*; ^[ii] *Carl Sandburg*; ^[iii] *Pablo Neruda*; ^[iv] *Amanda Gorman*

Writing Form: Poetry

Subject Areas: Creative Writing, Literature/English, Performing Arts, Social Studies

Length: 500-word maximum

Opens: Monday, April 3

Drafts due for Expert Review: Monday, April 10

Submissions Due: Tuesday, April 18

MAY

Food Writing Competition 2023

CREATIVE NONFICTION: Sources of sustenance.

Food—and the way we grow, source, prepare, eat, and write about it—links us to our families, our histories, our culture, our health, our environment, and our bodies. Food also plays a vital role in tradition, ritual, and celebration. “To write well is a public service, and a chance to influence millions,” wrote the food blogger Lisa Gosselin. “To write well about food, is a chance to influence millions in their daily choices: we all eat!” Food writing can be an investigation, an exposé, an odyssey, a memoir. Perhaps you’ll write about the pleasures of your grandmother’s famous falafel or the plight of the next-door dairy farm. And remember, as the journalist and cookbook author Ramin Ganeshram puts it, “it’s not really about the food.” We hungrily await your entry.

Writing Form: Creative Nonfiction

Subject Areas: Geography, History, Journalism, Literature/English, Science, Social Studies

Length: 600-1000 words

Opens: Monday, May 1



Drafts due for Expert Review: Monday, May 8
Submissions Due: Tuesday, May 16

JUNE

Letter Writing Competition 2023
CORRESPONDENCE — Words of thanks.

Today, in the digital age we live in, a physical letter is imbued with significance: it tells the recipient that the contents are to be held onto and cherished. Some would even say that messages sent through the mail are still the sturdiest form of record-keeping, bearing witness to a time and place, and documenting our thoughts and feelings at the most significant junctures of life. This month, help us celebrate this age-old form by writing a letter of thanks. Expressing gratitude via the written word fosters connection, preserves a sentiment, and makes us aware of how much we have to be thankful for. And guess what? Writing thank you notes is also good for your brain. A [study](#) in 2016 showed that after writing about gratitude, our brains are wired—even months later—to feel extra thankful! Your letter need not be in relation to gifts, or even addressed to someone you know. Perhaps you'll write a thank you to someone you admire: a leader of the youth climate movement or the musician who inspired you to learn to play the guitar. Or perhaps the recipient is someone you know best: the dog who taught you about loyalty, a parent who taught you about courage, or a teacher who ignited your love for molecular biology.

Writing Form: Creative Nonfiction, Personal Narrative
Subject Areas: Creative Writing, Literature/English, Personal Development
Length: 300-1000 words
Opens: Monday, June 5
Drafts due for Expert Review: Monday, June 12
Submissions Due: Tuesday, June 20



JULY

Creative Nonfiction Competition 2023
PERSONAL NARRATIVE: Transitions.

The teenage years are an in-between time, the stage linking our childhood to adulthood. It's a time of transition: starting at high school or university, gaining more freedom, finding a part-time job, taking on responsibility. Perhaps most importantly, it's a time of internal transitions, too, as we find out more about who we are and who we want to be in the world. It's no surprise, then, that so many of our favorite books capture this stage of life—with all its reflection and anticipation, journeys and crossroads, endings and beginnings. To name a few: *A Long Way Gone* by Ishmael Beah, *Catcher in the Rye* by J.D. Salinger, and *Esperanza Rising* by Pam Muñoz Ryan. This month, use the tools of creative nonfiction to write about your own experience of this passage into adulthood.

Writing Form: Creative Nonfiction, Personal Narrative

Subject Areas: Creative Writing, Literature/English, Personal Development

Length: 600-1000 words

Opens: Monday, July 3

Drafts due for Expert Review: Monday, July 10

Submissions Due: Tuesday, July 18

AUGUST

Flash Fiction Competition 2023
99 WORDS: A story in your pocket.

"There was more room to think," wrote novelist David Gaffney on becoming a flash fiction convert, "more space for the original idea to resonate, fewer unnecessary words to wade through." Stories of the sudden/mini/micro variety pack the best parts of fiction into brimming, half-pint packages. Come celebrate the art of concision this month, dear writers, and write a story in 99 words or less.

Writing Form: Fiction



Subject Areas: Creative Writing, Literature/English

Length: 99-word maximum

Opens: Monday, August 7

Drafts due for Expert Review: Monday, August 14

Submissions Due: Tuesday, August 22