



**Serving Somerset, Wicomico, &
Worcester Counties**

The Eastern Shore Literacy Association is thrilled to unveil the 2026-2027 Young Authors' Contest, presented in collaboration with various State of Maryland Literacy Association (SoMLA) local chapters. This exciting competition is open to students from grades 1 to 12, encouraging them to showcase their creativity and talent through original short stories and poetry. As an important note, the use of artificial intelligence (AI) in supporting student work is strictly prohibited. Local contests will be hosted by the respective SoMLA chapters, with the top winners progressing to the state-level competition. Join us in celebrating the budding authors of Maryland and their remarkable literary endeavors!

GRADE-LEVEL GUIDELINES

All entries must be original work and submitted in 12-point Times New Roman font. Entries must not include graphics. Only individual entries are accepted; group submissions are not being accepted. Submissions that do not meet these guidelines will be disqualified.

Elementary 1-5

- Short story entries must range between 100-400 words in grades 1-2
- Short story entry must range between 300-800 words in grades 3-5
- Poetry entries will consist of a single poem, any style from a minimum of 25-150 words
- Entries must not include graphics and should avoid violent subject matter.

Middle 6-8

- Short story entries must range between 600-1,600 words
- Poetry entries will consist of a single poem, any style, and must range between 25-200 words.
- Entries must not include graphics and should avoid violent subject matter.

High 9-12

- Short story entries must range between 800-2,000 words.
- Poem entries will consist of a single poem, any style, and must range between 25-300 words.
- Entries must not include graphics and should avoid violent subject matter.



Submission
Due to Local
SoMLA Chapter

December 18, 2026

Submission Steps:

1. Visit the online entry portal at: <https://easternshoreliteracyassociation.com/young-authors-contest/>
2. Select your grade level and the type of entry (e.g., short story or poetry).
3. Complete the Google Form. Be prepared to upload your entry file using the required naming format:
 - Grade#_EntryType_Title.docx
 - Example: Gr6_SS_TheNewPeterPan.docx OR Gr6_Poetry_TheOldPeterPan.docx
 - Note: Only Microsoft Word (.docx) files are accepted.
4. After submission, a confirmation screen will appear to verify your entry was received.
5. Each participant may submit only one entry. Submissions must be by individual students only; group entries are not permitted.