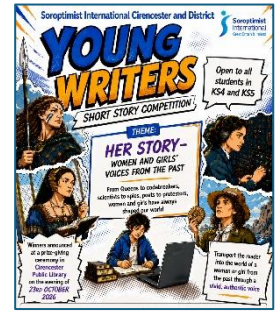


Soroptimist Young Writers Short Story Competition Help Sheet

Thank you for your interest in the **Soroptimist International Cirencester and District Young Writers Short Story Competition: 'Her Story – Women and Girls' Voices from the Past**. We are delighted that you are considering submitting an original short story, written entirely by you. We hope you enjoy the creative journey of bringing a woman's or girl's voice from history to life and we wish you every success with your entry.

The questions and answers below explain the competition requirements and provide guidance to help you prepare and submit your short story.



Questions

Answers

Who is involved in this competition?

The competition is organised by Soroptimist International Cirencester and District, with support from Her Majesty The Queen, who called it “a brilliant initiative”. The Cirencester History Festival is a collaborator, and we have the backing of local libraries, the Corinium Museum, school/college librarians, local bookshops, and other individuals.

What is the theme?

‘Her Story – Women and Girls’ Voices from the Past’. Your story should step into the shoes of a woman or girl from history, bringing her experiences and perspective to life.

How many words can I write?

500–1000 words. Note: minor formatting or typographical corrections may be made for publication purposes, without changing the story itself or its submitted word count.

Are there prizes?

Yes, 1st, 2nd and 3rd place winners will receive a monetary prize. In addition, book vouchers are also available to be won.

Is the main character a female?

Yes. The protagonist must be a woman or girl from the past. Your story should imagine her life and give a voice to her experiences, however ordinary or extraordinary they may have been.

Can I include other characters?

Yes, of course. Male, animal, and fantasy characters can all feature in your story.

Can I base my story on someone famous?

Much of the history we know has been recorded from a male perspective. If you choose to feature a well-known historical figure, embrace the opportunity to tell Her Story through a fresh authentic voice.

Are there any writing restrictions?

No particular genre or writing style is required, as long as your story remains true to the theme. However, entries must not contain excessive bad language, sexually explicit material or language that is discriminatory or deliberately offensive.

Does my story have to have a title?

Yes, absolutely.

Where can I research?

Apart from libraries and the internet, why not explore the Corinium Museum’s archives? You can email the museum (caroline.morris@freedom-leisure.co.uk) to uncover stories of women who lived in our region and played a part in its early archaeological discoveries, as well as artefacts that might spark your imagination.

Questions

Who are the judges?

What are the judges looking for?

Will the judges know who I am?

Can I use any form of AI?

Will my story be published?

What about my privacy?

Will there be any publicity?

How will I know if I've won a prize?

What happens if I don't win a prize?

Can I use my story for other competitions?

How should I submit my story?

Answers

The judging panel is made up of three local authors (Caroline Bradley, Judith Cutler and Rose Day) and the competition organiser (representing Soroptimist International Cirencester and District).

To put it simply: A good story, well told. We will consider quality of writing, originality, imagination and creativity, and readability (including a strong opening and carefully crafted ending).

Entries will be judged anonymously, so the judges will not see your name, age, gender or school/college.

No. Every entry must be entirely the writer's own work. The organisers reserve the right to disqualify any entry where there is evidence that it was generated, substantially written or rewritten by artificial intelligence (AI).

We aim to print an anthology booklet with as many of the entries as possible. After the prize-giving ceremony, it will be freely available at your local library, school/college library, local bookshops, and the Cirencester Visitor Information Centre.

Your contact details on the permission slip will be kept confidential. Stories selected for the anthology will be published with the writer's first name, key stage and school/college. The accompanying permission slip also covers the use of photographs taken at the prize-giving ceremony and the use of these details for publicity.

Yes, for example, after the official prize-giving we will be talking about the competition on Cirencester Radio. We also plan to celebrate the competition's success through local print and online media.

The winners will be contacted directly before the prize-giving ceremony. Their school/college will also be notified.

We hope to include as many entries as possible in the anthology, although publication in the anthology cannot be guaranteed.

Yes. Copyright remains with you. We only ask for permission to publish your story in our anthology and related publicity. You are free to enter other competitions, subject to their individual rules.

Follow your school/college librarian's instructions on how to electronically submit your entry and completed permission form. Your story should be in a Word document, using a simple serif font, 12pt, black text. PDFs are not acceptable. Please state the word count at the end of your story.