



## **OCW Cascade Writing Contest and Awards**

### **SCORING ELEMENTS**

#### **FICTION BOOK**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Opening hooks the readers and draws them into the story.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Characters have compelling goals or problems that drive the story.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Back story or facts are provided in a natural and interesting way.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Writer maintains consistent points of view and avoids head-hopping.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Book provides a powerful emotional experience.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Characters are well-developed and distinguishable.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Motivations are believable.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Believable story world where possibility of conflict exists.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Dialogue sounds realistic and natural.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Dialogue develops the characters and their emotions, and moves the story forward.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Voices of characters are distinct and appropriate for the time period.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Writing engages all five senses: sight, sound, smell, touch, and taste.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Writer has a strong command of grammar, punctuation, and spelling.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Book is appropriate for the Christian market.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Story holds the reader's interest to the end.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Writing is fresh, well-paced, and free of clichés.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Author's voice is unique.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Story is inspirational and/or may contain spiritual element.

## **NONFICTION BOOK/MEMOIR**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Opening creates a strong impression or hook.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Author establishes knowledge and authority with subject through personal experience or research.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Book is an informative and thoughtful examination of a fact or event and provides insight; or memoir retells a significant and personal life event in a compelling way.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Authentic presentation of information and attitudes as they existed at the time and place the book reflects.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Book is well-organized and designed. If published, photos enhance book/memoir.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Voice is distinct and engaging.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Book shares anecdotes and historical facts to illustrate points and set the stage.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Writing is fresh, well-paced, and free of clichés.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Writing engages all five senses: sight, sound, smell, touch, and taste.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Writer has a strong command of grammar, punctuation, and spelling.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Book is appropriate for the Christian market.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Book is inspiring and leaves the reader with hope.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Book holds the reader's interest to the end.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Ending is satisfying to the reader.

## **YOUNG ADULT: FICTION OR NONFICTION (AGES 12–18)**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Opening hooks readers and draws them into the story.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Characters are believable with relatable problems they must solve on their own.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Writer creates a believable and possibly dangerous story world.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Writer maintains consistent points of view and avoids head-hopping.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Book provides strong emotional experience for reader.

- \_\_\_\_\_ If nonfiction, authentic presentation of information/attitudes as they exist/ed or if fiction, story details feel true to the times being represented.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Dialogue sounds realistic, natural, and appropriate for teenage character.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Character reacts believably to the world and his situation.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Back story or facts are provided in a natural and interesting way.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Writer uses style appropriate to genre: tight, efficient prose, and action is well-paced.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Book holds the reader's interest to the end.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Book is appropriate for the Christian market.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Ending is satisfying and leaves teen reader with hope.

**CHILDREN'S: PICTURE BOOK (FOR BIRTH TO AGE 6), NOVEL OR BEGINNING READER (TARGET AUDIENCE 7–12), NONFICTION**

**PICTURE BOOK (BIRTH TO AGE 6) – Published with illustrations**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Book cover and opening images are bright, bold and high contrast.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Text contains pleasing sounds, rhymes, rhythm, or repetition.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Text flows naturally when read out loud.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Child can identify with character and sees character overcome obstacles in story.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Familiar words or actions are interspersed with less familiar.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Book length and word count is age-appropriate (200 words for infants; up to 32 pages or 600 words for preschool)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Excellence of pictorial interpretation of the story, theme, or concept. Interaction of words with pictures.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Book appeals to target audience.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Style is appropriate for young children.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Pages turn in the appropriate places.

**PICTURE BOOK (BIRTH TO AGE 6) – Unpublished, text without illustrations**

**\*\*Note submission exception: Send *entire* unpublished picture book electronically.**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Opening text promises to capture reader's imagination.

- \_\_\_\_\_ Text has pleasing sounds, rhymes, rhythm, and repetition.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Text flows naturally when read aloud.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Text contains patterned language.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Familiar words and actions are interspersed with less familiar.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Book length and word count is age appropriate (8 pages or 200 words for toddlers and up to 15 pages or 600 words for preschool).
- \_\_\_\_\_ Pages seem to turn in the appropriate places.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Book appeals to target audience and style is appropriate for young readers.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Child can identify with character and sees character overcome obstacles.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Book has a story arc, even if simple.

NOVEL OR BEGINNING READER (TARGET AUDIENCE 7–12) – Published or Unpublished

- \_\_\_\_\_ Opening hook creates interest and draws reader into the story.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Story has believable and intriguing characters with understandable goals or problems.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Distinct story world that the character must deal with.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Age of characters matches that of target audience.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Meaning or moral of story isn't heavy-handed.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The book presents facts and attitudes accurately for the time the story represents.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Style is age-appropriate: short paragraphs; action and dialogue with little description.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Characters and events meet the experience and possible expectations of young audience.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Child can identify with character and sees character overcome obstacles.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Ending is satisfying and leaves reader with hope.

CHILDREN'S NONFICTION (Published or Unpublished)

- \_\_\_\_\_ Opening is compelling and engages the young reader.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Author exhibits authority and accuracy with a topic.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Anecdotes and facts are used skillfully.

- \_\_\_\_\_ Book is well-organized and designed (if published, illustrations enhance concept).
- \_\_\_\_\_ Excellent writing style that is age-appropriate; short paragraphs.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Book is truthful and authentic in its presentation of information and attitudes as they exist/ed at the time and place which the story reflects.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Book provides child with the opportunity to learn more about his world.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Text and illustrations enhance reader experience; if unpublished, descriptions create sense of place.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Book leaves reader with hope.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Ending is satisfying for the reader.

### **SHORT NONFICTION – STORY, ARTICLE, COLUMN, BLOG, OR DEVOTIONAL**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Opening hooks the reader and creates interest quickly.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Writer establishes plot or theme.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Piece contains interesting twists or facts presented in a fresh way.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Anecdotes are used skillfully to illustrate points.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Writer shares a believable story, column or devotional that connects with readers.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Dialogue or narration sounds natural and advances the story or article theme.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Back story or facts are provided in a natural and interesting way.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Writer engages readers using all five senses: sight, sound, smell, touch, and taste.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Writer has a strong command of grammar, punctuation, and spelling.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Content appropriate for the Christian market.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Writing is fresh, well-paced, and free of clichés.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Author’s voice is unique and authentic.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Story/article/devotional or blog post is inspirational.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Piece holds the reader’s interest to the end.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Ending satisfies the reader.

## **POETRY/GIFT BOOK (Published or Unpublished)**

\_\_\_\_\_ Poetry or Gift Book theme shows originality.

\_\_\_\_\_ Language has excellent rhythm and flow; gift book text is well-written and style is appropriate for the intended audience.

\_\_\_\_\_ Gift book presentation is visually pleasing. If poetry, poet uses line breaks and other poetry conventions effectively. If published, attractive front and back cover.

\_\_\_\_\_ Book is well-designed and organized. If published, book may include design elements such as introduction, table of contents, chapters, acknowledgements, and permissions.

\_\_\_\_\_ Poet or author uses imagery effectively, using words to paint images.

\_\_\_\_\_ The “whole” invites reader connection with the subject by using text and illustrations to augment the book’s intended audience intention (grief book vs. a devotional book vs. a book of joy).

\_\_\_\_\_ Writer has a strong command of grammar, punctuation, and spelling.

\_\_\_\_\_ Content is inspiring and leaves reader with hope.

## **POETRY – THREE POEMS**

\_\_\_\_\_ Poetry shows originality and freshness.

\_\_\_\_\_ Piece flows with excellent rhythm—not necessarily rhyming, but has pleasing cadence.

\_\_\_\_\_ Writer engages the reader using all five senses: sight, sound, smell, touch, and taste.

\_\_\_\_\_ Poet uses imagery effectively, using words to paint images.

\_\_\_\_\_ Subject is emotionally engaging and resonates with readers.

\_\_\_\_\_ Writer has an excellent command of symbolism, repetition, line breaks, and other poetic conventions.

\_\_\_\_\_ Poems are inspiring and encouraging.

\_\_\_\_\_ Command of language (poetry may take liberties with grammar, but spelling is important).