



# How To Kit



## Community

# Writing Contest





# Community Writing Contest

The NWT Literacy Council has sponsored the NWT Writing Contest for 10 years. We've received many wonderful stories from Northerners of all ages that have been published in our annual book, *Northern Writes*.

After 10 years, we are now turning it over to communities to run their own contests. This How-to kit provides tips and ideas for running local writing contests and ways you can promote and celebrate local writers.

We hope you will continue to promote and celebrate northern writing as part of literacy activities in your community.





## Steps to Organizing a Community Writing Contest

### 1. Running a Community Writing Contest

- Find volunteers in your community to help organize and run the writing contest. You will need someone to promote the contest, receive entries, judges, and people to organize the celebration at the end.
- Set a deadline for entries to the writing contest and assign a person who will accept the entries. Depending on the number of entries, you may have to set up a way of keeping track of the entries.
- Decide on your contest rules, age categories, and writing categories. You may want to have authors include drawings as part of their entry. We have included a sample to get you started.
- It is nice to give out prizes for your community writing contest. Prizes can be books, pencils, or bookmarks. You can ask local businesses for donations or contact the NWT Literacy Council at 867-873-9262 if you would like book prizes.



### 2. Promoting Your Writing Contest

- Put together information packages with the contest rules, categories, and entry form and distribute them to schools, college, library, band office, etc.





- Put posters up around the community, advertise on the local radio station, or green screen, and hand out personal invitations at the school, library, adult education centres, elders' centre, and health centres. Tell everyone about it! Posters and mini-notice are included in this package.
- You can build some excitement for the contest by having a special event with local authors. You could also invite an elder to tell a traditional story.

### 3. Judging Your Community Writing Contest

Here are some ideas for ways to judge a writing contest.

- **Set categories for the entries**

There are a number of different categories you can have in your writing contest:

- Fiction
- Non-fiction
- Poetry
- Legends
- French entries
- Entries written in an Aboriginal language

You can also have age groups within each of the different types of categories. The NWT Writing Contest used the following:

- Children Age 5
- Children Ages 6-7
- Children Ages 8-9
- Children Ages 10-11
- Youth Ages 12-14
- Youth Ages 15 – 19
- Adult (20+)
- Adult Education Students





- **Set some basic guidelines for judging the entries**
- The guidelines you set should recognize that most writers in community writing contests are not professional writers but have a good story to tell.
- Don't worry too much about grammar and spelling. Focus on content and the amount of effort that goes into the writing. Spelling and grammar can always be edited. Originality, creativity, and effort can't.
- If you suspect an entry has been plagiarized, talk about it with other judges and the contest organizers. Plagiarized work should not be rewarded.
  
- **Judging Process**
- Make photocopies of all the entries and sort them according to age group and category.
- Identify your volunteer judges and pair them up in teams of two.
- Assign a category to each team of judges. For example, one team will read all children's poetry categories. Another team will read all youth non-fiction categories etc.
- Both judges read all the entries in their category and age groups and decide on their top three - five choices.
- The other judges then review the top three - five choices made by each team. They decide the winners from each category and age group based on each teams' top picks. This saves everyone from having to read all the entries.





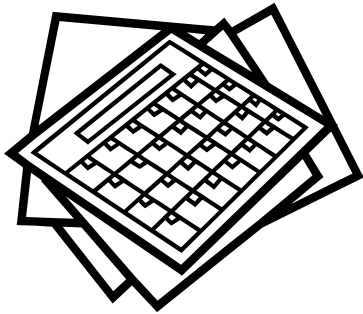
- It may take two or three meetings to decide the winners. One meeting is to assign judges their entries; a second meeting might be held between team members to decide on their top picks and a third meeting with all the judges to review the top picks and decide on the winners.

**The main thing is to have fun and enjoy reading the entries from your community!**

#### **4. Celebrating the Winners**

- Have a community event to celebrate the writers in your community. One community holds a coffee house after each writing contest and winners read their stories. You could give out certificates and prizes to the writers.
- Ask the local paper to do a story about the community writing contest and print the winning entries.
- You could publish the winning entries in a little booklet, make copies, and have it available in the community.
- The NWT Literacy Council wants to know about your writing contests. Send us an email to let us know how it went. We'd love to receive any publications that you do.
- You can send an electronic file with your winning entries to the NWT Literacy Council and we will put them on our website at [www.nwt.literacy.ca](http://www.nwt.literacy.ca).
- Thank your sponsors on the radio and by writing them a letter.





**Make the community writing contest a yearly event in your community.**



**Ask the local band office, Co-op, Northern Store, local business, or the NWT Literacy Council for donations of prizes for the winners.**





# Community Writing Contest Rules

(A sample of the rules from the NWT Writing Contest)

## How To Enter

1. Fill out an [official entry form](#) with each entry you send in. Entries without an entry form cannot be considered.
2. Your entry must be mailed or dropped off by (date) \_\_\_\_\_.  
No faxes will be accepted.

## What You Can Enter

1. Your entry must be original. A person who submits an entry that is plagiarized will be disqualified from the contest. Plagiarism is copying someone else's words and or their ideas and saying they are your own.
2. Only unpublished material will be accepted. Copyright remains the property of the author.
3. Your entry can be in any of the official languages of the NWT. They are Chipewyan, Cree, Dogrib, English, French, Gwich'in, Inuktitut, Inuvialuktun, Inuinnaqtun, North Slavey, and South Slavey.
4. Your entry can be on any topic and in any form, such as a poem or short story.
5. You can send in more than one entry: but you can receive only one prize.
6. Your entry must be typed or handwritten very clearly, double-spaced, on 8-1/2 x 11 inch paper.
7. Your entry can only be a maximum of 5 pages long. Entries longer than 5 pages will not be considered. \_\_\_\_\_

## Who Can Enter

1. This contest is open to all residents of the community of \_\_\_\_\_, NWT.
2. Only the author has the right to submit an entry.

## How Entries are Judged

1. A panel of judges will judge the entries.
2. Each entry will be judged for content, originality, style, and effort.

## Winners and Prizes

1. All authors of winning entries will be contacted.
2. All authors of winning entries will receive a prize.







## Community Writing Contest

### Official Entry Form

**Author's Name:** \_\_\_\_\_  
(please print)

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Phone Numbers:** Home: \_\_\_\_\_

Work: \_\_\_\_\_

Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**Age:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Are you an adult education student?** \_\_\_\_\_

**Is your entry:** Fiction \_\_\_\_\_ Non-fiction \_\_\_\_\_ Poetry \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature of Author:** \_\_\_\_\_

Your signature shows you agree with and accept all the contest rules.

**Mail entries to:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Contest Deadline is** \_\_\_\_\_





# Writing Contest

**Fiction**

**Poetry**

**Legends**

**Non-fiction**



## Enter Today!

Deadline for entries: \_\_\_\_\_

Drop off your entries at: \_\_\_\_\_

Sponsored by: \_\_\_\_\_

For more information call: \_\_\_\_\_





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## 2002 Community Writing Contest

presents



**This certificate is presented to you in  
recognition of your  
entry in the  
2002 Community Writing Contest**



\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date