



MARYLAND ASSOCIATION OF CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS
2023-2024
CREATIVE WRITING MANUAL

General Creative Writing Rules:

1. Each school may only enter one entry per Creative writing category. No substitutions can be made. If a school does not enter a particular creative writing level, they may not enter additional entries in another level.
2. A student may only enter one creative writing category.
3. Creative writing topics will be emailed to School Coordinators by November 10, 2023.
4. A PDF copy of each entry must be sent via the Creative Writing Registration online form along with a judging sheet (with the top portion filled out) no later than 5:00 PM on December 11, 2023.
5. It is imperative that the student sign the Statement of Originality on his judging sheet.
6. In addition to their entry on the Creative writing online registration form, Creative Writing entries in **Level 1b** and in **Level 11** must also send the **originals** and two completed judging sheets to Ruth Peters at Harford Christian School, 1736 Whiteford Road, Darlington, MD 21034 no later than December 11, 2023.
7. All results will be given with the Fine Arts competition results.
8. The completed Creative Writing Fee Form and payment must be mailed no later than December 11, 2023. Checks should be made out to MACS and mailed to Ruth Peters, Harford Christian School, 1736 Whiteford Road, Darlington, MD 21034.

Level 1a (Grades 1-3):

Creative Writing: Poetry; Creative Writing: Short Story

1. A student may enter only one creative writing category – either short story or poetry. If a school does not enter in a particular level, it may not enter additional entries in another level.
2. Students should be told the topics at least one week prior to writing so they have time to think through what they wish to communicate.
3. Students must submit a typed (or handwritten) entry that has been written in the school and under school supervision, without adult or student assistance. After writing a draft and making corrections, the student should type or write a clean copy to submit for judging. On this level, an adult may do the typing, but it must be typed exactly as the student had written it.
4. No reference materials or notes except a King James Bible and a dictionary shall be permitted at the time of writing. Preparation may be done outside of class, but no notes may be used during the writing period. The time limit for the writing is two hours. (The two hours may be used all at once or broken up into a few sessions.)
5. If entries are typed, the final copy must be printed on one side of the paper. If hand-written, please use pencil or black ink and only write on the front side of the final copy. Handwriting must be legible.
6. The following information must be listed at the top of the first page of the student's entry: Student's name and title of entry.
7. Previously written poems or short stories will not be acceptable.
8. Each year the topics will be supplied by the MACS Fine Arts Director. An entire class may write on the topic but only one will be accepted for judging.
9. Papers will be written at the individual schools and a PDF copy will be sent to the appointed school for judging. Each entry needs its own judging sheet.
10. Keep the original copy at your school.
11. The creative writing host will distribute the selections to the judges. The creative writing host will return the selections with the judging sheets to the host school which will tabulate the results. Winners will be announced along with the other elementary results.
12. Because of the time needed to do accurate judging, all deadlines must be observed.
13. Each entry will be judged according to the criteria on the Creative Writing judging forms. The student must provide one judging form with the top portion filled out (name, school, etc.) The student must sign the Statement of Originality.



CREATIVE WRITING: POETRY

Name _____

Circle Level

Student ID # _____ School _____

Level 1a

Title _____

Level III

FACTORS EVALUATED	COMMENTS	POINTS
ORIGINALITY/CONTENT/COMMUNICATION: (a) Is the approach to the topic creative and original? (b) Is the content organized intentionally? (c) Does the poem capture the reader's interest? (d) Is the theme or main idea developed and well integrated? (e) Is the word choice precise, fresh, and free of clichés? (f) Does the poem contain unique details and vivid descriptive language? (g) Is the viewpoint intentional?		50
POETIC DEVICES: (a) Rhyme (1) If the poem is in rhyme, is the rhyme scheme correct? (2) If there is no rhyme, are there compensating sound devices (alliteration, consonance, onomatopoeia, etc.) to provide aural appeal? If the pattern is broken, is it broken intentionally? (b) Meter (1) Is the meter consistent throughout and appropriate? (2) If there is no meter, does the phrasing possess a rhythmic flow to distinguish it from prose? (c) Is the poem infused with imagery-specific sensory impressions, rather than broad generalities? (d) Do literary devices such as metaphor or symbol add depth or layers of meaning to the poem? (e) Visual Appearance: Is the structure intentional and meaningfully connected to the content?		40
WRITING MECHANICS: Does the writer show a clear understanding of the rules of capitalization, punctuation, spelling, and grammar/syntax? OR is there consistency and intentionality in breaking the rules?		10

Judge _____

DO NOT TOTAL

Statement of Originality

I certify that this project is my own original and authentic work and that I received no help in completing this project other than general instruction and supervision.

Student's Signature _____



CREATIVE WRITING: Level 1a Short Story

Name _____

Student ID # _____ School _____

Title _____

FACTORS EVALUATED	COMMENTS	POINTS
<p>CONTENT:</p> <p>(a) Does the narrative actually tell a story?</p> <p>(b) Does the story have a strong beginning? -attention getting hook -strong establishing of character and setting</p> <p>(c) Does the story develop a strong plot? -Is there a conflict to resolve? -Is there a climax?</p> <p>(d) Are there sufficient specific, concrete, and relevant supporting details?</p> <p>(e) Does the story have a strong conclusion? -Does the story line build to the ending? -Is the ending satisfying?</p>		50
<p>ORGANIZATION:</p> <p>Do the elements of the essay support the theme or purpose and contribute to a unified whole? The elements may include, but are not necessarily limited to, the following:</p> <p>(a) Clear paragraph structure</p> <p>(b) Correct use of dialogue</p> <p>(c) A clear purpose, theme, or overriding idea behind the story</p> <p>(d) A logical progression of ideas and effective transitions</p> <p>(e) A strong title effectively implemented in the story</p>		20
<p>STYLE:</p> <p>May include, but is not necessarily limited to, the following:</p> <p>(a) Effective vocabulary and word usage that is fresh, precise, vivid, and free of clichés; that avoids weak repetition, wordiness, or awkward phrasing; and that presents clear explanations.</p> <p>(b) Sentence structure that is clear, forceful, and varied.</p> <p>(c) An approach to the topic that is creative and original.</p> <p>(d) Ideas that are consistently original and insightful and that demonstrate sophistication and complexity of thought.</p>		20
<p>WRITING MECHANICS:</p> <p>Does the essay conform to the rules of capitalization, punctuation, spelling, and grammar/syntax? Is there accurate sentence structure?</p>		10

DO NOT TOTAL

Judge _____

Statement of Originality: I certify that this project is my own original and authentic work and that I received no help in completing this project other than general instruction and supervision. Student's Signature _____

MACS Level 1b and Level II Creative Writing Rules:

Entries shall meet the specific length requirements listed below:

1. LEVEL 1b (Grades 4-6)

Poetry: maximum 200 words
words
Short Story: maximum 750 words
words

Level II (Grades 7-8)

Poetry: maximum 300
words
Short Story: maximum 1000
words

2. A student may enter only one category – either short story or poetry.
3. Students should be told the topics at least one week prior to writing so they have time to think through what they wish to communicate.
4. Students must submit a typed (or handwritten) entry that has been written in the school and under school supervision, without adult or student assistance. After writing a draft and making corrections, the student should type or write a clean copy to submit for judging. **Entries to state and national competition must be free of written comments and corrections.**
5. No reference materials or notes except a King James Bible and a dictionary shall be permitted at the time of writing. Preparation may be done outside of class, but no notes may be used during the writing period. The time limit for the writing is two hours.
6. If entries are typed, final copy must be printed on one side of the paper. (If hand-written, students must use standard notebook paper. The final copy must be written in pencil or black ink using only one side of the paper.) Entries may be photocopied for school judging and will be photocopied for state and national judging. Leave a one-inch margin on all sides of the paper.
7. The following information must be listed at the top of the first page of the student's entry: Student's name and grade; school name, city, and state; category entered; title; and **number of words**.
 - A "fancy" cover page or title page is not allowed.
 - If the student uses more than one piece of paper, each additional paper should have the following information: page #, student's name, and name of school.
 - **Do not** staple the pages together. Stapling tears out the corners of the photocopies.
8. Review the judging sheets for judging criteria. The schools should have received copies of each judging sheet. Before submitting the entry, on the judging sheet fill in the level, name, school, city, state, grade, **title, number of words, and signed statement of originality**. Students will be penalized if the judging sheet is not correctly completed, including title, number of words, and signed statement of originality.
9. Original student entries and two completed judging sheets must be mailed to Ruth Peters, Harford Christian School, 1736 Whiteford Road, Darlington, MD 21034 no later than **December 11, 2023**. A copy of each entry and judging sheet must also be sent via the Creative Writing JotForm Registration no later than 5:00 PM on December 11, 2023. MACS judges will select one winner in each category to go on to the AACS National competition. National winners will be announced in April 2023.
10. MACS judges will receive the entries by December 12th and will need to do their judging and return them no later than Tuesday, January 12, 2024.

CREATIVE WRITING—SHORT STORY

(Check Category)

Elementary (4th–6th grade)

Junior High (7th–8th grade)

Name _____ Grade _____

School _____ City _____ State _____

Title (required) _____ Number of Words (required) _____

STATEMENT OF ORIGINALITY: I certify that this project is my own original and authentic work and that I received no help in completing _____ this project other than general instruction and supervision. Student's Signature (required) _____

FACTORS EVALUATED	POINTS	COMMENTS
Creativity		
1. Appeal: Author demonstrates originality. Story sustains reader interest for its intended audience.		
2. Details: Descriptions contribute to the reader's enjoyment.		
3. Style: Elements enhance the story. May include but not limited to: word choice, figurative language, tone, voice.		
4. Theme/Purpose: Author's message or intent is effectively obtained.		
Content/Development Elements support the theme/purpose and contribute to a unified whole. May include but not limited to:		
1. Setting/Mood		
2. Characterization and Dialogue (if any)		
3. Plot/Conflict – May include but not limited to: engaging beginning, Introduction of conflict, rising action, climax, falling action, resolution.		
4. Organization		
Writing Mechanics		
1. Meets or exceeds grade level. 2. Errors are minimal and do not confuse the reader.		

Points

- 1 = Poor
- 2 = Fair/Average
- 3 = Good/Above Average
- 4 = Excellent
- 5 = Superior

Total (45 possible points) _____

Judge's Signature

CREATIVE WRITING—POETRY

(Check Category)

Elementary (4th–6th grade)

Junior High (7th–8th grade)

Name _____ Grade _____

School _____ City _____ State _____

Title (required) _____ Number of Words (required) _____

STATEMENT OF ORIGINALITY: I certify that this project is my own original and authentic work and that I received no help in completing this project other than general instruction and supervision. _____
Student's Signature (required)

FACTORS EVALUATED	POINTS	COMMENTS
Originality/Content/Communication		
1. Approach to topic is creative/original.		
2. Content is organized intentionally.		
3. Poem captures the reader's interest.		
4. Theme or main idea is developed and well integrated.		
5. Poem contains unique details.		
Poetic Devices		
1. Rhyme a. If the poem is in rhyme, the rhyme scheme is correct. b. If there is no rhyme, there are compensating sound devices (alliteration, consonance, onomatopoeia, etc.).		
2. Meter a. Meter is consistent throughout and appropriate. b. If there is no meter, phrasing possesses a rhythmic flow to distinguish it from prose.		
3. Poem is infused with imagery-specific sensory impressions, rather than broad generalities. Word choice is precise and free of clichés.		
4. Literary devices such as metaphor or symbol add depth or layers of meaning to the poem.		
5. Visual appearance: Structure is intentional and meaningfully connected to the content.		
Writing Mechanics		
Writer shows a clear understanding of the rules of capitalization, punctuation, spelling, and grammar/syntax OR consistency and intentionality in breaking the rules.		

Points

- 1 = Poor
- 2 = Fair/Average
- 3 = Good/Above Average
- 4 = Excellent
- 5 = Superior

Total (55 possible points) _____

 Judge's Signature

MACS Senior High (Level III) Creative Writing Instructions:

Division 3: Composition

GENERAL RULES

1. At AACS nationals each student may enter a total of two Academic categories. However, he may enter only one category from Division 3 and one category from Division 4. (He may not enter both composition categories or both science fair categories.) Example: He may take two academic tests; or he may take one academic test and enter a science fair project; or he may enter one writing category and one science fair project. These rules do not apply at MACS.
2. Creative Writing students must supply the appropriate judging form with the top portion completed (name, school, etc.).
3. A student may enter only one category – either Poetry or Essay. Each school may only have one SH Poetry entry and one SH Essay entry. If a school does not enter in a particular level, it may not enter additional entries in another level.
4. Students should be told the topic at least one week prior to writing so that they have time to think through what they wish to communicate.
5. Students must submit a typed entry that has been written in the school and under school supervision, without adult or student assistance. After writing a draft and making corrections, the student should type (without using Spell Check) a clean copy to submit for judging.
6. No reference materials or notes except a dictionary shall be permitted at the time of writing. Preparation may be done outside of class, but no notes may be used during the writing period. The time limit for the writing is two hours. (The two hours may be used all at once or broken up into a few sessions.)
7. The final copy must be typed on one side of the paper, leaving a one-inch margin on all sides.
8. The following information must be listed at the top of the first page of the student's entry: Student's name and title of entry.
9. Previously written poems or essays will not be acceptable.
10. Each year the topics will be supplied by the MACS Fine Arts Director. An entire class may write on the topic, but only one will be accepted for judging.
11. Writing will be done at the individual schools and a PDF copy will be submitted via the Creative writing JotForm registration form and then sent to the appointed school for judging. Each entry needs its own judging sheet.
12. Keep the original copy at your school.
13. The creative writing host will distribute the selections to the judges. The creative writing host will return the selections with the judging sheets to the host school which will tabulate the results. Winners will be announced along with the other secondary results.
14. Because of the time needed to do accurate judging, all deadlines must be observed.
15. Each entry will be judged according to the criteria on the Creative Writing judging forms. The student must provide one judging form with the top portion filled out (name, school, etc.) The student must sign the Statement of Originality.

Category 17: Creative Writing: Poetry

1. The writing period cannot exceed two hours in length.
2. The prompt (topic) will be announced at least one week prior to writing.
3. Previously written poems will not be acceptable.
4. The student may create and refine his entry within the limits of the allotted contest period, but the work must be strictly his own.
5. No reference materials, except for a dictionary provided by the test proctor, will be permissible.
6. Each entry will be judged according to the criteria on the Creative Writing: Poetry judging form. The student must provide one judging form for State Competition.
7. Contestants who advance to the AACS National Competition will compose their entries prior to the competition. See rules and procedures in the 2020 AACS National Competition Manual.

Category 18: Expository Writing: Essay

1. The writing period cannot exceed two hours in length.
2. The prompt (topic) will be announced at least one week prior to writing.
3. Previously written essays will not be acceptable.
4. The student may create and refine his entry within the limits of the allotted contest period, but the work must be strictly his own.
5. An essay will be defined as a written expression of the author's opinion:
 - a. Stated in a thesis in the first paragraph.
 - b. Supported and proven in three to four paragraphs in the body, each introduced by topic sentences that relate directly to the topic but each providing a different argument or fact.
 - c. Concluded with a summarizing paragraph which restates the thesis.
6. The essay is not to exceed 1,000 words.
7. Essays may not make use of either first person or second person. Essays written in either first person or second person will be disqualified. However, essays that contain occasional or infrequent first or second person pronouns will receive a point deduction. Points or a fraction of a point will be deducted which will prevent an otherwise first-place winner from placing first, a second-place winner from placing second, or a third-place winner from placing third.
8. No reference materials, except for a dictionary provided by the proctor, will be permissible.
9. Each entry will be judged according to the criteria on the Creative Writing: Essay judging form, in this manual. The student must provide one judging form for State Competition.
10. Contestants who advance to the AACS National Competition will compose their entries prior to the competition. See rules and procedures in the 2020 AACS National Competition Manual.



CREATIVE WRITING: POETRY

Name _____

Circle Level

Student ID # _____ School _____

Level 1a Level III

Title _____

FACTORS EVALUATED	COMMENTS	POINTS
ORIGINALITY/CONTENT/COMMUNICATION: (a) Is the approach to the topic creative and original? (b) Is the content organized intentionally? (c) Does the poem capture the reader's interest? (d) Is the theme or main idea developed and well integrated? (e) Is the word choice precise, fresh, and free of clichés? (f) Does the poem contain unique details and vivid descriptive language? (g) Is the viewpoint intentional?		50
POETIC DEVICES: (a) Rhyme (1) If the poem is in rhyme, is the rhyme scheme correct? (2) If there is no rhyme, are there compensating sound devices (alliteration, consonance, onomatopoeia, etc.) to provide aural appeal? If the pattern is broken, is it broken intentionally? (b) Meter (1) Is the meter consistent throughout and appropriate? (2) If there is no meter, does the phrasing possess a rhythmic flow to distinguish it from prose? (c) Is the poem infused with imagery-specific sensory impressions, rather than broad generalities? (d) Do literary devices such as metaphor or symbol add depth or layers of meaning to the poem? (e) Visual Appearance: Is the structure intentional and meaningfully connected to the content?		40
WRITING MECHANICS: Does the writer show a clear understanding of the rules of capitalization, punctuation, spelling, and grammar/syntax? OR is there consistency and intentionality in breaking the rules?		10

Judge _____

DO NOT TOTAL

Statement of Originality

I certify that this project is my own original and authentic work and that I received no help in completing this project other than general instruction and supervision.

Student's Signature _____



EXPOSITORY WRITING: Essay

Name _____

Level III

Student ID # _____ School _____

Title _____

FACTORS EVALUATED	COMMENTS	POINTS
<p>CONTENT: (a) Does the essay have a strong thesis statement that is defined and clearly articulated? (b) Are there logical arguments that support the thesis? (c) Are there sufficient specific, concrete, and relevant supporting details? (d) Does the writer avoid emotional appeals? (e) Is the writer's intent effectively obtained?</p>		50
<p>ORGANIZATION: Do the elements of the essay support the theme or purpose and contribute to a unified whole? The elements may include, but are not necessarily limited to, the following: (a) An effective introduction that prepares the reader for the thesis. (b) Coherent, unified, fully developed, and logical paragraphing with strong topic sentences. (c) A logical progression of ideas and effective transitions. (d) A conclusion that provides closure for the argument.</p>		20
<p>STYLE: May include, but is not necessarily limited to, the following: (a) Effective vocabulary and word usage that is fresh, precise, vivid, and free of clichés; that avoids weak repetition, wordiness, or awkward phrasing; and that presents clear explanations. (b) Sentence structure that is clear, forceful, and varied. (c) An approach to the topic that is creative and original. (d) Ideas that are consistently original and insightful and that demonstrate sophistication and complexity of thought.</p>		20
<p>WRITING MECHANICS: Does the essay conform to the rules of capitalization, punctuation, spelling, and grammar/syntax? Is there accurate sentence structure?</p>		10

Judge _____

DO NOT TOTAL

Statement of Originality

I certify that this project is my own original and authentic work and that I received no help in completing this project other than general instruction and supervision.

Student's Signature _____