



Old Dominion Association of Church Schools

Elementary and Junior High 43rd Annual AACS Poetry and Short Story Contest*

Elementary Grades 4-6	Poetry	Write a poem on this topic: <i>This makes me happy.</i>
	Short Story	Write a story that involves something negative or bad that turns out to be positive or good.
Junior High Grades 7-8	Poetry	Write a poem about a celebration (for example: holiday, birthday, family traditions, winning a sporting event); consider including sights, sounds, tastes, smells, and emotions, and/or a specific participant's perspective.
	Short Story	Write a story in which the main character tries something new that is exciting, frightening, or enlightening. What does your character learn, or how does he change from his experience?

*Please note that this contest is **NOT** the same competition as the ODACS Creative Writing competition that is part of our regional and state Bible, Fine Arts, and Academic Competitions in March.

- Entries shall meet the specific length requirements listed below.

Elementary Level (Grades 4-6)	Junior High Level (Grades 7-8)
Poetry: maximum 200 words	Poetry: maximum 300 words
Short Story: maximum 750 words	Short Story: maximum 1000 words
- Each school may submit only one entry for each category in each level. Only a total of four entries may be submitted from your school.
- A student may enter only one category – either poetry or short story.
- Teachers**
 - Our goal with this contest is to award excellence. Writing may begin with free writing, but excellent writing on any level requires writing and re-writing. Use this as a teaching opportunity. Tell your students the topic at least one week in advance. Brainstorm with your class. Follow your curriculum's procedure for pre-writing, writing, peer editing, teacher review, and re-writing.
 - Review the judging forms for judging criteria.
 - Student entries are not required to be spiritual in nature or application. Content should be wholesome and within the boundaries of appropriate Christian thought and behavior (Phil. 4:8). Vulgarity, sexual innuendoes, crass humor, dark subject matter, distasteful, and Biblically objectionable content are not appropriate.
 - Absolutely no plagiarism or AI-generated work is acceptable.
 - Within the guidelines above in 4.a., the entry must be the student's own work.
- Preparing the Entry**
 - Typed entries are preferred, but handwritten entries will be accepted. The student should type or write a clean copy to submit for judging. If the hand-written entry has been scanned for digital submission, ensure that the scanned copy is clear enough for judges to read easily.
 - Entries to state and national competition must be free of written comments and corrections.**
 - The following information must be listed at the top of the first page of the student's entry: Student's name and grade; school name, city, and state; category entered; title; **word count**; and **Statement of Originality**. STATEMENT OF ORIGINALITY: I certify that this project is my own original and authentic work and that I received no help in completing this project other than general instruction and supervision. (Type or sign name after statement.) **Failure to include the Statement of Originality will result in disqualification.**
- Review the judging sheets for judging criteria. Each school should have received a copy of each judging sheet. If not, please contact the ODACS office. Before submitting the entry, on the judging sheet fill in the level, name, school, city, state, grade, **title, and number of words**. The student will be penalized if the judging sheet is incomplete.
- Submitting the Entry:** Original student entries and judging forms must be submitted **as e-mail attachments** to the ODACS office by **December 8, 2025**. Send entries by e-mail to vaodacs@icloud.com. ODACS will select one winner in each category and then will forward those winning entries to AACS for judging in the national contest. National winners will be announced in April, 2026.
- State winners will be presented medals. National winners will be awarded plaques. All awards will be provided by AACS.