

WRITING CONTEST

WRITING CONTEST—Best of Show: \$150	Best of Division	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	Hon. Mention
Division A (Junior: Ages 13 or younger on July 17)	\$35.00	\$25.00	\$20.00	\$10.00	\$10.00	\$6.00
Division B (Young Adult: Ages 14–20 on July 17)	\$40.00	\$30.00	\$20.00	\$15.00	\$10.00	\$6.00
Division C (Adult: 21 or older on July 17)	\$100.00	\$75.00	\$50.00	\$35.00	\$20.00	\$10.00

HERITAGE CONTEST – Best of Show: \$150						
Division D (Ages 20 or younger on July 17)	\$45.00	\$30.00	\$20.00	\$15.00	\$10.00	\$5.00
Division E (Adult: Ages 21 or older on July 17)	\$50.00	\$40.00	\$30.00	\$20.00	\$10.00	\$5.00

Cash awards will be mailed September 2026.

People living in North Dakota have had an opportunity each year since 1976 to enter their writings in the ND State Fair Writing Contest. Work submitted will be displayed in the 4-H Hall in the ND State Fair Center during the 2026 North Dakota State Fair (July 17-25). In addition to the ND State Fair, support for the contest comes from Minot State University and the Northern Plains Writing Project. Please indicate which contest and category you are entering.

The Rules:

1. Each North Dakota resident may enter up to three works in any form (short stories, poems, plays, essays, letters, diaries, etc.). Maximum length for a work is 2,500 words.
2. Writer's name, address, and division MUST BE on the first page of each manuscript in the upper right-hand corner. If a return address is out-of-state, the writer should enclose a written explanation of residency. Please punch a hole in the upper left-hand corner of all manuscripts for hanging in the display.
3. Writers 13 years of age or younger on July 17, 2026, will compete in Division A. Writers 14 through 20 years of age on this day will compete in Division B, and writers 21 years of age and older on this day will compete in Division C. A writer competing in Division A or B should write his or her age as of July 17 on the first page of the manuscript.
4. Manuscripts should be sent to the North Dakota State Fair Writing Contest, Box 1796, Minot, ND 58702 or by email to competitive@ndstatefair.com. All entries must be in the Fair office by July 5, 2026.
5. Submission of a manuscript gives the officials of this contest and of the State Fair permission to display the manuscript in the 4-H Hall during the 2026 North Dakota State Fair. If sufficient funding is received, efforts will be made to publish winning manuscripts in an anthology, or to offer the manuscripts for publication in North Dakota weekly and daily newspaper. All other rights remain with author.
6. Photocopied manuscripts can be submitted. Manuscripts will not be returned. Officials and institutions associated with this contest assume no responsibility for lost or damaged manuscripts. Judging will be done by teacher-consultants of the Northern Plains Writing Project. All decisions of the judges are final.
7. Comments about the Writing Contest are encouraged from participants. Please address comments to: Samuel Stinson, ND State Fair Writing Contest, Division of Humanities, Minot State University, Minot ND 58707.

THE HERITAGE CONTEST

The North Dakota Heritage Contest exists so people might write down and submit their own stories about what life was like in North Dakota. Work submitted will be displayed in the 4-H Hall in the ND State Fair Center during the 2026 North Dakota State Fair (July 17-25). The contest is sponsored by the North Dakota State Fair. Additional support comes from Minot State University and the Northern Plains Writing Project. Please indicate which contest and category you are entering.

The Rules:

1. Each North Dakota resident may enter up to three works which illustrate aspects of North Dakota's culture and heritage. Here are a few of the many possible topics: attending a one-room school, being snowbound during a blizzard, working in a blacksmith shop, coming home after a war, going to town on Saturday night, and moving from farm to town.
2. Personal reminiscences, interviews with people who have lived in the state, or pieces of writing based on letters, diaries, and other old documents are all acceptable. Maximum length for a work is 2,500 words. Judges will look for quality of writing, relevance to the history and culture of North Dakota, and human interest when judging works entered.
3. Writer's name, address, and division MUST BE on the first page of each manuscript in the upper right-hand corner. If a return address is out-of-state, the writer should enclose a written explanation of residency. Please punch a hole in the upper hand corner of all manuscripts for hanging in the display.
4. Writers 20 years of age or younger on July 17, 2026, will compete in Division D. Writers 21 years of age and older on this day will compete in Division E. A writer competing in Division D should his or her age as of July 20 on the first page of the manuscript.
5. Manuscripts should be sent to the North Dakota State Fair Heritage Contest, Box 1796, Minot, ND 58702 or by email to competitive@ndstatefair.com. All entries must be in the Fair office by July 5, 2026.
6. Submission of a manuscript gives the officials of this contest and of the State Fair permission to display the manuscript in the 4-H Hall during the 2026 North Dakota State Fair. If sufficient funding is received, efforts will be made to publish winning manuscripts in an anthology, or to offer manuscripts for publication in North Dakota weekly and newspapers. All other rights remain with the author.
7. Photocopied manuscripts can be submitted. Manuscripts will not be returned. Officials and institutions associated with contest assume no responsibility for lost or damaged manuscripts. Judging will be done by teacher-consultants of the Northern Plains Writing Project. All decisions of the judges are final.
8. Comments about the Heritage Contest are encouraged from participants. Please address comments to: Samuel Stinson, State Fair Writing Contest, Division of Humanities, Minot State University, Minot, ND 58707.