

North Street Book Prize: Frequently Asked Questions

The top questions submitters ask about eligibility and more

- May I submit a book I published several years ago?
- I've submitted my book via Submittable. Should I also mail a printed copy?
- Do you waive fees for authors who are lower income?
- Can I submit a book written by my child?
- Can I submit a translation?
- Can I submit a bilingual book?
- What is the difference between creative nonfiction & memoir versus hard nonfiction, scholarly works, and reference?
- Why don't you accept hard nonfiction, reference, and scholarly works?
- Why don't you accept unpublished manuscripts?
- Which edition/version of my book should I submit?
- Should I ship printed books via rush delivery?
- I submitted a book in a past year. May I submit it again?
- Why do only digital submissions receive feedback from the judges?
- What is in the feedback on submissions? How do you write so much of it so quickly? Do you use AI?

May I submit a book I published several years ago?

Yes, there is no restriction on the year of publication. You may submit a book you published decades ago if you like.

I've submitted my book via Submittable. Should I also mail a printed copy?

The digital copy you submitted is sufficient. Please do not send a hard copy. We may ask you for a printed book later if your submission reaches the advanced rounds of judging.

Do you waive fees for authors who are lower income?

As a small organization, we can only afford to waive fees for incarcerated authors. If entry fees are beyond your budget, we encourage you to take advantage of our database of [The Best Free Literary Contests](#), available with a free newsletter subscription.

Can I submit a book written by my child?

Yes, a parent or guardian may submit a book by a minor.

Can I submit a translation?

We regret not. We lack the resources to assess the accuracy or intellectual property rights status of translations.

Can I submit a bilingual book?

Yes, as long as one of the languages is English, you are the author of the non-English text, and an English translation of the entire text is part of the book. (Example: [*Caras Lindas de Colombia/ Beautiful Faces of Colombia*](#), North Street Book Prize, First Prize, Art Book, 2023)

What is the difference between creative nonfiction & memoir versus hard nonfiction, scholarly works, and reference? How can I tell if my book is eligible?

The Creative Nonfiction & Memoir category is for books that tell a true story with the kind of narrative arc and literary techniques one would find in a novel or short story collection: characters and character growth, dialogue, scenes, sensory impressions, setting, and more. This can include memoirs, personal essay collections, or narrative nonfiction.

If you're not sure whether your book fits our criteria, consider if it reads like a novel. If so, the book is likely eligible, otherwise not. Scholarly works written in an academic style are not eligible.

We are not accepting business or marketing books at this time.

If you submit a book but we find it is not eligible, we will refund your entry fee in full.

Why don't you accept hard nonfiction, reference, or scholarly works?

These genres are more about conveying information than literary skill. We would only be able to judge them based on our agreement or disagreement with the content, which is not our goal for this contest. In the case of scholarly or business-related works, the judges don't have the expertise to evaluate everything that could be submitted in these genres. In the case of hard nonfiction, we don't have the staff or funds to fact-check such works.

Why don't you accept unpublished manuscripts?

Many great books are self-published or hybrid-published each year, but don't get the attention they deserve. We feel called to elevate these books, rather than publish manuscripts ourselves.

Which edition/version of my book should I submit?

Please submit the edition that is on sale to the public at the time of entry. Send your entire book, including the cover and front and back matter. We judge your entire book as a package, not just the story inside. If you plan to update your book within the next two years, consider waiting to submit until the new version goes on sale.

Should I ship printed books via rush delivery?

Please don't go to the expense of rush delivery unless we specifically ask you to. Regular ground shipment will be fine. In the US, USPS Ground Advantage will usually be your best option. As long as you postmark your submission by our July 1 deadline, it's acceptable if it arrives a few days later.

I submitted a book in a past year. May I submit it again?

We don't recommend this unless you have made significant changes to your book. Books that have won a cash prize from Winning Writers should not be submitted again even if changed.

Why do only digital submissions receive feedback from the judges?

The judges who prepare the feedback work in Europe, so it's not practical to provide them with printed books in most cases. More generally, it is easier for Winning Writers to process digital entries than printed ones, so the feedback is an incentive for digital submissions.

What is in the feedback on submissions? How do you write so much of it so quickly? Do you use AI?

We do not use AI for any part of our judging process. Only humans will read and write about your book.

We want our feedback to clarify how we judge books. The content of the feedback varies from one book to another. It usually includes what the judge liked most, followed by one or more factors that prevented the book from advancing to the next round. The feedback varies in length depending on the complexity and prevalence of the issues the judge wishes to discuss.

Your feedback will include specific examples from your book. We feel these are key, and devote considerable time to identifying good examples.

To deliver useful feedback on 1,000+ books without charging exorbitant entry fees, Winning Writers has developed a system of pre-written templates to address the issues we see most often. We always support these with direct examples from your book and often provide additional commentary outside the scope of the template. Templates are also used for the introduction to the document and the “Judging procedure and context” section at the end.

Our template library is an evolving document of tens of thousands of words tailored to subjects in each of our contest categories. All templates are written by managing editor Annie Mydla with contributions from the other assistant judges. We frequently add templates when submissions give us new insights. We won’t try to shoehorn a generic comment into your feedback that’s not on point.

With our unique library of internal resources, we aim to make our judging more transparent, grounding our verdict in real, specific examples from your own book. We also hope our comments on strengths and weaknesses will suggest a direction for possible future revisions. Our contest is about honoring great work, and about building better books.

Have more questions? Please email us at info@winningwriters.com.