



BTPM PBS KIDS Writers Contest Rules 2025

Buffalo•Toronto
Public Media



MANY WILL ENTER, FEW WILL WIN. NO PURCHASE NECESSARY TO ENTER OR WIN. The BTPM PBS KIDS Writers Contest is produced by Buffalo Toronto Public Media (“BTPM”) (the “Contest” or “Promotion”) and based on the Reading Rainbow® Young Writers and Illustrators Contest, a concept developed by BTPM-PBS, BTPM’s broadcast affiliate. The Contest begins on or about January 1, 2026 and ends with the announcement of winners on or about May 1, 2026. This Contest consists of one round of local judging. To enter the Contest, you may submit your Entry via US or Canada mail to Buffalo Toronto Public Media, 140 Lower Terrace, Buffalo, New York, 14202 – OR email a PDF file to WritersContest@btpm.org. All mailed entries must be postmarked by March 31, 2026 and received by April 6, 2026 to be eligible. These Contest rules are subject to modification by BTPM at its discretion. This Contest is void where prohibited. Sponsored and coordinated by Buffalo Toronto Public Media, (“Sponsor” or “PBS”) located at 140 Lower Terrace, Buffalo, NY 14202.

Eligibility & Entry Guidelines

- Entrants must be children at the kindergarten, first, second, or third grade level, including those who are homeschooled.
- Children of employees of BTPM, sales representatives, subsidiaries or parent companies, advertising/sales promotion agencies, and judges are not eligible.
- To be eligible, an entrant must be a legal resident of the fifty (50) United States and D.C. or a Southern Ontario province of Canada within the Buffalo Toronto Public Media viewing area.
- Sponsor reserves the right to disqualify ineligible entries; such entries will not be returned.
- Only one entry per person will be accepted in this Contest; all subsequent entries will be disqualified.
- Only single author stories qualify (no co-authored stories).
- Stories can be fact or fiction, and prose or poetry.
- Any failure to adhere to these Contest Rules may result in disqualification from the Contest.
- No purchase is necessary. Many will enter, few will win.

Word Count Requirement

- Kindergarten and first grade stories must have a **minimum of 50 words** and a **maximum of 200 words**.
- Second and third grade stories must have a **minimum of 100 words** and a **maximum of 350 words**.
- The word count includes “a,” “an,” and “the,” but not the words on non-story pages such as the title page or those that enhance the illustrations.
- Text must be printed or written legibly or typed.
- Children who cannot write may dictate their story to be printed, written legibly or typed.
- Text may be integrated into the illustration pages or on separate pages.
- Non-English text must be translated on the same page and the translated text (English text) must adhere to word count.
- Invented spelling is accepted.

Format & Illustrations

- Stories must have **at least 5 original** and clear illustrations.
- Original art can include drawings, collages, and 3-D created by the author or photographs taken by the author.
- Stories submitted by mail must be created on one side of the paper and numbered on the back of each page.

Official Entry Form

- Each entry must include the official BPM PBS KIDS Writers Contest Entry Form, with the required signature of a parent/guardian (and, if appropriate, the optional signature of the sponsoring teacher), consenting to allowing their child/ward to enter the Contest, confirming that the story and art are original, and granting certain rights to the entry materials.
- The entry form must be complete and legible to be eligible.

Judging, Awards & Notification

All entries submitted to the Contest will be judged by a panel of no fewer than 3 judges selected and coordinated by BPM. Judging will occur after April 6th and before May 1st. The judging will be based on the criteria as follows:

- Creativity and originality of plot and/or themes,
- Story structure and use of literary devices,
- Relevance, quality and originality of illustrations,
- Adherence to the Contest rules and structure.

All decisions of the judges are final and binding and not subject to appeal or review. Winners will be as follows: (1) First Place winners; (2) Second Place winners (3) Third Place winners; and (4) Honorable Mention as specified below. Winners will be notified on or before May 1, 2026.

Prizes

Every child's participation is recognized with a certificate. All **four (4) first place entries will each receive an Amazon Fire HD 8 Kids Pro tablet (approximate value: \$132.00)**. The remaining **second place entries (4), third place entries (4), and honorable mention entries (4) will each receive a gift card (valued at \$100.00) from a local book shop**. Any winning authors from Western New York will receive a gift card from Alice Ever After Books (<https://www.aliceeverafterbooks.com/>) and any winning authors from Southern Ontario will receive a gift card from Mabel's Fables (<https://www.mabelsfables.com/>). All winning entries will also receive a Contest t-shirt, a book, PBS KIDS goodies, and their stories published on bpm.org and Buffalo Toronto Public Media social media platforms. Winners will be invited, along with their families and teachers, to a celebration to read their stories at our downtown Buffalo BPM Studios in May 2026. The ceremony will also be live-streamed for those who are unable to attend in-person. Alternatively, recipients must allow a minimum of 4 to 6 weeks from notification to delivery, if not attending the Awards Celebration. Prizes are not redeemable for cash, non-transferable, and non-substitutable, except at the sole discretion of Sponsor.

Return of Entries

The Contest administrators will make every effort, but are not required, to return entries. Guaranteed return will happen only if accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope of an **appropriate size and postage**. BPM is not responsible for late, lost, stolen, misdirected, damaged, mutilated, incomplete, returned, or illegible entries, or postage-due mail.

Rights Associated with Contest

Submission of the Entry Form constitutes permission from the participant's parent/legal guardian for Buffalo Toronto Public Media to use the participants' name, likeness, biographical information, information and materials contained in the Entry Form, photographs, and any statements or remarks made about the Contest in advertising and promotion without further compensation or permission, except where prohibited by law. All entries, and any copyrights therein, become the sole property of Buffalo Toronto Public Media. By entering, entrants' parent/legal guardian agree to abide by the rules stated herein, and warrant that their child's/ward's entry is their original work and does not infringe upon or violate rights of any third party and grant to Buffalo Toronto Public Media the right to edit, publish, promote, and otherwise use their entry materials without permission, notice or compensation. No royalties will be paid at this or any time. By submitting an entry and Entry Form, each participant's parent/legal guardian, on behalf of the participant, agrees to assign all right, title, and interest in and to the entry and Entry Form to Buffalo Toronto Public Media and

warrants that the participant's parent/legal guardian has the authority to assign such right, title, and interest. In the event that any applicable law requires certain formalities to be fulfilled to effectuate such grant of rights, each participant (and parent or guardian) agrees to cooperate with Buffalo Toronto Public Media to achieve fulfillment of such formalities. By submitting an Entry Form, each participant's parent/legal guardian, on behalf of participant, agrees to be bound by these Contest Rules. Each participant's parent/legal guardian, on behalf of the participant, agrees to release and hold Buffalo Toronto Public Media and its employees, officers, directors, shareholders, agents, representatives, subsidiaries, parent companies, or other affiliated companies harmless from any and all damages, losses, claims and liabilities arising out of participation in the Contest or resulting from acceptance or claiming of any prize hereunder. Buffalo Toronto Public Media reserves the right, in its sole discretion, to terminate, suspend or otherwise cancel the Contest at any time. Income and all other taxes are the responsibility of the prize recipient. Buffalo Toronto Public Media is not responsible for any expenses incurred in connection with participation in the Contest.

Privacy: Unless otherwise specified, any and all information connected in connection with this Contest will be used by Sponsor solely for the purpose of administering the Contest. To understand how Buffalo Toronto Public Media uses, stores, manages and discards private information, visit the Buffalo Toronto Public Media [privacy policy](#). To understand how PBS uses, stores, manages, and discards private information, visit the PBS privacy policy at: <http://www.pbs.org/about/policies/privacy-policy/>.

Sponsor: Buffalo Toronto Public Media, 140 Lower Terrace, Buffalo, New York, 14202