

UI 100 WORD MICROSTORY CONTEST RULES (2026)

The University of Iowa Center for Advancement Privacy Statement

At the University of Iowa Center for Advancement, we are committed to being good stewards of your personal information and ensuring it is collected, used, and secured appropriately. The University of Iowa Center for Advancement Privacy Statement may be read in its entirety through the following [link](#). The information in this privacy statement summarizes our policy, procedures, and practices as it relates to your personal information. If you have any questions or comments about our privacy practices or compliance efforts, please contact 1-800-982-4295 or email privacy@foriowa.org.

Minor Contestants

The parent or legal guardian of any minors (defined as ages 0–17) interested in participating in the contest must complete the submission form and provide consent to the University of Iowa Center for Advancement to collect and use the minor’s information. If consent is not provided, the minor will not be allowed to participate in the contest. The information to be collected and used includes the minor’s: first name, last initial, state or country, and contest entry.

Information on “minors” collected will be expunged once the contest has concluded.

If a minor should win in their age group (grades 3 & 4, grades 5 & 6, grades 7 & 8, and grades 9–12), then the minor’s first name, first letter of their last name, state or country, (e.g., Jane D., Iowa) and their entry will be posted to the contest website (foriowa.org/write-now). The prize will be sent to the parent/legal guardian completing the submission form at the provided address.

Minors should enter the age group that corresponds with the 2025-2026 academic year.

Eligibility to Participate

The contest is free and open to UI alumni, students, faculty, staff, and friends. Entrants must submit their entry between 9 a.m. (CST) on Monday, July 13, 2026, and 4 p.m. (CST) Friday, July 24, 2026. Once the registration is completed online, an automatic confirmation will be displayed.

Contest Schedule

The contest begins at 9 a.m. (CST) on Monday, July 13, 2026, and runs through 4 p.m. (CST) on Friday, July 24, 2026. The winners will be announced on Tuesday, August 12, 2026, at 9 a.m. (CST).

Story Assignments

In honor of the 250th anniversary of America, writers will create a story – in 100 words or less – by selecting one of two provided prompts. The contest opens on the Write Now website at about 9 a.m. (CST) on Monday, July 13, 2026.

Photos of two photos will serve as writing prompts. Contestants should select one photograph to create their fictional story. What original story are you able to create looking at the elements in the photograph?

All stories must be 100 words or less, created within the competition period, and focused on one of the two prompts provided.

Deadline and Submission Format

- **Deadline:** Completed stories must be received by 4 p.m. (CST) on Friday, July 24, 2026. All entries not received by the University of Iowa Center for Advancement by that time will be ineligible.
- **How to submit:** Stories must be uploaded through the contest website (foriowa.org/write-now) or submitted via email to write.now@foriowa.org.
- **File format:** The story must be uploaded as a Word Document (.doc or .docx), Text File (.txt), or in Rich Text Format (.rtf). **Stories submitted in Apple's Pages format will not be accepted.** The name of the file must be the title of the story. For example, if the title of your short story is "Autumn," then the name of your file must be "Autumn.doc," "Autumn.txt," or Autumn.rtf."
- **Font:** Submissions must be typed in 12-point Courier, New Courier, or Times New Roman typeface.
- **Anonymity:** The author's name must not appear anywhere in the microstory document. The author's name will be submitted only on the web entry form.
- **Length:** The maximum length for each micro story is 100 words. Entries with more than 100 words will be disqualified.

Judging:

Entries will be judged on format; spelling and grammar; and the story (use of prompt, writing, originality, character development, and plot development).

There are seven age categories: grades 3 & 4, grades 5 & 6, grades 7 & 8, and grades 9–12; and current UI students and adult (University of Iowa alumni and Non-University of Iowa alumni). One winner will be selected from each category.

Feedback on the individual entries will not be provided.

Creative Development

All creative development for stories must take place between the contest's entry window, from 9 a.m. (CST) on Monday, July 13, 2026, and 4 p.m. (CST) on Friday, July 24, 2026. All decisions as to compliance with the contest's entry window are within the sole discretion of the UI Center for Advancement; and any such decisions by the UI Center for Advancement are final, conclusive, and binding upon all entrants. The UI Center for Advancement reserves the right to disqualify any entries that are plagiaristic or otherwise unoriginal to the corresponding entrant.

Prizes

A winner in each of the four grade school categories will win a \$25 Bookshop.org gift card. The winner of the adult categories will receive a handcrafted wooden handle made from a tree that

was located on the University of Iowa campus, and a \$50 Bookshop.org gift card. In addition, the top entry in each age category will be posted to the Write Now website.