



The Freedom
to Write

Guidelines for the PEN Prison Writing Program's Annual Prison Writing Contest 2019

OPENS: January 1, 2018

DEADLINE: September 1, 2018

PEN America Center sponsors the Annual Prison Writing Contest as part of PEN's Prison Writing Program. Anyone incarcerated in federal, state, or county prison in the year before the September 1 deadline is eligible to enter.

Prizes of \$250, \$150, \$100, and \$25 are awarded for first, second, third, and honorable mention places. Winners are also published on the PEN America website (pen.org). Authors retain all rights to their own writing.

Guidelines:

Incarcerated writers may submit material in the genres of poetry, fiction, nonfiction, and drama (screen/stage play). While we do not place a limit on the number of submissions in any genre, we do request that you submit only your best work as the contest is competitive and we are looking to award the highest quality prison writing across the country. The maximum number of pages per submission is 25. No complete novels, please, though short excerpts from novels are fine. Any topic that moves you is fit for our contest, and no entries will be disqualified based on content.

Manuscripts in all formats are accepted, but we encourage typewritten copies if a computer or typewriter is made available to you. Handwritten entries should be neatly printed. Also, if possible, please submit a copy of your work rather than the original material. This request protects you, the writer, in the unlikely event that your work is misplaced or otherwise not returnable. If possible, we will attempt to return work that includes a Self Addressed Stamped Envelope (SASE) with sufficient postage for your submission.

The Prison Writing Mentorship Program pairs established writing mentors with incarcerated mentees. To become eligible for the program, one must first enter the annual contest. Winners are offered the opportunity to participate in the mentorship program and, in some instances, writers who do not win an award but whose efforts are recognized also offered a mentor.

Winners will be selected and notified in the spring of 2019. You can request a list of the contest winners by writing to us.

Submit by sending work to:

PEN Prison Writing Program Annual Contest
588 Broadway, Suite 303
New York, NY 10012