

Margins: 2 inches on the left, 1 inch at the top, bottom, and right. All pages of your entry should be like this. At the end of the competition every entry is included in a bound book. These margins assure your writing doesn't get lost in the spine.

The title page information is fairly centered up and down on the page. Some writers like to put an illustration on this page. That's fine, but make sure all the basic information shown below is also in place.

Entry title: Title should be concise.

This font is 18 pt., double spaced. You can choose any font you prefer, but make sure it is something that is not too hard to read.

What Should a Writers Competition Entry Look Like?

Oscar J. Schmedlap

Your name: This is the only place this should appear in your entry.

Nonfiction

Entry category: There are two categories. Fiction – a story created from your imagination. Nonfiction – an article or essay about some subject or issue that is taking place in the real world.

19+

Age Group: Not your actual age. Age groups are 6-8, 9-11, 12-14, 15-18, and 19+

What Should a Writers Competition Entry Look Like? Page 1

This is what the inside page of your entry should look like. The paragraph you are reading is double-spaced. The margins are two inches on the left, and one inch on the top, bottom, and right. Notice that flush right at the top of the page is the title of this entry and the page number. Don't put your name on the inside pages and begin numbering after the title page.

This font is a 12-point Times New Roman, but you can choose any easy-to-read serif or nonserif font. Some writers like to use a larger font, but you should never use anything smaller than 12. Don't try to use big fonts to compensate for a shorter entry. The length of the entry, as long as it is under 2,000 words, doesn't matter as much as the imagination and good writing you put into it.

Arrange your entry so you are writing on just one side of the page. Use plain white paper like that used in a photocopier or a printer – standard size 8 ½ by 11 inches.

You are welcome to include illustrations in your composition. Just make sure that they are inside the required margins. If you are using a colored illustration only one copy needs to be in color – the original to be included in the bound volume.

A good rule of thumb is to remember that you want to make your entry as easy for the judge to read as possible. Modern word processors make it possible to do a variety of things on the page, but the judge won't be impressed by these gimmicks as much as a well thought-out and crafted piece of writing.

What Should a Writers Competition Entry Look Like? Page 2

Here are some other tips for writers:

- Before you begin to write read the rules that accompany your entry form and then REREAD them. You must use the required format.
- Try to write the same way you talk. You may find it useful to read your entry out loud. Does it sound natural to you? Do your characters “speak” in ways that they really would?
- Write about what you know. Look for stories in the world around you. Even a fiction story will have elements in it to make it seem believable.
- You will find it valuable to have another person read your story for errors before you submit it. (That doesn’t mean you have to change everything to accommodate somebody else’s style. But a second set of eyes will pick up things like spelling and punctuation errors that you won’t see.)
- It is OK for an adult to retype an entry for a child who hasn’t learned to use a keyboard. But the words and style should remain the child’s and not an edited version of the entry. If you are correcting spelling, grammar, and punctuation explain what you are doing so that the child understands.
- Good writers are usually avid readers. Examine writing you enjoy and see if you can identify what makes it enjoyable for you.
- Format, spelling, and grammar are factors in judging. Don’t rely entirely on spell check.

If you have questions, contact the library: 208/769-2315 Ext. 426.

P.S. If you are a teacher or adult volunteer assisting a class or other group of children to submit their entries it is extremely important that you, too, have read the rules and instructions. The rules are now in a handy checklist format. Go through the list with the child and make sure everything is correct before delivering the entry to the library.