Freeport Public Library Short Story Contest 2026

Scoring Rubric

Criteria	4 20 pts	3 15 pts	2 10 pts	1 5 pts
Ideas	The opening lines vividly present the story's main conflict and characters. Significant, descriptive details reveal the setting and characters. The writer uses strong dialogue to show the characters' personalities.	The opening lines present the story's main conflict and characters. Most details are relevant in revealing the setting and characters. The writer often uses dialogue to show the characters' personalities.	The opening lines vaguely present the story's main conflict and characters. More details and examples are needed. The writer occasionally uses dialogue.	The opening lines do not present the story's main conflict or characters. Details and examples are irrelevant or missing. The writer uses little to no dialogue.
Organization	The writer sets the scene by introducing the characters, setting, or action in a memorable way. The sequence of events is clear and engaging. The story has a clear beginning, middle, and ending. The ending resolves the conflict satisfactorily.	The writer vaguely presents the characters, setting, or action. The sequence of events is mostly clear. The story has a beginning, middle and end, but the action is not always easy to follow. The ending resolves the conflict.	The writer hints at the characters, setting, or action. The sequence of events is sometimes confusing. The story has a beginning, middle, and end, but the action is hard to follow. The ending does not bring the conflict to a satisfying conclusion.	The writer does not set up what the story is about. The story ends and begins in a confusing way.
Voice	The tone and voice are strongly individual and appropriate for the story. The point of view is highly consistent.	The tone and voice are individual and appropriate. The point of view is consistent.	The tone and voice are not clearly individual and not always appropriate. The point of view is occasionally inconsistent.	The voice lacks individuality. The point of view is inconsistent or confusing.
Word Choice & Sentence Structure	Thoughtful use of sensory language helps create memorable pictures of the setting, characters, and conflict. Sentences have a pleasing variety of structures. Use of fragments and run-on sentences in dialogue is deliberate and thoughtful.	Sensory language is adequate to describe the setting, characters, and conflict. Sentences mostly have a variety of structures. Use of fragments and run-on sentences in dialogue is thoughtful.	More sensory language is needed. Some sentences have a variety of structures. Use of fragments and run-on sentences in dialogue is not always thoughtful.	Lack of sensory language limits the picture of the setting, characters, and conflict. Repetitive sentence structures and lack of dialogue make the writing difficult to follow.
Conventions	Spelling, capitalization, and punctuation are correct. Grammar and usage are correct.	Spelling, capitalization, and punctuation are mostly correct.	Spelling, capitalization, and punctuation are sometimes incorrect.	Familiar words are misspelled, and punctuation is missing or incorrect.

	Paragraphing tends to be correct.	Grammar and usage do not distort meaning but are sometimes incorrect. Paragraphing is attempted but is not always sound.	Grammar and usage errors distract from meaning. Paragraphing is irregular or too frequent.	Grammar and usage mistakes are frequent and distort meaning. Paragraphing is missing.