
Creative Writing Division Rules

VA Staff: Keep track of all Veterans who compete/enter through your VA facility and enter their information into **Local Level Participation form on page 15 of the handbook**. **Send this form to Arts4Vets@va.gov when your local competition has ended.**

Entries submitted into the Creative Writing Division will be judged based upon the merit of the original work, creative content, message clarity, use of language, originality of topic or idea, and overall strength.

NEW for 2022 – Facilities may submit the top three finalists in each category. A formal competition is not required at the local level but is strongly encouraged. All eligible Veterans should be given the opportunity to participate regardless of degree of talent.

All gold medal winners from the national competition in the creative writing division will be invited to attend the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival.

Note: First-place winning entries at the national level of the competition will be printed in a booklet and will be distributed at the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival in April of 2023.

1. Entries in the creative writing division must have been completed after October 1, 2021.
2. All entries submitted into the Creative Writing Division must be original compositions written solely by the eligible Veteran who is submitting the entry.
3. Entries must be submitted as Word documents in 12-point font. Do not send PDF attachments.
4. Entries must be submitted as text only. Do not send documents with pictures or graphics. Only the text of the entry will be judged.
5. Include the Veteran's name, VA facility, category, and title of the piece at the top of the Word document entry.
6. Judges reserve the right to move an entry to the appropriate category or disqualify the entry if rules are not followed.
7. Collections of poems, essays, stories, etc. submitted as one entry will not be allowed.

Note: VA staff contact persons will be notified via E-mail with the competition results.

Creative Writing Categories

1. **Poetry Rhyming** - A verse composition, **no longer than 48 lines** in length. Poetry humorous entries should be submitted into the Humor category.
2. **Poetry Non-Rhyming** - A composition, **no longer than 48 lines** in length. Poetry humorous entries should be submitted into the Humor category.
3. **Personal Essay** - A non-fiction composition based on something the writer has experienced or felt. Entries in this category **must not exceed 850 words**.
4. **Humor** - All types of works which employ humor as the primary component should be submitted in this category. **Poetry entries should be no longer than 48 lines and prose entries must not exceed 850 words**.
5. **Short, Short Story** - A short story, **no longer than 1,000 words**. The story must have a beginning, middle, and an end.
6. **Short Script** - Part of a script for one or more characters. Scripts should document the movement, scene descriptions, acting style instructions, and dialogue of the characters and should be written in a screenplay format and resemble the blueprint for a play, television show, or film. Short Script entries written in prose format (written language that follows the natural flow of speech, with words and phrases that build full sentences and paragraphs) will not be accepted. Entries in this category **must not exceed 850 words**.
7. **Military Experience Poetry** – Poetry entries related to military experience should be submitted in this category. Entries must be **no longer than 48 lines in length**.
8. **Military Experience (not poetry)** – Entries (not poetry) related to military experience should be submitted in this category. **Entries in this category must not exceed 850 words**.
9. **Special Recognition** - Individual or group. Entries by Veterans who exhibit creative expression through use of creative writing while possessing significant physical or psychological limitations. The intent of this category is to reinforce the concept of the arts as therapy, where individuals use artistic expression to facilitate successful treatment outcomes. **Poetry entries should be no longer than 48 lines and prose entries must not exceed 850 words**.

Entries in this category **MUST** also include:

- **A Word document containing a typed statement/narrative** (25 to 225 words) composed by a VA staff person or the Veteran explaining why the Veteran is deserving of special recognition. **Entries submitted without a write-up will not be judged.**
- Consent form 10-3203 and 10-5345 (included in this handbook) must be signed and dated by the Veteran. The staff contact person submitting the entry for the Veteran should safeguard the signed consent forms at their VA facility.

Sample Creative Writing Judging Criteria

Sample Creative Writing Judging Score Sheet

| | |
|------------------|----------------|
| Category Number: | Category Name: |
| Title of Entry: | |

| CRITERIA | POINTS | | | | | | | | | |
|--|--------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| Creative Content | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| Message Clarity | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| Use of Language | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| Originality of Topic or Idea | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| Overall Strength of Composition | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |

TOTAL SCORE _____

*Note: References to diagnosis and explanations of emotional or personal content related to the entry or Veteran will not be read or communicated to the national judges. The exception to this rule is an entry submitted into a category that require a write-up.

How to Submit Entries to the National Competition

National Competition Entry Submission Process – Arts4Vets App

Entries may be submitted **only by facility staff contact persons** to the national level of the competition using the Arts4Vets App.

Non-VA Staff from other government Veteran medical facilities will not have upload access to the Arts4Vets App and may continue submit entries in other ways. Please reach out to the National Director or division chairpersons to coordinate.

Veterans will not be able to submit their own entries through to the national level of competition or directly into the Arts4Vets App. They must work with the VA facility where they are enrolled and meet the local competition deadline dates.

Creative Writing Division Entry Form

| | |
|---------------------------|--|
| Category Number and Name: | |
| Title of Piece: | |
| Line Count/Word Count: | |

Individual Entry – For entries submitted by one Veteran

| | | |
|--|--|------------------|
| Veteran Name: | | |
| Veteran E-mail: | | |
| Veteran Phone Number: | | |
| Veteran gives permission for the entry to be included in a booklet if the entry wins first place at the national level of the competition: | | Veteran Initials |

Group Entry – For an entry submitted by a group of Veterans into the Special Recognition category

| | | |
|--|--|---|
| Group Name: | | |
| Number of Veterans in Group: | | |
| Veterans give permission for the entry to be included in a booklet if the entry wins first place at the national level of the competition: | | Staff confirms the Veterans provided approval |

Group Members:

| First Name | Last Name | Email | Phone Number |
|------------|-----------|-------|--------------|
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |

File Name: Files uploaded to the new Arts4Vets App will automatically be renamed to coordinate with the entry data. For local competition purposes, it is suggested to name the files in a way that works best for the local staff contact person(s). Suggestion: Division-Cat.#-Title of piece-vet initials

Veterans: By submitting entries into the competition, you are confirming the following statements:

- I/we confirm this piece was completed entirely by me/us after October 1, 2021. I/we have read all the rules for the division in which I/we am/are entering.
- If this entry wins first place at the national level of the competition, I/we give permission for this writing piece to be printed in a compilation booklet and distributed at the at the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival in April of 2023.

VA Staff Checklist, be sure that each Veteran:

- Meets the competition eligibility criteria
- Is approved to enter the NVCA Competition as a representative of this VA facility
- Has signed the necessary consent forms (10-3203 and if necessary, 10-5345)

EACH VETERAN MUST SIGN FORM 10-3203 TO COMPETE IN THE LOCAL AND NATIONAL LEVEL CREATIVE ARTS COMPETITIONS. The signed form should not be submitted to the Arts4Vets App for national competition judging. The signed form must be safeguarded at the Veteran's VA facility.



Department of Veterans Affairs

CONSENT FOR PRODUCTION AND USE OF VERBAL OR WRITTEN STATEMENTS, PHOTOGRAPHS, DIGITAL IMAGES, AND/OR VIDEO OR AUDIO RECORDINGS BY VA

NAME OF INDIVIDUAL WHOSE STATEMENT, LIKENESS, OR VOICE IS REQUESTED

NOTE: The execution of this form does not authorize production or use of materials except as specified below. The specified material may be produced and used by VA for authorized purposes identified below, such as education of VA personnel, research activities, or promotional efforts. It may also be disclosed outside VA as permitted by law and as noted below. If the material is part of a VA system of records, it may be disclosed outside VA as stated in the "Routine Uses" in the "VA Privacy Act Systems of Records" published in the Federal Register.

The purpose of this form is to document your consent to the Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) request to obtain, produce, and/or use a verbal or written statement or a photograph, digital image, and/or video or audio recording containing your likeness or voice. By signing this form, you are authorizing the production or use only as specified below.

You are NOT REQUIRED TO CONSENT TO VA's REQUEST to obtain, produce, and/or use your statement, likeness, or voice. Your decision to consent or refuse will not affect your access to any present or future VA benefits for which you are eligible.

You may rescind your consent at any time prior to or during production of a photograph, digital image, or video or audio recording, or before or during your provision of a verbal or written statement. You may rescind your consent after production is complete if the burden on VA of complying with that request is not unreasonable considering the financial and administrative costs, the ease of compliance that number of parties involved, and **the Veteran's VA facility and the Dept. of VA Office of National Veterans Sports Programs & Special Events.**

The photograph, digital image, and/or video or audio recording will be produced while I am (describe the activity or situation) ***(To Be Completed by the Department of Veteran Affairs, if applicable)***

A participant in an adaptive sport or creative arts therapy program sponsored by the Veteran's VA facility and the Office of National Veterans Sports Programs and Special Events (NVSP&SE) and the American Legion Auxiliary.

Check at least one of the following (to be completed by VA)

I hereby voluntarily and without compensation authorize Department of Veterans Affairs NVSP&SE and/or the Veteran's VA facility to produce a photograph, digital image, and/or video or audio recording of me (or of the above named individual if the individual is legally unable to give consent).

I hereby voluntarily and without compensation authorize Department of Veterans Affairs NVSP&SE and/or the Veteran's VA facility to obtain or use a verbal or written statement from me (or the of the above named individual if the individual is legally unable to give consent).

I consent to allowing VA to record and use a verbal or written statement, or produce and use photographs, digital images, and video or audio recording for the purpose(s) identified below:

This product will be used: (NOTE: At least one of these boxes must be checked as well as a purpose described below) (to be completed by VA)

Internally (stay within VA) Externally (shared outside VA)

Please check the applicable purpose(s) (to be completed by VA)

Promotional Efforts:

Internal Publication (only VA) External publication (publicly available)

Other (Specify): Newspapers, radio stations, television stations, participant profiles, souvenir program booklet and DVD, and other media outlets. In addition, VA may release this information to sponsor organizations of the National Veterans Sports Programs and Special Events in the form of other media products to promote the positive aspects of creative arts therapy.

Research Activities: Study

Education Purposes:

Presentation Conference Publication in a Journal Training

Other (Specify):

VA ONLY Use:

Performance Improvement Quality Improvement Health Care Operations

Other (Specify):

All of the Above

NOTE: Do not sign this form unless one or more of the boxes above has been checked.

I have read and understand the foregoing, and I consent to the use of a verbal or written statement from me, and/or of my likeness and/or voice as specified for the above-described purpose(s). I understand that no royalty, fee, or other compensation of any kind will be made to me by the United States for such use. I understand that consent to obtain, produce, and/or use a verbal or written statement, photograph, digital image, and video or audio recording containing my likeness or voice is voluntary, and my refusal will not adversely affect my access to any present or future VA benefits for which I am eligible. I further understand that I may, at any time, rescind my consent prior to or during production of a photograph, digital image, or video or audio recording. I also understand that I may rescind my consent after production is complete if the burden on VA of complying with that request is not unreasonable considering the financial and administrative costs, the ease of compliance, and the number of parties involved.

| | | |
|--|------------------------------|-------------|
| Print Veteran Full Name (First and Last Name) | Veteran Signature | Date |
| <i>Permission Obtained By (TO BE COMPLETED BY VA)</i> Print VA Employee Full Name | Title | Date |
| <i>Signature of Person Obtaining Consent (TO BE COMPLETED BY VA)</i> Print VA Employee Full Name | VA Employee Signature | Date |

IMPORTANT: If VA is providing or releasing any patient health or demographic information with the verbal or written statement, photograph, digital image, or video or audio recording, VA Form 10-5345, Request for and Authorization to Release Medical Records or Health Information, is required prior to the release of such data to any source outside VA.