

Seven Hills Writing Contest

Tallahassee Writers Association

Category: Children's Literature: Chapter Books or Short Stories

Children's Chapter Books or short stories are targeted toward children ages 6-12. If geared toward the 6-8 age range, the pieces should use simple vocabulary that the child could read with some assistance from parents. If geared from 9-12, children should be able to read the material on their own.

Scale: 5 Excellent 4 Very Good 3 Fair 2 Needs Work 1 Poor

- ___ 1. MECHANICS - Do word count and format conform to contest rules? Is manuscript free of grammatical, spelling and punctuation errors? Is a target age group specified?
- ___ 2. HOOK - Is the reader drawn into the story/character from the beginning?
- ___ 3. CHARACTERS - Are they interesting and believable? Does the protagonist have human weaknesses which make them real, as well as strengths to resolve the story's conflict? Are antagonists one-dimensional "cartoon" figures, or do they have enough positive qualities to make them real? Do we get a sense of their motivation?
- ___ 4. SUITABILITY - Is the content suitable for the children's market and are content and writing suitable for the target age group? _____
TARGET AGE GROUP SPECIFIED: _____
- ___ 5. TECHNIQUE - Is the point of view consistent? Is there a proper balance between showing and telling? Does the active voice predominate over the passive?
- ___ 6. LANGUAGE USE - Is the writing fresh and free of cliches? Does the choice of words keep the reader embedded in the story? Does the writer rely on adjectives and adverbs instead of strong nouns and verbs?
- ___ 7. DIALOGUE AND NARRATIVE - Does any dialogue sound natural to the characters and the situation? Does each character have a unique voice? Is there a proper balance between dialogue and narrative?
- ___ 8. SETTING - Does the reader know where and when the story takes place? Can you see, feel, hear and smell the setting? Does it enhance or detract from the story?
- ___ 9. CONFLICT/OBSTACLES - Is the protagonist presented with a need/desire to solve a problem, and obstacles preventing their fulfillment? Are motivations of both protagonist and antagonists strong enough to provide conflict worth reading about?
- ___ 10. RESOLUTION - Does the protagonist grow or learn something during the course of the story? Is there an "aha" moment when the new reality becomes apparent?
- ___ 11. STRUCTURE - Does the structure of the story suit the material? Did the writer find the best entry and exit point? Is every scene necessary?

__ 12. ORIGINALITY – Does the story seem fresh and original? Does it have its own twists on character, plot, and setting that make it unique?