



## SEPTEMBER 2020 - AUGUST 2021 COMPETITIONS OVERVIEW

### SEPTEMBER

#### Historical Fiction

**SHORT STORY – Travel back in time.**

“Novelists,” wrote the Italian writer Alessandro Manzoni, back in 1850, convey “not just the bare bones of history, but something richer, more complete.... [they] put the flesh back on the skeleton that is history.” This month, dear writers, in short story form, take your readers back in time through the eyes of a real or imagined historical character. Perhaps you’ll write a story centered around the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s, a piece set in Vietnam in the 1800s, a Mayan child’s life in 300 A.D.; or perhaps you’ll research a time when your favourite author or historical figure was growing up, or ask a grandparent about their earliest memories.

*Writing Form: Fiction*

*Subject Areas: Creative Writing, Literature/English, History, Social Studies*

*Length: 600-1000 words*

*Opens: Monday, September 7*

*Drafts due for Expert Review: Monday, September 14*

*Submissions Due: Tuesday, September 22*

### OCTOBER

#### Speech Writing

**ORATION – Be heard.**

“The eyes of all future generations are upon you,” Greta Thunberg told world leaders at the UN Climate Summit on September 23, 2019. “And if you choose to fail us, I say—we will never forgive you.” Powerful words like these are burned into our collective memory, catalyzing social change, inspiring movements, and sparking



courage. Words that are written to be spoken are charged with a particular power—crafted to come alive when delivered to an audience. This month, dear writers, compose a speech of your own. We'll award a prize for the best spoken word delivery as well as one for the best written speech.

*Writing Form: Persuasive writing / Oration*

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

*Length: 600 – 1,000 words*

*Opens: Monday, October 5*

*Drafts due for Expert Review: Monday, October 12*

*Submissions Due: Tuesday, October 20*

## NOVEMBER

### Novel Writing

**EXCERPT: The world anew.**

Have you ever wanted to experience the world from a different perspective than your own? Live deep in an urban jungle, or on a farm surrounded by sheep? Grow up on a wildlife preserve, or come of age sailing the seven seas? Writing a novel is about shedding your identity and inhabiting the experiences of an imagined character. But a novel also requires looking inward: drawing upon your own experience and interior life to find elements of the human condition that you can offer to your fictional characters. This month, explore the human experience through writing, and share an excerpt with us.

*Writing Form: Fiction*

*Subject Areas: Creative Writing, Literature/English*

*Length: 600-1000 words*

*Opens: Monday, November 2*

*Drafts due for Expert Review: Monday, November 9*

*Submissions Due: Tuesday, November 17*



## DECEMBER

### Creative Nonfiction

**NARRATIVE: Making meaning.**

This year brought unexpected change to every corner of the globe. From the reach of the pandemic, to the voices rising up demanding social and environmental justice, 2020 will no doubt be the subject of countless future history books. But this month, dear writers, we want to hear about *your year*: a personal story that grounds 2020 in real life. Perhaps you'll write about the impact of the pandemic on your neighbourhood, or finding unexpected hope in lockdown, or a pivotal family conversation about racism. Use the tools of creative nonfiction to weave together scenes and reflection, braiding together storytelling and meaning.

*Writing Form: Creative Nonfiction, Personal Narrative*

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

*Length: 600-1000 words*

*Opens: Monday, November 23*

*Drafts due for Expert Review: Monday, November 30*

*Submissions Due: Tuesday, December 8*

## JANUARY

### Book Review

**REVIEW: Share your must-read.**

How do we decide what to read? Sometimes a book beckons us with a clever title or flashy cover, but more often we read on recommendation—a personal endorsement from a friend or family member . . . or a stranger who touts their “must reads” in a book review. This month, plant your favorite pages—from fantasy to biography to memoir to history, or any other genre of your liking!—in the hands of hungry readers by telling us what book has captured your heart and why.



*Writing Form: Review*

*Subject Areas: Journalism, Literature/English*

*Length: 600-1000 words*

*Opens: Monday, January 4*

*Drafts due for Expert Review: Monday, January 11*

*Submissions Due: Tuesday, January 19*

## FEBRUARY

### **Song Writing**

**LYRICS: Strike a chord.**

Since the early utterances of human language, we've been putting words to music—belting anthems of change, humming hymns of hope, crooning lyrics of love. Songs can tell stories, evoke emotion, even deliver lessons. Before the written word, songs served as a historical record, passing information down through the generations. And, we now know that music stimulates more corners of the brain than any other activity, firing even those neurons damaged by stroke or disease. This month, write a song of your own—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, Performing arts, Music, Creative Writing*

*Length: 50-500 words*

*Opens: Monday, February 1*

*Drafts due for Expert Review: Monday, February 8*

*Submissions Due: Tuesday, February 16*

## MARCH

### **Op-Ed**

**OPINION: Say what matters.**



Pick up a pen, dear writers, and share your opinion with the world. Perhaps the most democratic form of journalism, the op-ed is founded on the idea that every person has a voice worthy of a public platform. So tell us: What change would you like to see on a community, country, or global scale? From education reform, to environmental justice, to racial equity—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 1*

*Drafts due for Expert Review: Monday, March 8*

*Submissions Due: Tuesday, March 16*

## APRIL

### Poetry & Spoken Word

**POETRY: The world remade.**

“A tool for dialogue and healing.” That’s how the British spoken word artist Sukina Douglas describes poetry. Poems, American poet Jane Hirschfield explains, take fragments of the human experience and “make [something] new by rejoining parts into a visibly changed whole.” This month, give us the world remade whole, conjuring poetry into stanzas, meter, or free verse; or with an original piece of spoken word (poetry performed aloud). We’ll award two top prizes—one for a written poem, and one for a recorded performance.

*Writing Form: Poetry*

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

*Length: 500-word maximum*

*Opens: Monday, April 5*

*Drafts due for Expert Review: Monday, April 12*



*Submissions Due: Tuesday, April 20*

## MAY

### Food Writing

**CREATIVE NONFICTION: Sources of Sustenance.**

Covid-19 has unleashed changes on nearly every part of society, including the world of food. More people are cooking at home, growing their own food, and finding creative solutions to cupboards full of canned goods. Meanwhile, the pandemic has gutted the restaurant industry, put workers in meat processing plants and migrant farmers at higher risk, and made *everyone everywhere* realize that where our food comes from and how it is processed and delivered is not to be taken for granted. More than ever, we are aware that food links us to our families, our culture, our environment, our bodies... and to tradition, ritual, and celebration. This month, write an essay about food and so much more. 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 3*

*Drafts due for Expert Review: Monday, May 10*

*Submissions Due: Tuesday, May 18*

## JUNE

### Science Fiction

**SHORT STORY: An imagined future.**

Can you envision a future dramatically changed by technology, the environment, or a new social order? This month, transport us to your distorted world. You might write about artificial life, unexpected encounters, novel societies, or cli-fi (climate



fiction) utopian or dystopian futures. In a short story, conjure a reality that no one else has dreamed of, and transform our vision of tomorrow's world.

*Writing Form: Fiction*

*Subject Areas: Literature/English, Creative Writing*

*Length: 600-1000 words*

*Opens: Monday, June 7*

*Drafts due for Expert Review: Monday, June 14*

*Submissions Due: Tuesday, June 22*

## JULY

### Sports Writing

**JOURNALISM:** The ball's in your court.

A rundown of that remarkable win from the underdogs? A feature piece on virtual coaching during a pandemic? An op-ed on why a break from sports has been (surprisingly) beneficial for many teens? This month, with the Summer Olympics rescheduled to begin in Tokyo, help us kick off our Sports Writing Competition—the field of sports writing is yours to play on.

*Writing Form: Journalism*

*Subject Areas: Journalism, Opinion, Social Studies*

*Length: 600-1000 words*

*Opens: Monday, July 5*

*Drafts due for Expert Review: Monday, July 12*

*Submissions Due: Tuesday, July 20*

## AUGUST

### Flash Fiction

**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/skinny/mini/micro variety pack the best parts of fiction into brimming, half-pint packages. 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 2*

*Drafts due for Expert Review: Monday, August 9*

*Submissions Due: Tuesday, August 17*