

7 Annual Writing Contests for Kids

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By **Amanda Morin** Updated December 11, 2018

It's not always easy to get your kids motivated to write. One way to encourage them to polish their writing skills is to have them enter a writing contest. Sometimes just the idea of recognition is enough to get those pencils to paper (or fingers to keyboard).

PBS Kids Writers Contest (Grades K-3)

This writing contest has both a regional and national component. After reading the contest guidelines—which include helpful information about how to brainstorm and outline a story—kids can submit illustrated stories to their local PBS station. Each station chooses winners which are then entered in the national contest.

[TIME for Kids' TFK Kid Reporter Contest \(Ages 14 and Younger\)](#)

TIME for Kids, a non-fiction weekly news magazine for classrooms, is a child-oriented version of its parent, TIME Magazine. Many of the articles are written by TFK's Kid Reporters, a job for which the magazine opens a talent search each year in March—the TFK Kid Reporter Contest. Entrants must be under 15 years old and write a compelling news story about a school or community event.

Kids Are Authors (Scholastic)

This annual contest is unique in that it focuses on kids working collaboratively to create a piece of illustrated work in the form of a children's book. The 21-29 page book can be fiction or non-fiction and must be created by a group of at least three students.

Not only does this writing contest help kids learn to work together, but it also teaches them about formatting manuscripts for children's books, as submissions must be formatted according to specific guidelines. The winning book is published by Scholastic and sold at Scholastic Book Fairs across the country.

Letters About Literature (Grades 4-12)

Sponsored by the Center for the Book in the Library of Congress, the annual Letters About Literature competition combines both reading and writing. Students must write an essay (in the form of a letter) describing how a certain book or author has had a profound effect on their outlook on life.

Students are grouped by age into three different levels, all of which are judged at both a state and national level. Entries are judged on the merits of composition (grammar, organization, and language skills); content (how well the theme has been addressed); and voice. National winners receive a monetary or gift card prize as well as a sizable “LAL Reading Promotion” grant in their name for their local school district.

Scholastic Art & Writing Awards (Grades 7-12)

This prestigious contest began in 1923, and winners include such notable people as Sylvia Plath, Robert Redford, Joyce Carol Oates, and Truman Capote.

Writers in seventh through twelfth grade may submit work in one or more of the following categories: Dramatic Script, Flash Fiction, Humor, Journalism, Personal Essay, Persuasive Writing, Poetry, Science Fiction/Fantasy, Short Story, and Novel Writing.

Entries are judged both regionally and nationally—the highest-level regional work is submitted for national consideration. National winners are published in anthologies and Scholastic publications.

Stone Soup Magazine (Ages 13 and Younger)

Though technically not a contest, Stone Soup magazine publishes stories (2,500 words or less) and poetry and book reviews by kids 13 and younger. Not all submissions will be published and kids are encouraged to read the Stone Soup archives to get a sense of what type of writing the editors prefer. The great thing about Stone Soup is that kids can submit work as often as they want, regardless of previous rejection or acceptance for publication.

[Creative Kids Magazine \(Ages 8 to 16\)](#)

Like Stone Soup, Creative Kids Magazine is not a contest but a publication written for kids by kids. Kids can submit everything from stories and songs to editorials and plays. The magazine is published quarterly and submitted work is read not only by editors but also by an advisory board comprised of students between the ages of eight and 16.

