WOW! QUARTERLY CREATIVE NONFICTION ESSAY CONTEST

Prizes

1st Place: $500.00
+ Published on WOW! Women On Writing, One item from CreateWriteNow's Store, Interview on The Muffin.

2nd Place: $300.00
+ Published on WOW! Women On Writing, One item from CreateWriteNow's Store, Interview on The Muffin.

3rd Place: $200.00
+ Published on WOW! Women On Writing, One item from CreateWriteNow's Store, Interview on The Muffin.

7 Runners Up:
+ $25 Amazon Gift Certificate, Published on WOW! Women On Writing, One item from CreateWriteNow's Store, Interview on The Muffin.
10 Honorable Mentions:
+ Name and title of essay published on WOW!, One item from CreateWriteNow's Store.

*All prizes are sent electronically.*
Cash is sent via PayPal and Amazon Gift Cards are sent via email.

---

OPEN SUBJECT

You are welcome to write about any topic, subject, or theme that you want to explore. Just make sure it’s nonfiction (true), and not fiction. The style is up to you. From personal essay, memoir, lyric, hybrid, and more—we welcome you to get creative!

WORD COUNT

Minimum: 200    Maximum: 1000
The title is not to be counted in your word count. We use MS Word to determine the submitted entry’s word count.
CONTEST DEADLINES

We have rolling deadlines:

Q1: August 1 – October 31st, 11:59 PM (Pacific Time)
Q2: November 1 – January 31st, 11:59 PM (Pacific Time)
Q3: February 1 – April 30th, 11:59 PM (Pacific Time)
Q4: May 1 – July 31st, 11:59 PM (Pacific Time)

You can sprint like Cinderella at midnight, but you run the risk of having your essay become mouse food. In other words, you worked hard on the essay. Safeguard it! Act like the deadline is a day or so *before the deadline*.

LIMITED ENTRIES

To increase your odds at winning but still enable healthy competition, we’ve limited the number of entries to **300 essays** for the season. Please enter early to ensure your spot in the competition. If we reach 300 entries, we will disable the PayPal button on the contest page. If the button is still active, it means we haven’t reached 300 essays yet. Please visit our contest page [http://www.wow-womenonwriting.com/contest.php](http://www.wow-womenonwriting.com/contest.php) to **ensure that the button is active before you send us an e-mail** asking us if we’ve reached the limit.

ENTRY FEE: $12.00

The entry fee is not a reading fee. All fees are used solely and purely for award money, prizes, promotion, and administrative costs. To enter this contest, you must pay an entry fee.

To pay by credit card, debit card, or PayPal balance, go to: [http://www.wow-womenonwriting.com/contest.php](http://www.wow-womenonwriting.com/contest.php). Click on the "Buy Now" button. It will take you to PayPal. From there you have two options:

1. Pay with PayPal (If you have an account, choose this option).
2. If you don’t have a PayPal account, click the link that says “Pay with Debit or Credit Card” and follow the instructions by selecting the appropriate tab.

E-MAIL SUBJECT LINE

Type **(Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4 – whichever quarter you are entering) Essay Contest Submission (Year – replace "Year" with the year the contest ends)** in your subject line when you e-mail your submission. If you were entering this contest, February 1 - April 30, 2020, you’d type **Q3 Essay Contest Submission 2020** in your email subject line.
Please do this to ensure that we do not miss the essay that you will have worked so hard on. **If you have purchased a critique**, please type (Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4 – whichever quarter you are entering) Essay Contest Submission (Year – replace “Year” with the year the contest ends) with Critique in your subject line. For instance, if you were entering our this contest, you’d type Q3 Essay Contest Submission 2020 with Critique in your email subject line. Without the word “critique” in your subject line, our contest manager won’t identify your entry as a critique. So if you purchase a critique, please make sure you mention it in your subject line.

**Submission Confirmation**

Our Auto Responder will thank you for submitting. It is not a clock-watcher or calendar reader. If your submission is LATE, we humans will note that fact and your essay will be disqualified; but our non-prejudicial Auto Responder will simply say thank you. **NOTE:** If you have a Hotmail/MSN/Outlook/Live account, you will not receive an auto-response because Microsoft is blocking all auto-responses from our server.

**Disqualifiers**

1. Turning in your submission LATE! That means we would have received it AFTER 11:59 PM on the deadline date. If you read articles concerning your chances of winning a writing contest, they will always remind you to get entries in early rather than late. Please take the advice, including ours, because we have no desire to disqualify anyone’s entry.

2. We will reject any submission that MS Word counts under 200 words or above 1000 words. THIS DOES NOT COUNT THE TITLE OF YOUR ESSAY OR YOUR PERSONAL CONTACT INFORMATION AT THE END OF YOUR ESSAY.

3. You didn’t pay for your contest entry.

4. You sent your essay to the wrong email or you didn’t send your essay in. Please note, the only email to send you essay to is essaycontest@wow-womenonwriting.com.

**MUST READ:**

**The 14 WOW! Guidelines**

1. Your essay must be nonfiction.

2. Your submission must be Minimum: 200 words; Maximum: 1000 words. This does not count your title or personal contact information that you add at the END OF YOUR ESSAY.

3. You must pay $12.00 for the entry before making your submission.
4. You must type (Q1, Q2, Q3, or Q4) Essay Contest Submission (Year) in the subject line of your e-mail. If you purchased a critique, you must type (Q1, Q2, Q3, or Q4) Essay Contest Submission (Year) With Critique in the subject line of your e-mail.

5. The Contest Deadline is at 11:59 PM on one of the quarterly deadlines, Pacific Standard Time.

6. Whet our appetite with a title. It will be the only thing typed above your essay in the body of your e-mail. No title means a lower technical score for not following the guidelines.

7. At the END of your essay, please type on the left hand side the following information:
   a. Your name.
   b. Your e-mail address; you may submit more than one to be on the safe side.
   c. Your city/state or country.
   d. Telephone number where we will most likely be able to reach you. Just in case you win and we can’t reach you via e-mail.
   e. Word count—this does not include your title, name or your personal contact information. We use MS Word to verify the word count of your essay.
   f. Your unique PayPal Transaction ID or receipt number, which is your confirmation number for payment.

8. WE DO NOT ACCEPT ATTACHMENTS—EXCEPT FOR THOSE THAT PURCHASE A CRITIQUE (See below in the Critique Section). Our Auto responder is polite and may thank you for your e-mail. But, we still WILL NOT ACCEPT ATTACHMENTS.

9. Use Verdana 12 pt type or Plain text. If your e-mail provider doesn’t have the option of Verdana or plain text, you can use Times New Roman or Courier New. Just make sure the text is black (no fancy colors please) and readable.

10. No html e-mails accepted, except for the aforementioned font. No tables, pictures, etc.

11. The best way to submit your essay is to copy-paste from a plain text document. If you purchased a critique, you may attach your essay to the email in a Microsoft Word document.

12. We accept only one submission per title. We accept only one submission per e-mail. Rewrites are not accepted—meaning, once you’ve sent your essay in, please don’t revise the same essay and send it in again under the same payment. Again, our auto responder graciously thanks you and we, on the other hand, disqualify repeats under the same payment. If you revised your essay during the time of the contest and would like to submit the new edited and updated version, you must go through the entry process again and submit another payment. Why? Because your essay has most likely already been submitted to judges. Remember, we only allow a limited number of stories to be entered in the contest, so each essay must be submitted with its own payment.
13. E-mail your submission to: essaycontest@wow-womenonwriting.com, no later than 11:59 PM, Pacific Standard Time on the deadline date.

14. The act of entering this contest constitutes an agreement between you and WOW, that you agree to EVERY ONE OF THE 14 GUIDELINES.
   a. In case of disqualification, remember the only serious mistakes are the ones from which we don’t learn.
   b. In reality, we rarely disqualify anyone. These guidelines are in place to make sure entries as uniform as possible.

~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~

WOW! Women On Writing Contest: Critiques!

If you purchased the “Contest Entry with Critique” option, you will receive personal editorial feedback from one of our round table judges who is also a professional editor. Upon the close of our contest, and after winners are announced (typically one to two months after the contest closes), you will receive a critique of your contest essay on three categories:

☞ Subject
☞ Content
☞ Technical

You will be provided with your scores (1-5) in each category, and personal editorial feedback as well. There is also a fourth category that does not get scored. “Overview” is where the reader shares her personal thoughts or comments about your essay. Please be patient upon the close of our contest and allow time for our editors to thoroughly critique your piece. **You will not receive your critique until AFTER the contest winners are announced—which is typically two months after the contest closes.** (Note: If critiques are finished early, we send them as soon as we possibly can.)

To purchase a critique with your entry, please visit our contest page: [http://www.wow-womenonwriting.com/contest.php](http://www.wow-womenonwriting.com/contest.php) and choose the button that says, “Buy Entry w/Critique.” **Please note: this option must be purchased at the time of entry.** This allows us to verify which piece you are receiving a critique for. Please choose your option carefully. We do not issue refunds.

**You must put (Q1, Q2, Q3, or Q4) Essay Contest Submission (Year) with Critique in your subject line when submitting your entry.** This will help us verify that your particular entry is the one you’ve chosen for critiquing. Please remember this step. Without putting the above subject line in your e-mail, our contest manager won’t know that you purchased a critique and you will not receive one.
We WILL accept Microsoft Word documents (.doc or .docx) as attachments for stories that are receiving a critique. (No PDFs please…we can’t write editorial comments on those.) If you purchased a critique and are worried about the formatting of your essay, you may submit your essay as a Microsoft Word (.doc or .docx) attachment. Follow the same guidelines as you would with a regular submission—including your title at the top, and include your contact information at the bottom along with your PayPal receipt—and attach it to your e-mail when submitting. Send to essaycontest@wow-womenonwriting.com.

~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Why should I enter the contest?
Contests provide writers with challenges, including a deadline, word count limitation, and editing practice. Writing an entry for a contest means more practice with writing, proofing, and editing.

What should I write about?
You can write on any topic that you choose, just make sure it’s nonfiction and within the word count.

To whom should I target my writing? Who is my audience of readers?
Gear your writing toward women readers.

How long should my entry be?
Enteries must be a minimum of 200 words to a maximum of 1000 words. The word count does NOT include your title.

Who is eligible for the contest?
Any person on the planet who can submit their entry in English, via our online means, is eligible to enter.

How do I get my essay published?
If an entrant wins 1st, 2nd, or 3rd Place, or places as one of the 7 Runners Up, then her essay will be published on WOW! 10 Honorable Mentions will only have the title of their essay, their name, and city/state published on WOW!

What are the quarterly periods and deadlines?
Q1: August 1 – October 31st, 11:59 PM (Pacific Time)
Q2: November 1 – January 31st, 11:59 PM (Pacific Time)
How long must I wait before I hear the results?
We officially notify contestants no longer than two months after the close of the contest, depending on the expediency of our guest judges. At that time, if you were chosen in the top 10, your entry will be published in the next newsletter of WOW! We aim to have all the prizes to the contestants within a week after the contest winners are announced. You can check the status under the "Previous Winners" section on the Contest Page. We post significant updates there like judging announcements and a finalists list.

Can I submit a piece I wrote for another publication that’s posted online?
Yes, you can submit a piece you wrote for another publication as long as you own the copyrights to the essay. Please make sure you do NOT have to give credit to another publication should your winning entry be published on WOW!

Can I submit a piece I self-published and is available for sale?
Yes, you can submit an essay you’ve self-published.

Can I submit a essay I previously submitted to a WOW! contest?
Yes, you may, but only if your essay didn’t get published on WOW in a previous contest—meaning, your essay didn’t win 1st, 2nd, or 3rd Place, or place as one of the 7 Runners Up. If your essay won an Honorable Mention, which means it wasn’t published on WOW (only the title and author’s name) then YES, it is okay to submit the same essay in the current contest.

We’ve had contestants who didn’t place in one contest, place in another. Just make sure you go back and review your essay to make sure it is free of typos, spelling mistakes, and construction errors. Identify any problem areas to rewrite. Some contestants who’ve purchased a critique take the suggestions of the editor who critiqued their essay and rework it for the next contest.

Do you allow simultaneous submissions? Submitting to other contests at the same time?
Yes, it’s fine with us, but please check with the other contest or market to make sure they also allow for simultaneous submissions. If you end up placing in our contest and placing in another contest, it’s fine with us—just make sure it’s fine with them!

What is the entry fee?
$12.00 per entry, per e-mail.

What is the critique fee?
An additional $13.00 for a critique, per entry, per e-mail. $25 total.
How do I pay for my entry?
Go to the contest page: [http://www.wow-womenonwriting.com/contest.php](http://www.wow-womenonwriting.com/contest.php). Click on the "Buy Now" button. It will take you to PayPal. From there you have two options: 1. Pay with PayPal (If you have an account, choose this option); 2. If you don’t have a PayPal account, pay by credit or debit card (If you'd rather not create a PayPal account, you can pay by credit card with that option).

What if I don’t have a credit card, debit card, checking account with e-check capabilities, or a PayPal account? Can I send you a check or money order?
No, I’m sorry, but we no longer allow for paper checks or money orders. We used to allow for the option, but only one or two people used it a year, so we had to discontinue the service.

Can I enter more than once?
Yes, but please submit each entry in a new e-mail with a new PayPal Transaction ID or Receipt number at the bottom, to facilitate tracking and organization. You can enter as many times as you like as long as you follow the guidelines.

Is it possible for someone to win more than once for different pieces in the same contest?
Yes, we’ve had writers place twice in the same contest. We judge by the essay and remove all contact information before sending stories to the guest judges of the season; so the guest judges may think two (or more) essays are worthy of placing, no matter if they’re written by the same author.

I live outside the United States, can I enter?
We welcome entries from all over the world. But contest entries must be submitted in English and via our online means.

Can you explain the judging process and who judges?
We have a roundtable of 5-7 judges who blindly score submissions based on: Subject, Content, and Technical. If an entrant scores well in the first round, she goes to the second round of judging which averages out scores to narrow down the top 20 entries. Afterward, it’s up to our final judges to choose the 10 Honorable Mentions and the Top 10. From the Top 10, they rank the 7 Runners Up, and then the Third, Second, and First Place Winners.

What do you mean by “blind judging”?
Blind judging means we remove all your contact info (name, e-mail address, address, city, state, phone number, etc.) before we send your entry to our judges. This is to ensure fairness; so that all essays are judged equally. The only thing we might include is the
country where the writer is from. This is so our judges will overlook spelling differences (e.g. color/colour).

**How should I submit my entry?**
Please submit your entry with “(Q1, Q2, Q3 or Q4) Essay Contest Submission (Year)” or “(Q1, Q2, Q3 or Q4) Essay Contest Submission (Year) With Critique” (if you purchased a critique) in the email Subject heading, your essay in the body of your e-mail, and your PayPal Transaction ID or PayPal receipt number at the bottom, below your name, address, and contact information.

Submit to: essaycontest@wow-womenonwriting.com after reading our guidelines.

**I entered, but I didn’t receive an auto-response: help!**
Please check your e-mail and make sure you sent it to the correct e-mail address. The **only e-mail address for contest entries is essaycontest@wow-womenonwriting.com**. It’s also the only e-mail address that you’ll receive an auto-response from. The most common mistake we see is contestants sending their stories to our PayPal e-mail address. Please make sure you send it to the e-mail address above only. If you are sure you sent your entry to the e-mail address above and didn’t receive an auto-response, you are welcome to send us an e-mail to verify your submission, but please check your bulk mail folder to make sure it didn’t end up there. Also, if you enter more than once in a row, you probably won’t receive an auto-response for each submission. **Our auto-responder is set up to only reply once to the same e-mail within a day.** This protects our server against the multitude of spam sent to our contest e-mail address. When in question, feel free to contact us: contestinfo@wow-womenonwriting.com. Please put “contest question” in the subject line.

**If I win the contest, can I go ahead and enter the next one?**
Yes. Previously, we didn’t allow contestants to enter if they’d placed 1st, 2nd, or 3rd, but now we are opening up each contest to allow previous winners to enter again. Make sure you submit a new essay.

**What about rights?**
You retain all copyrights to your essay. If your entry wins, we request the right to publish it on the website and archive it. It may be republished. You retain all copyrights, so you may republish it elsewhere.

**Can I send my entry to another contest?**
That depends. Be sure to check their guidelines. It’s fine with us, but many contests want only original entries.
**Is there a particular format I should use to submit my entry?**
Please avoid fancy and odd-sized fonts. In the body of your e-mail, use a standard-size font, like Verdana, Times New Roman, Courier, or plain text. Please don’t indent paragraphs and don’t double space after periods, either. Single space your entry beneath your title. Please note: we recommend copy-pasting from a plain text document. This is the best way to ensure that we don’t receive odd characters that occur from copy-pasting from Microsoft Word. (*Note: if you purchased a critique, you may submit your essay as a Microsoft Word attachment.*)

**Here is an example of what your entry should look like:**

E-mail Subject Line: “(Q1, Q2, Q3 or Q4) Essay Contest Submission (Year)” or “(Q1, Q2, Q3 or Q4) Essay Contest Submission (Year) With Critique”

Title of your essay

Essay goes here. Remember, no indents please, and no double-spacing after periods. Use single spacing only with margins flush left. Please do not center your text or title. This is called “block formatting.”

This is a paragraph. Notice the distance between this paragraph and the one above. We are using “single” or “1.0” under line spacing options. Type your essay into the body of an e-mail or copy-paste from a plain text document for the best outcome. If you want to use em dashes, please use your hyphen key like this--it will help eliminate odd characters. You can also use asterisks to indicate scene changes. These do not count in the overall word count. Please make sure they are flush left (as below), not centered.

***

At the end of your essay, remember to include all the information listed in our 14 guidelines. Hit the return key a couple of times and then enter your information below your essay:

Your Name
Your Pen Name (if applicable)
E-mail address(es)
Your city/state or country (what you'd like published if you win - it doesn't have to be where you really live)
Telephone number(s) with area code
Word count
PayPal transaction ID# or Receipt#
Can I use a pen name/pseudonym?
Yes, you may. Please make sure you include both your real name and your pseudonym. We will only publish your pseudonym if you win.

Does the entry have to be a complete essay, or can it be a partial/chapter of a larger work like a memoir?
If your piece is part of a larger work just make sure it can stand on its own.

Help! When I paid for the contest I entered a title on the payment form, but now I want to change my essay’s title. Do I have to pay again?
No, you don’t have to pay again. We have a text box underneath the PayPal button that allows writers to enter their title—this is to help us match essays with payments. You can change the title of your essay from the time you pay to the time you e-mail your essay as long as you have included your PayPal transaction # underneath your essay. That will be enough for us to match up the payment with the essay. (Plus your name and other information helps, too.) Make sure you include a note at the top of your essay that says you changed your title.

I accidentally forgot to enter the Title of my essay on the PayPal payment form! Do I have to pay again?
No, you don’t have to pay again. Same thing as above. The title just helps us match up your payment to your essay. If you forget to include your title in your PayPal form, that’s okay. Just make sure you include a title above your essay and your PayPal transaction id or receipt number underneath your essay.

Can I receive feedback on my entry?
We get this question a lot, so we offer an additional critique option when purchasing your entry. Please read above where it says, “WOW! Women On Writing Contest: Critiques!” To receive a critique, you must purchase it at the time of entry.

Do you notify me if I don’t win?
No. Unfortunately, we can’t personally respond to contestants that did not place, but you can see the results online on the contest winners’ page. There will be a link on our contest page under “Previous Winners & Updates” to the winners’ page as soon as it publishes. You can also sign up for our email newsletter to keep up with the latest updates on the contest or follow us on Facebook and/or Twitter @womenonwriting. We post updates as soon as we find out. We will also send the contest results directly to all those who entered the contest as long as they have not opted out of our email service provider at Constant Contact.

How many people enter the contest?
We’ve limited the number of entries to 300. If we receive 300 entries, we will close the contest early.
Help! I paid for an entry and I saw a note on the contest page that says the contest is closed (before the deadline). What do I do?
That just means we reached 300 entries. We disable the payment buttons and put up a notice to prevent any more people from purchasing entries. If you purchased an entry before the notice went up, you still have until the contest’s deadline to submit your essay.

I purchased an entry but never submitted my essay. Can I get a refund?
I’m sorry, but no. Please make sure you have a essay ready, or near ready, at the time of purchase. We do not issue refunds because PayPal charges us fees to do so. Remember, we only allow for 300 entries, so make sure you can submit a essay before the deadline.

What if I have another question that doesn’t appear here?
If you have a different question, not answered in here or by the Terms and Conditions, feel free to e-mail us at contestinfo@wow-womenonwriting.com. Please put “Contest Question” in the subject line.

Submit to: essaycontest@wow-womenonwriting.com after reading our guidelines.

LET’S HAVE FUN THE WRITE WAY!
ENJOY WRITING AS MUCH AS WE WILL ENJOY READING!
THANKS FOR VISITING WOW! AND ENTERING (Y)OUR CONTEST.

Useful Links:

Make sure you sign up for our e-mail newsletter to receive the latest news and contest updates from WOW! Women On Writing. The sign up box can be easily spotted on any page of the site, upper right hand corner gray box. We also post interviews with contest winners on our blog, The Muffin, every Tuesday. Read the interviews to get tips from previous winners!

The Muffin: http://muffin.wow-womenonwriting.com/

WOW! Women On Writing: www.wow-womenonwriting.com
Workshops & Classes: http://www.wow-womenonwriting.com/WOWclasses.html
Twitter for WOW!: http://twitter.com/womenonwriting
Twitter for Books: http://twitter.com/WOWBlogTour
Pinterest: https://www.pinterest.com/womenonwriting/
Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/wow_womenonwriting/
Facebook: http://www.facebook.com/pages/WOW-Women-On-Writing/135164411877

CREATIVE NONFICTION ESSAY Contest

We look forward to reading your work!