



## SCHOLARSHIP CATEGORY WRITING

### REQUIRED WRITINGS

You must submit original pieces of writing from two different genre. The acceptable genres are short story, general essay, biographical sketch, first-person story, feature article, or in-depth news story. (See definitions below.) Ask an English teacher or librarian to help you find examples of each genre of writing so you can learn the structure of each one and know what makes them different.

All entries, regardless of genre, must have a Christian theme. Unacceptable items are research papers (school term papers), or stories or biographies based on Biblical accounts. You may not reenter writings previously submitted.

Good Christian writing is Biblically accurate and persuasive and is suitable for publication. It is understandable and interesting to both Christians and non-Christians because it is not based on stock phrases or Christian jargon.

You must submit original writings of 1,000 to 1,500 words. Plagiarism, close paraphrasing, or substantial borrowing of contents or ideas and representing them as your own work will result in disqualification.

### GENRE

#### Short Story

Mainstream fiction; may be based on real people or incidents, but is basically fiction that reflects typical life experiences. Not acceptable are allegory, science fiction, historical fiction, and fantasy.

#### General Essay (editorial or personal opinion)

Composition that defines an area of concern, presents a specific view, and moves readers to think or act in response to the message; written to be as articulate and persuasive for secular readers as for Christian readers; not an extended tract or written with the intent to evangelize; characterized by concise, compact style; not preachy or predictable; grounded in facts and research rather than on emotion; written from personal point of view (I, we, you)

#### Biographical Sketch

Usually written about a deceased person whose life was significant; deals with some particular aspect of the person's life in the context of a short overview of that life; does not report details of that life so much as it shows the significance of that life to other people

#### First-person Story (true-life drama)

A true story from the writer's own experience; typically incorporates anecdotes, conversations between people involved, and significant details of the setting surrounding the events that make the story interesting to a reader; may also be another person's experience written in the "as told to" form

#### Feature Article

Treatment of a person, event, process, organization, trend, or issue; goes beyond the who, what, where, when level of journalism; written to inform, encourage, help, analyze, challenge, entertain, or provide a memorable example; characterized by a well-written lead, body, and conclusion

#### In-depth News Story

Well-researched report of an event that is timely, significant, and of current interest to readers; characterized by accurate and thorough reporting of the facts (who, what, where, when, how) and objective, fair treatment of the whys that make the story newsworthy; writing style shows economy and clarity of expression. Past examples include but are not limited to youth missions trips, efforts to start Bible clubs in school, and the death of a missionary.

### MECHANICAL INSTRUCTIONS

#### Manuscript

Type your manuscripts on 8<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>" x 11" white paper and double-spaced. Use 12-point Times New Roman or a similar font.

#### Word Count

Each composition must have no fewer than 1,000

and no more than 1,500 words. The total word count does not include the title page or, if the type of composition demands it, footnotes or bibliography.

## QUOTED RESEARCH

Quoted material is that which is copied directly from the work of another writer in order to set forth or support a point. Any use of quoted material should comprise **no more than ten percent** of the composition. You must accurately copy all quotations from other writers and give credit to their sources (e.g., footnoting). Quoted material does not refer to conversation or direct discourse (i.e., fiction, biography, news stories) written by you. However, should any direct discourse be copied from another writer, it must be included in the quoted word count.

## TITLE PAGE

Each composition must contain a plain-text title page that lists the following: your name, title of entry, genre of entry, total word count, and quoted word count (if any).

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

If you use any outside resources, list them at the end of your composition.

### Sample Book Entry

Elliott, Anne. *Juggling Life's Responsibilities*. Schaumburg, Ill: Regular Baptist Press, 2005.

### Sample Magazine Entry

Webber, Gerald K. "The Emerging Church." *The Baptist Bulletin* (October 2005): 18–20.

### Sample Web Site Entry

Doerflinger, Richard M. "Medical Groups Begin Campaign for Lethal Embryo Research." June 1999. [www.nrlc.org/news/1999/NRL699/doer.html](http://www.nrlc.org/news/1999/NRL699/doer.html)

## IMPROMPTU WRITING

In addition to your prepared writings, you will be asked to write and title **an impromptu nonfiction essay** on a topic chosen by the judges. All contestants will be given the same topic and will be allowed one hour to write. Paper and a dictionary will be furnished. You may use your Bible if you desire.

You may bring a notebook computer to write your impromptu essay. You are responsible to print your document or to **make sure it can be printed at the competition in Microsoft Word**. Contact your state TFC director for details about printing your document. Using a notebook computer will not give you any advantage in scoring over those who write their

impromptu essays longhand. Your impromptu essay must be an original writing and will count for one-third of your final score. Your two previously submitted genre will count for one-third each; your score will be totaled and divided by three for a final score.

## READING AND WRITING EXPERIENCE

To help you expand your writing talent beyond writing for personal pleasure or for composition class, you must meet these additional requirements to participate in your state competition.

(1) Prepare a **one-page** summary of a minimum of **100** pages of reading from at least **two different sources** (secular or religious) about the genres you have chosen. You will find a list of suggested books below. You may also check your local library for books on writing or find information on the Internet. Exercise caution in using the Internet, and use only reliable sources. Include with your one-page reading summary the titles and authors of the sources you read.

(2) Read 20 published short stories or articles in each of the genre you have chosen (a total of 40 stories or articles). Short story collections are available in libraries and bookstores. All nonfiction genres are readily available in magazines, newspapers, and online.

(3) Put one article or story in print. This article can be one of your TFC pieces or another one you write. It can appear in such places as a school newspaper, a church newsletter, a community publication, your youth group newsletter, your church's Web site, or as an insert in your church bulletin. You must submit a statement of what article you put in print and where it appeared to the state TFC judge. If you have any questions about where your writing may appear, contact your state TFC director.

You will not be judged on your reading summary, your genre reading, and putting an article or story in print, but you must complete these assignments to be able to compete in the state and national contests.

## STATE CONTEST

Submit four copies of each of your writings at the time specified by the state TFC director. With your writings send your reading summary, a list of the short stories or articles you have read, and the statement of what article you put in print and where it appeared. You will receive your writings after the state contest and may correct and submit them for national competition. You are required to appear in person at

the state competition, and you will be asked to write an impromptu nonfiction essay as described earlier.

## **NATIONAL CONTEST**

Each first- and second-place state winner intending to compete nationally must send four copies of his/her writings, reading summary, list of short stories or articles read, and statement about the article in print to GARBC/TFC, 1300 North Meacham Road, Schaumburg, IL 60173-4806 **by June 1, 2007**. Failure to submit ALL required elements by the deadline will result in a deduction of points at national competition.

You are required to appear in person at the national competition, and you will be asked to write an impromptu nonfiction essay as described earlier.

## **ADJUDICATION AREAS FOR NONFICTION**

*Sense of audience*—writing is clearly intended to reach specific readers (i.e., age, life experience); writer's approach shows awareness of readers' interests and needs and reading level; supplies take-away value to reader

*Central idea*—unifying idea that is original, timely, clearly stated or implied, and effectively developed

*Structure of article*—logical; unified and coherent throughout; well paced in moving reader along

*Beginning/lead*—provides framework; attracts reader's interest; sets tone and direction of the article; stimulates reader to care

*Middle/development*—develops topic and central idea in a logical, orderly way (e.g., past to present; problem to solution; general to specific) with appropriate examples, illustrations, anecdotes, comments to support and develop the central idea

*Conclusion*—convincing; appropriate to central idea; ties the whole article together; motivates reader (e.g., to self-evaluation, increased faith in God, positive action)

*Sentences and paragraphs; transitions*—appropriate variety (i.e., length, structure) of sentences; transitions move readers smoothly from point to point within paragraphs or between paragraphs

*Style and diction; voice and tone*—precise and effective word choice, appropriate to theme and purpose; avoidance of wordiness, triteness, clichés

*Mechanics and presentation*—proper grammar, usage, punctuation, spelling, manuscript presentation; fulfills the definition and purpose of the genre chosen; personal appearance; appropriate attire; good grooming

*Theological soundness*—Biblical worldview conveyed without preachiness; correct use of Bible terms,

concepts; avoidance of Christian jargon or clichés; useful spiritual insight conveyed

## **ADJUDICATION AREAS FOR FICTION**

*Sense of audience*—writing is obviously intended to reach specific readers (i.e., age, life experience); writer's approach shows awareness of readers' interests and needs and reading level; supplies take-away value to readers

*Theme/plot*—unifying theme that is timely, original, clearly stated or implied, and effectively developed; plot deals with a realistic human condition, problem, or situation; presents a believable conflict; shows the central character maturing; dramatic without seeming sensational or contrived

*Point of view and setting*—point of view is appropriate, consistent, and effective in portraying characters and telling their story; setting (time, place, mood) appropriate to plot and characters; contributes to credibility of the story

*Beginning*—sets the story in motion in an interesting, believable way; sets the stage for everything that comes after

*Middle/development*—effective selection and arrangement of conversations, thoughts, incidents to heighten interest and expectation; middle elements are of adequate importance to the whole of the story; sense of connectedness of these elements to each other and to the beginning and conclusion

*Conclusion*—appropriate and convincing; consistent with theme and tone; not too abrupt; not overdone or preachy; effectively brings resolution, sense of completion to the story

*Characters/characterizations*—credible, true-to-life personalities and motivations; selection of details reveals what characters believe and value—how they think; sufficient development of characters

*Dialogue and narrative style*—dialogue appropriate to age and personality of each character; narrative style reflects the story's theme, purpose, and narrator's point of view; precise, economical word choices; avoidance of wordiness, clichés, triteness

*Mechanics and presentation*—proper grammar, usage, punctuation, spelling, manuscript presentation; fulfills the definition and purpose of the short story genre; personal appearance; appropriate attire; good grooming

*Theological soundness*—Biblical worldview conveyed without preachiness; correct use of Bible terms, concepts; avoidance of Christian jargon or clichés; useful spiritual insight conveyed

## **RECOMMENDED BOOKS**

### **Form, Grammar, and Mechanics**

*The Elements of Style* (any recent edition) by William Strunk, Jr., and E. B. White (Macmillan Publishing Co.)

Any reputable English textbook currently being used in high school or college English classes

### **Suggested Resources for Required Reading**

*A Complete Guide to Writing for Publication*, edited by Susan Titus Osborn (American Christian Writers Press)

*Handbook of Magazine Article Writing* (Writer's Digest Books)

*How to Write What You Love* by Dennis E. Hensley (Harold Shaw Publishers)

*Introduction to Christian Writing* by Ethel Herr (American Christian Writers Press)

*On Writing Well* by William Zinsser (Harper/Collins)

*Sally Stuart's Guide to Getting Published* by Sally Stuart (see chapters 8 and 11) (Harold Shaw Publishers)

*The Complete Guide to Writing and Selling the Christian Novel* by Penelope J. Stokes (concepts apply to short stories too) (Writer's Digest Books)

*Writing to Inspire* by William Gentz, Lee Roddy, and others (Writer's Digest Books)

*Writing Short Stories for Young People* by George Edward Stanley (Writer's Digest Books)

*The Christian Communicator*, a monthly magazine for Christian writers (for subscription information, visit [www.ACWriters.com](http://www.ACWriters.com))