

2022 Literary Review FAQ

This document is [printable](#)

1. **Only current members of CWC may submit to the *Literary Review*?**
 - Not currently a member? To join please go to <https://calwriters.org/membership/> and apply to join. You may submit and if your membership completes before the close of submissions your piece will be considered.
2. **What does it cost to submit to the *Literary Review*?**
 - The fee is \$10 per person, which covers one submission.
 - No money will be refunded
3. **What is one submission?**
 - With no exceptions one submission consists of (choose one):
 - One prose piece of no more than 2,500 words (not including title) **OR**
 - Two poems of no more than 50 lines each (not including titles.)
 - No previously published pieces will be accepted, with the exceptions of being published in a branch newsletter or on a blog post and nowhere else.
4. **What are the submission categories and lengths excluding titles?**
 - **Prose:** Fiction, non-fiction, memoir, essay, humor: 2,500 words maximum
 - **Poetry:** 50 lines per poem maximum

Please Note: The word "**LITERARY**" in the title of our publication refers to the quality of the writing, not genre.

5. **How are the categories of prose defined?**

Following are high-level definitions only. If you are in any doubt about your category, please do some research, read all the material in #5, and refer to the Prose Evaluation Criteria sheet below. (Many thanks to the Tri-Valley Writers Branch for sharing their evaluation criteria sheet for prose.) Submitters are encouraged to **research and explore** books and websites that discuss elements for the categories.

In general evaluators look for:

- A compelling story, event, or narration with a beginning, middle, and an end that stirs an emotional response.
- Tight writing, using action verbs, vivid nouns, limited use of adverbs, and free from wordiness
- Good flow and smooth transitions between scenes
- Dialog, if used, that shows the character(s) and is laid out correctly. Grammar rules do not apply in dialog spoken by a character; appropriate punctuation does.
- Well delineated characters, setting, and tension.
- Writing demonstrating good command of standard English grammar and punctuation and free from clichés, repetition, and trite descriptions
- For essays: Clear statement of topic or intent with obvious, explicit, or implied main idea or thesis; a conclusion or revelation that follows from the material presented
- For memoir: Information or personal experience that supports the topic in a logical fashion; emotional response from the author
- Authors are encouraged to read their work aloud to themselves to find problems.
- Share your work with another skilled author or critique group and solicit written feedback.
- Solicit a copy edit, and polish your work before submission.

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- Grammar and punctuation matter. “Let’s eat Grandma” is very different in meaning to “Let’s eat, Grandma.”

Categories

- **Fiction:** Short stories or book excerpts that stand alone.
- **Nonfiction:** Prose writing based on facts, real events, and real people,
- **Memoir:** A first-person account of an event in the author’s life. The author’s experience and response are the central focus.
- **Essay:** Clearly states an opinion on a topic, issue, or situation. Types include:
 - Informative or expository essay seeks to educate the reader. It can compare, contrast, analyze information, or explain how to do something.
 - Personal essay; uses the author’s experience to illustrate a point or come to a conclusion. It can be about a present situation, but the issue, not the author, is the central focus.
 - A narrative essay is a third-person account of an incident or the telling of someone else’s experience.
- **Humor:** See <https://www.storyinliteraryfiction.com/essays-on-writing/how-humor-works-in-literary-fiction/> for a good article. And research others as needed.

6. What are evaluators looking for?

- **Evaluators** are looking for the common elements of good writing in scene, character, story, word selection, grammar, punctuation, style, and flow. Also refer to the Prose Evaluation Criteria and Poetry Evaluation Criteria sheets below. (Many thanks to the Tri-Valley Writers Branch for sharing their evaluation criteria.)

POETRY

- **Poetic Technique**
 - At least one poetic technique evident—e.g., form, simile, metaphor, assonance, alliteration, strong verbs or ending words, turn or pause.
 - Rhythm, meter, sound, and rhyme, if used, are more natural than contrived.
- **Word Choice and Language Skills**
 - Original use of concrete words that express passion, emotion, and poetic image.
 - Proficiency in language compression.
 - Clarity of meaning within two readings.
- **Grammar and Meaning**
 - Syntax—word forms, order, and structure—contributes to understanding.
 - Punctuation and capitalization, if used, are consistent and contribute to clarity.
- **Overall Impression**
 - Aesthetically pleasing, flows; strives toward universality.
 - Impact and power, compelling ending.
 - Clear speaker’s voice and point of view.

7. **Format requirements** reduce the corrections the volunteer who does the layout would have to make to 30-40 submissions selected for publication.

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- Word document (.doc or .docx), 8 ½ x 11 letter-size page, one-inch margins
- Times New Roman 12 point font, double line space (except for poetry)
- Center the title on the first page with category and word or line count beneath
- Do not include author's name anywhere in the document
- Pages numbered bottom center in footer
- Indent **all** paragraphs using Microsoft: Home, Paragraph, Indentation, Special, First Line, By .5
- One space after each period.
- Do not right justify
- Do not set Word to hyphenate at the end of a line

8. **When will I know the status of my submission? Will I receive feedback on my submission?**

- All submitters will be notified by email of the final status of their submissions before the *Literary Review* is released.
- All submissions will receive feedback unless you opt out when submitting.

NOTE:

Submitting your writing does not guarantee publication in the *Literary Review*.

9. **Who will read and evaluate submissions?**

- At least 3 experienced evaluators will read each submission without knowing the author or the branch. We try to not send to the branch a piece came from
- All evaluators are given guidelines so they have a common understanding of the requirements for selection. These guidelines are part of this document below.
- Submissions will be judged based on the guidelines for the category the author selects and adherence to the submission guidelines.

10. **How many submissions are selected for publication?**

- The *Literary Review* is a print and online publication.
- The number of pieces selected depends on quality, length, and production limitations.

REMEMBER:

The *Literary Review* seeks the best writing from CWC members, regardless of category.

11. **Uh-oh. What if my piece needs editing after I submit it?**

- No changes are allowed once a piece is submitted, and no monies are refunded.

12. **What content is the *Literary Review* unable to publish?**

- Per CWC Policies and Procedures, the *Literary Review* cannot publish:
 - Religious, political, or any other kind of proselytizing; libelous material; material that infringes on another's copyright; material that is misogynistic, racist, or bigoted, or material that contains gratuitous vulgarity or obscenity.
 - Additionally, in this era of sensitivity, the judges and managing editors may request that certain potentially offensive words be amended.

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13. How do I submit to the Literary Review?

- **Step 1:** FIRST carefully read all the available helpful hints in this document, and see the poetry/prose evaluation criteria the judges will use shown at the end of this doc.
- **Step 2:** Online Form
 - the Literary Review Submission Form (see link at the end of this doc)
 - (a) The form creates a line in a Google doc (like a spreadsheet) with information the managers need*
 - (b) The Submissions Manager will assign an identifying number for each piece. This number is used to track the piece so that submitters' names are not exposed to the poetry or prose managers or judges.*
- **Step 3:** After completing and submitting the online Submission Form(s), email your piece(s) separately to: SubmitLitReview@calwriters.org Each poem submitted requires a separate submission form.
- **Step 4:** Send Your Payment via
 - PayPal **OR**
 - Check, to:
 - Literary Review
 - PO Box 11212
 - Pleasanton, CA 94588

Your submission(s) will not be sent to judges until payment is received. You must ensure your payment is post marked by January 31, 2022, preferably earlier. This year you may not be reminded to send your check.

14. Remember that you retain the rights to your work.

PROSE EVALUATION CRITERIA

Fiction: ___ Historical Fiction ___ Mystery/Suspense ___ Romance ___ Sci-Fi ___ Fantasy ___ Young Adult ___ Western ___ Humor
Nonfiction: ___ Memoir ___ Essay
Committee Reviewer:
Overall Impression:
___ Compelling and interesting
___ Evokes emotion in reader
___ Has a sense of tension and/or conflict and resolution
Structure and Technical
___ Consistent POV and verb tense
___ Pacing (speed and rhythm) is appropriate for type of writing
___ Good balance of show vs. tell for type of writing
___ Clarity of speaker or proper use of related tags in dialogue
___ Proper spelling, punctuation and grammar (<i>Chicago Manual of Style</i>)
___ Sentence fluency/variety and appropriate word choice
Characters
___ Well drawn, multi-dimensional characters
___ Character's steps to achieving goal are clear
___ Reader connects and/or cares about the main character
Setting
___ Setting is consistent with storyline and characterizations
___ Multiple senses used in description
___ Character interacts with environment
Additional Comments:
Overall Evaluation:

Key:

Scoring: (use for each line item above) 5 = Excellent; 4 = Good; 3 = Adequate; 2 = Fair; 1 = Poor

Overall Evaluation: Excellent (Publishable as is); Good (Needs minor work, close to publishable); Adequate (Need to address problem areas); Fair (Shows promise, but needs major revision). **Note:** all submissions subject to minor grammar/punctuation by final copy editor.

POETRY EVALUATION CRITERIA

Title:
Type: ___ Rhyming Poetry ___ Free Verse ___ Haiku/Senryu ___ Others
Committee Reviewer:
Overall Impression/Quality of Writing:
___ Compelling and interesting
___ Evokes emotion in reader
___ Is there “meaning” to the writing, and is that conveyed well?
Development
___ Is the reader likely to feel and/or visualize the images presented?
___ Are the rhyme and/or rhythm natural and sensible, or artificial and forced?
___ Does the poem lead naturally to its conclusion?
Mechanics
___ Are the line endings/line breaks used effectively to create emphasis?
___ Does the word choice enable the poem to reach its intent?
___ Does the layout enhance and strengthen the writing?
___ Are spelling and grammar consistent without interrupting the flow of the poem’s language?
___ Does the poet respect language conventions and / or provide punctuation to aid the reader in understanding of the writing?
Additional Comments:
Overall Evaluation:

Key:

Scoring: (use for each line item above) 5 = Excellent; 4 = Good; 3 = Adequate; 2 = Fair; 1 = Poor

Overall Evaluation: Excellent (Publishable as is); Good (Needs minor work, close to publishable); Adequate (Need to address problem areas); Fair (Shows promise, but needs major revision). **Note:** all submissions subject to minor grammar/punctuation by final copy editor.