



Walpurgis Words for Literacy's
Halloween Horror:
Student Flash Fiction Contest
OFFICIAL RULES



(Terms & Conditions Bound by Participating)

1. Sponsor & Agreement to Rules

The Contest is sponsored by Walpurgis Words for Literacy ("WW," "we," "us," or "our"), a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, in conjunction with the Dark Veil Society (DVS), an international horror publishing collective based in the U.S.

UK and international students are welcome where legal. By entering the Contest, each entrant (or legal guardian) agrees to these official rules and the decisions of the Sponsor, which are final and binding in all respects.

2. Eligibility

Contestants must be current students in grades 9–12, or the international equivalent of secondary education (typically ages 14–18; entrants aged 13–19 in grades 9–12 are eligible), as of September 15, 2026, with valid proof of enrollment if requested, and where not prohibited by local law. Students enrolled in any post-secondary or university-level program are not eligible. Parental or legal guardian consent is required for all entrants under the age of 18. For entries submitted individually by a student, consent is obtained via the online submission form, which includes a mandatory parental consent checkbox and requires a parent/guardian email address for verification. For entries submitted by a teacher on behalf of a student, the teacher must have a signed parental/legal guardian consent form on file for that student and must provide the parent/guardian's email address so that a confirmation of the entry can be sent. One (1) entry per person. Members of WW, its affiliates, and their immediate family members are ineligible.

3. Contest Period

Submissions are accepted between September 1, 2026 and 11:59 pm EST on October 15, 2026. Late entries will not be accepted. The Sponsor's clock is the official time keeper. Because judging capacity is limited, WW may close submissions before October 15, 2026 if the Contest receives an unusually high volume of entries. Entrants are strongly encouraged to submit early.

4. How to Enter

Visit the official Contest webpage at walpurgiswords.org/contest and complete the submission form, providing all required fields. Upload a single horror, thriller, or dark fantasy fiction entry (500–1,500 words) in .docx or .pdf format, using the “Classic Shunn” formatting template. Ensure the file is legibly titled with your name. Incomplete or improperly formatted entries may be disqualified. Entries may be submitted (a) individually by an eligible student, or (b) by a teacher on behalf of students at their school. Each school or classroom is limited to five (5) entries per contest year, selected by the teacher. To ensure every entry receives a fair read, the Contest is limited in the total number of entries accepted; spots reserved through teacher registration are held until the submission deadline, and individual entries are accepted in the order received until capacity is reached.

5. Entry Requirements

- Must be original and unpublished prose.
- Word-count: 500 min – 1,500 max.
- Content must be PG-13: no graphic violence/gore, sexual content, profanity, hate speech, or explicit language.
- No portion of the text may have been written or edited by any generative AI.
- Only one (1) story per individual. Duplicate or plagiarized submissions will be disqualified.

6. Judging & Winner Selection

A judging panel appointed by WW will evaluate each entry on: creativity, adherence to theme (“Urban Legends”), tone, structure, clarity, and originality. WW may use AI detection tools and reserves the right to request verification of authorship from any entrant. The panel’s decisions are final. Winners will be selected by October 29, 2026, and publicly announced on October 31, 2026.

7. Prizes

- 1st Place: \$150 USD cash prize
- 2nd Place: \$75 USD cash prize
- 3rd Place: \$25 USD cash prize

Prize amounts are stated in USD; international winners will be paid the equivalent value in their local currency. Winners also receive printable certificates and publication credit in a WW-hosted online showcase. All prize details are non-transferable and subject to availability.

Cash prizes will be paid by check, mailed to the winner (or to a parent or legal guardian where the winner is under 18) at a mailing address provided after notification, within thirty (30) business days of eligibility confirmation and receipt of a valid mailing address. WW is not responsible for prizes that are undeliverable due to incorrect or incomplete contact information provided by the winner.

In the event that the Contest receives five (5) or fewer eligible entries, WW reserves the right to adjust, combine, or reduce the listed prize amounts or placements at its sole discretion, ensuring all rewards remain fair and proportional to participation.

8. Notification & Claiming

Winners will be notified within five (5) business days after announcement — for individual entries, via the student's provided email address; for entries submitted through a classroom, via the teacher who submitted the entry. If a winner fails to respond within 48 hours or cannot verify eligibility, they forfeit their prize and an alternate may be chosen.

9. Rights Granted & Publicity Release

Entrants retain full copyright to their submission; however, by entering they grant WW and DVS a non-exclusive, worldwide, royalty-free license to publish, share, or feature the work in any media related to the Contest or future promotions, with proper author credit.

By participating, entrants (and their parent/legal guardian if under 18) grant WW and DVS permission to use their name, city/state of residence, photograph, likeness, voice, and biographical information for promotional, advertising, and publicity purposes in any media (including but not limited to websites, social media platforms, press releases, newsletters, and printed materials) without further compensation or approval, except where prohibited by law.

10. Representations & Warranties

By submitting, entrant (and parent/guardian if under 18) represents and warrants that:

- a. the entry is original and does not infringe on any copyright, privacy, or proprietary right of any person or entity;
- b. it has not been published elsewhere;
- c. it does not contain AI-generated text;
- d. the entrant has the right and authority to grant the licenses set forth in Section 9.

Sponsor reserves the right to disqualify any submission failing these terms.

11. Data Privacy

Information collected in connection with this Contest is subject to WW's Privacy Policy (available at walpurgiswords.org/privacy). By entering, entrants consent to the collection, use, and retention of their personal data in accordance with that policy.

12. Taxes & Fees

All prize values are shown in USD. Recipients are solely responsible for any taxes or fees associated with the prize. No substitution or cash equivalents are allowed, except at Sponsor's discretion in case of prize unavailability.

13. Disqualification & Cancellation

WW reserves the right to disqualify any entry or disqualify any entrant suspected of technical misconduct, fraud, duplication, or violation of these rules. WW also reserves the right to modify or cancel the Contest should circumstances beyond its control compromise its integrity.

14. Release & Limitation of Liability

By entering, participants (and their guardians) release and hold harmless WW, DVS, their affiliates, and their respective directors, employees, and agents from any claim or cause of action arising out of participation in the Contest or acceptance/use of prizes, except as prohibited by law. WW's total liability will not exceed the total prize value.

15. "No Purchase Necessary"

No purchase is necessary to enter or win; a purchase does not increase your chance of winning. Void where prohibited. This Contest is subject to all applicable federal, state, provincial, and local laws. Sponsor reserves the right to disqualify any entrant if disallowed by law. Standard contest exclusions apply, including (in the U.S.) residents of Puerto Rico and territories unless otherwise permitted.

16. Governing Law, Disputes

These Official Rules and any disputes hereunder are governed by the laws of Ohio, without giving effect to any conflict-of-law provisions. Any dispute arising out of or relating to this Contest will be resolved individually, without resort to any form of class action, and shall be subject to the exclusive jurisdiction of the courts located in Greene County, Ohio.

17. Contact Information

For questions, complaints or assistance, email contests@walpurgiswords.org. A list of winners may be requested in writing between October 31, 2026, and January 15, 2027.

By entering, you acknowledge having read, understood, and agreed to abide by all aspects of these Official Rules.