

Section 1

CONTEST RULES

All [state rules](#) and [local rules](#) apply.

1. All amateur and professional work will be accepted regardless of residence. Since the Fair has no geographical limits, we can accept entries from around the world but the Fair will refuse an entry if it is not in English.
2. American system of judging will be used unless otherwise noted.
3. **COST: \$10 PER ENTRY**
NOTE: Entrants 16 or older are eligible to compete in any division even if there is no specific Young Adult class. There is no limit on the number of entries or prizes received per person; however, there can be no more than two awards paid in each class per person.
4. **OUR EARLIER DEADLINE:** Be aware that unlike other Fair departments, the Literary Arts Department does not accept mail-in entry forms and our contest deadline is **11:59pm, April 1st**, a month earlier than other Fair departments.
5. **LITERARY ENTRIES** must be contestant's original work, written in English and open to themes and genres appropriate for the general population. Per state Fair rules, no foul language, gratuitous sex, or violence.
6. **WE DO NOT OFFER CONTESTS FOR CHILDREN. MINIMUM CONTESTANT AGE is 16:** No underage submissions (except scholarship entrants). **NOTE: Entrants under 16 will be disqualified (no refunds) and also ineligible to enter the Youth Dept literary contests.** Age is determined by having had a birthday on or before January 1.
7. **HOW TO ENTER:** Enter online at www.sanmateocountyfair.com, pay the entry fee, and upload your entry with title when prompted; no submission will be accepted without registration AND payment. If you have difficulties, email literary@smcec.co **BEFORE** the April 1st deadline; emails received after the deadline cannot be honored. Upload each entry separately after you complete the online registration. **NOTE:** Be patient, it takes time to upload a document so don't assume it's done until you see the final finish notice for each submission. You can register your entry and then upload the document later as long as the title remains the same and all uploads are completed by 11:59pm on April 1st. **Note: You cannot change your entry's title once it has been submitted online.**
8. **DIVISION RULES:** Make sure your submission is entered in the correct contest or it will be disqualified as state rules forbid switching entries to different divisions. For example, don't enter a memoir into the essay contest.
9. **FORMAT RULES:** Entries must be **uploaded as a PDF or Microsoft XPS** document with the following stipulations: written in Times New Roman font, 12-points, double-spaced, with one-inch margins and approximately 300-325 words per page formatting. Entries must have correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation.
IMPORTANT: INCLUDE WORD COUNT BELOW TITLE.
10. **DISQUALIFICATION RULES:** Submissions will be disqualified with **no refunds given** if name appears anywhere on entry; word count is not clearly marked under the title of entry; word counts are over the specified word count limit; contestant is under the minimum age of 16; contestant enters entry into wrong division; title does not match uploaded entry title; entry is uploaded not in **PDF or Microsoft XPS format**; or if entry was previously entered into any San Mateo County Fair Literary contests regardless if it won a prize or not.
Five score points will be deducted for each of the following: If title does not appear at the top, center of first page; use of profanity; or the inclusion of cover pages or explanations, synopses, prologues, illustrations (except for the Stories for Children contest), or photos. Be aware it's often a close race so any points deducted for entry errors could mean the difference between winning or not. Pieces that won other literary contests, have been published online or in print are acceptable. You can update a submission after it's registered as long as the title is the same. The office will gladly help resolve problems but can't always solve last minute errors before the deadline. No refunds will be given for any contestant entry errors.
11. **RELEASE:** Author retains all rights to their work; however, the author agrees that all Literary Arts entries may be displayed in the Fine Arts Galleria; Best of Show winners will be highlighted on posters with entrant's name, title, and brief excerpt; and any/all entries may be used for publicity purposes at the sole discretion of the Fair management.
12. **MATERIAL:** Submissions are printed and displayed in the Literary Department: all printed material will be recycled.
13. **PRIZE RIBBONS:** Per State Fair rules, RIBBONS ARE PROHIBITED FROM BEING REMOVED FROM DISPLAYS DURING THE FAIR; **ribbons can be picked up on Monday, June 17 from 2 to 7pm** (no parking or entry fee required).
14. The Fair reserves the right to remove any exhibit that is not in the best interest of the Fair or entered in violation of its rules and regulations.
15. No advertising material will be allowed in the Literary Arts Department without approval of its Director.
16. **MULTIPLE CONTEST SUBMISSIONS:** Exhibitors may not enter the same story in more than one category or class.

Go to <https://www.sanmateocountyfair.com/literary-arts> to download the online Literary Arts Guidebook for the complete list of contest rules and events information.

