



Twinflower Books' FISH STORIES writing contest

Eligibility

Anyone residing or working in Chisago County, MN may enter this writing competition.

Individuals must be aged 13+ for the Poetry, Nonfiction, and Fiction categories.

Individuals must be in grades 4, 5, or 6 for the 2025-26 school year for the Young Storyteller category.

Categories

Four categories are offered for 2026:

- **Poetry**, ages 13+
- **Nonfiction**, ages 13+
- **Fiction**, ages 13+
- **Young Storyteller**, grades 4, 5, or 6

Requirements

The fish story must be original.

The fish story may be a poem, fiction, or nonfiction.

Students entering the Young Storyteller category may write a poem, fiction, or nonfiction and should indicate this at the top of their submission.

The fish story must be text only – no images may be used in the story. If images are submitted with the submission they will be removed before judging begins.

Length:

- Poems: no more than 200 words
- Nonfiction and Fiction: no more than 1,000 words

The fish story may not contain: 1) slanderous language; 2) defamation (of a person, product, brand, location, or region); 3) commercialized information about a product or company; 4) plagiarized material or content.

No purchase or donation is required to submit for this contest.

Judging Criteria

Two judges will review each submission against the scoring criteria. The scores from the two judges will be added to provide an overall score (maximum score points = 43). In the instance of a tie for the prize, a third judge will be asked to be a tie-breaker.



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Scores

Score range	Theme	Description
1 to 5 points	Originality	Poem or story must be original.
1 to 5 points	Plot	The best fish stories are grand stories that keep us on the edge of our seat.
1 to 5 points	Emotion	The best fish stories elicit an emotion from the readers or listeners – this category is intended to capture how well the story elicits an emotional response (excitement, sadness, empathy, etc.) from the reader.
1 to 5 points	Writing quality	A good fish story is easy to read with no or few typos or grammatical errors.
Bonus: 3 points	Chisago Lakes Region representation	Bonus points are awarded for stories that take place or make reference to any Chisago Lakes area body of water.

Judges

Judges are local authors or literary experts. If you are interested in becoming a judge, please send an email to contact@twinflowerbooks.com

How to submit

Submit your story at www.TwinflowerBooks.com or email your fish story to contact@twinflowerbooks.com. When emailing, be sure to indicate at the top of your submission the category (poem, fiction, nonfiction, young storyteller) and include your full name, mailing address, phone number and email address.

Submissions for minors should include a primary contact (parent or guardian).

Submissions Opening Date: January 16, 2026

Submissions are not accepted nor allowed prior to January 16, 2026 when the submission form opens at www.TwinflowerBooks.com.

Deadline

All submissions must be submitted using the submission form at www.TwinflowerBooks.com or emailed by 10pm, Friday, February 13, 2026.

Prize

The winner for each category will receive \$50 cash. Winners are announced on Sunday, February 15, 2026. Prizes will be shipped using the mailing address provided in the submission.

These contest guidelines were established using the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) <https://ncte.org/statement/contestsguidelines/>



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Rights

Your submission to this contest allows Twinflower Books permission to use the participant's name, likeness, biographical information, information and materials contained in the entry email without compensation or permission, except where prohibited by law.

By entering, participants agree to abide by the requirements and warrant that their submission is their original work. Participants agree that their submission does not infringe upon or violate rights of any third party. Participants grant to Twinflower Books the right to edit, publish, promote, and otherwise use their submitted materials without permission, notice or compensation.

All entries become the property of Twinflower Books. No royalties will be paid as part of this contest.

Each participant (or parent or guardian) agrees to release and hold Twinflower Books and its employees, officers, directors, shareholders, agents, representatives, subsidiaries, parent companies, or other affiliated companies harmless from any and all damages, losses, claims and liabilities arising out of participation in the Contest or resulting from acceptance or claiming of any prize here under.

Twinflower Books reserves the right, in its sole discretion, to terminate, suspend or otherwise cancel the Contest at any time. Income and all other taxes are the responsibility of the prize recipient. Twinflower Books is not responsible for any expenses incurred in connection with participation in the Contest.