



Do you consider yourself a storyteller? Do you have a great story/poem you've always wanted to put to paper and share with others? Showcase your storytelling ability in the...

Annual Wapsie Writing Contest

Complete Contest Rules: BettyBrandtPassick.com

Subject: Of your choosing
Genre: Short Story, Poetry, Fiction or Nonfiction (previously unpublished)
Length: 100-1500 Words
Format: MS Word

3 Age Categories:
Adults—19 years and older
Youth—12 to 18 years
Children—11 years and younger

MILESTONES:

- 1) Submission: Jan. 1-March 15
- 2) Judging: After March 15
- 3) Winners Announced: May 15

Cash Prize: Winner of each age category

WAPSIE WRITING CONTEST RULES

Updated: September 2026

GOAL: Encourage children, youth, and adults to write more and improve their creative writing skills. The ability to convey ideas through narrative and writing is a fundamental skill in many fields—especially in this new era of ChatGPT and artificial intelligence.

SUBMISSION TIMELINE (annually): Accepted January 1st through midnight March 15.

AGE CATEGORIES: Adults (19 and older), youth (12-18 years), and children (11 years and younger).

SUBMISSIONS:

- Suggested reading: [Seven Vital Elements Every Story Must Have](#); [10 Elements of Good Poetry](#).
- Entry must be a never-before-published short story or poetry; fiction or non-fiction; subject matter of author's choosing. Length: 100 to 1,500 words.
- Only one entry per person is allowed.
- Submit entry written in MS Word, and include the author's name, phone number, and age category (plus, if submitted on a child/youth's behalf, the adult/teacher's name and contact information,) to: bbpassick@comcast.net.

JUDGING: A committee of judges made up of published authors and poets, schoolteachers, and prolific book readers evaluate the entries in each age category based on the most creative and original, and demonstrated quality of beauty and intensity of emotion for their age category.

CONTEST UPDATES:

- Beginning in 2025, winners in each age category receive a certificate—plus a **nominal cash prize**.

WINNER ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- **The winner in each age category is notified as soon as possible after May 15th.**
- **The sponsor offers to present the certificate and cash prize in person, as available.**
- **A press release announcing the winning stories/poems is submitted for publication to regional newspapers.**

ABOUT THE SPONSOR: I grew up in the small town of Fairbank, Iowa (population 1,000), where few people would expect the idea for a gangster series to emerge, yet this is where I draw inspiration for my award-winning historical crime novels, largely set in my hometown. Since a young girl, I had dreamed of one day writing novels—which eventually moved me to create the annual Wapsie Writing Contest (2022). My hope is the contest provides an opportunity and encouragement to those of every age to express and share their creative writings. Hopefully, a nominal cash prize stimulates interest, too. Read more at BettyBrandtPassick.com.