



## Jax PBS KIDS Writers Contest Rules

NO PURCHASE NECESSARY TO ENTER OR WIN. The Jax PBS KIDS Writers Contest is based on the Reading Rainbow® Young Writers and Illustrators Contest, a concept developed by WNED. The Contest begins on January 1, 2026 and ends with the announcement of winners on or before March 31, 2026. This Contest consists of two (2) rounds of judging: (1) grade level judging, and (2) People's Choice. To enter, you must first be judged at the grade level for a chance to move on to the People's Choice judging. To enter the Contest, submit entries to WJCT c/o Writers Contest 100 Festival Park Ave., Jacksonville, FL 32202. All entries must be postmarked by **March 1, 2026** to be eligible. Contest rules are subject to modification by WJCT at their discretion. This Contest is void where prohibited. Sponsored and managed by WJCT Public Media.

### **Eligibility & Entry Guidelines \* If story does not meet the following requirements it will not be judged.\* •**

Entrants must be children in kindergarten, first, second, or third grade.

- Children of employees of PBS, PBS stations, or their affiliates, 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 Washington D.C. (excluding Puerto Rico, USVI, and American Samoa). Sponsor reserves the right to disqualify ineligible entries; such entries will not be returned.
- Only one entry per child will be accepted; 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.

### **Word Count Requirement \* If story does not meet the following requirements it will not be judged.\***

- **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 illustrations.
- Text must be printed, 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 \* If story does not meet the following requirements it will not be judged.\* •**

Stories must have **at least 5 original, clear, and colorful illustrations**.

- Original art can include drawings, collages, and 3-D created by the author or photographs taken by the author. • Stories must be created on **one side of the paper AND numbered on the back of each page**.

### **Official Entry Form \* If story does not meet the following requirements it will not be judged.\***

- **Each entry must include the official Jax 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 will be judged using the judging criteria below by a panel of local judges. The entry with the highest score in each grade will be deemed the grand prize winner for that grade. The stories with the top four scores from the grade level judging round will be automatically entered into the People's Choice judging round of the Contest. Judging for each grade level round of the Contest will begin in March 2026. Judging for the People's Choice round of the Contest will begin on March 23 2026. The judging criteria used by any judge in connection with the grade level round of the Contest shall be scored using a rubric based on the following criteria:

- Originality
- Creative Expression
- Storytelling
- Integration of Story & Illustrations • Overall Impression

All decisions of the judges are final and binding and not subject to appeal or review. For the grade level round of the Contest, winners will be as follows: (1) entries with the highest total score from among all eligible entries received per grade will be the First Place winners; (2) the entries with the second highest total score from among all eligible entries received per grade will be the Second Place winners; (3) the entries with the third highest total score from among all eligible entries received per grade will be the Third Place winners. In the event of a tie, the entry with the highest score in the creativity and originality category from among all tying entries will be deemed the winner from among all tying entries. Winners will be notified on or before April 11, 2026.

WJCT will invite the community to judge all eligible entries for the People's Choice judging round of the Contest online. The top three (3) stories from each grade level with the highest total scores will be eligible for the People's Choice judging round. For the People's Choice round of the Contest, winners will be as follows: (1) entry with the highest total number of votes from among all eligible entries will be the First Place winner; (2) the entry with the second highest total number of votes from among all eligible entries will be the Second Place winner; (3) the entry with the third highest total score from among all eligible entries will be the Third Place winner. In the event of a tie, the entry with the highest total score from the grade level judging round will be deemed the winner from among all tying entries. Winners will be notified on or before April 11, 2026.

### **Return of Entries**

Contest administrators at WJCT will make every effort, but are not required, to return mailed entries only if accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope of an appropriate size. WJCT and or its affiliates are 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 WJCT 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 WJCT. By entering, entrants' parent/legal guardian agree to abide by the above stated rules, 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 WJCT 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 WJCT 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 WJCT 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 WJCT, 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. WJCT 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. WJCT 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 WJCT solely for the purpose of administering the contest. To understand how WJCT uses, stores, manages, and discards private information, visit the WJCT privacy policy at: <http://www.wjct.org/donor-privacy-policy>.