

Brought to you by: In-Country Partner:



In Partnership With:



NATIONAL YOUNG AUTHORS CHALLENGE 2.0

GRADES 5-12

Your Chance to Become a Published Author
with **Penguin Random House**

One of the World's Biggest
Creative Writing Competition Returns



**TWO PENGUIN RANDOM
HOUSE BOOKS.**

**100 PUBLISHED
YOUNG AUTHORS.**

WELCOME TO THE NATIONAL YOUNG AUTHORS CHALLENGE 2.0

YOUR STORY COULD BECOME A PUBLISHED BOOK

Every great author begins with a single story.

Following the remarkable success of the inaugural edition, the **National Young Authors Challenge** returns as **NYAC 2.0**; bigger, more inclusive, and with an even greater opportunity for young writers to see their work published by **Penguin Random House**.

This year, the competition welcomes students from **Grades 5–12**, creating opportunities for an even larger community of young storytellers across the world.

To ensure fair and age-appropriate evaluation, entries will be judged across two separate categories, with each category featuring its own writing theme.

APPLY NOW!

EARLY BIRD DEADLINE: 30TH NOVEMBER 2026

SCHOOL REGISTRATION

SCHOOL REGISTRATION DEADLINE: 1ST NOVEMBER 2026

THE UMBRELLA THEME: THE WORLD WE INHERIT

Every story begins in a world shaped by others; families, friendships, places, memories, traditions, rules, mistakes, inventions, dreams and choices.

This year, we invite young writers to imagine the worlds their characters receive, protect, question, change or pass on.

TWO THEMES

JUNIOR CATEGORY (GRADES 5-8): WHAT IF?

Write an original short story that begins with a problem. What if a character embarked on an unexpected adventure, set out to solve a mystery, discovered a secret, entered a strange place, faced a fear or encountered a challenge?

Your story can be funny, adventurous, light-hearted, emotional, futuristic, mysterious or realistic. What matters is the problem, how the character deals with it, and the journey to the end.

Top 50 stories from this category will be published in a dedicated Penguin Random House anthology featuring young authors from **Grades 5–8**.



SENIOR CATEGORY (GRADES 9-12): AT THE CROSSROADS

Every character reaches a moment when they find themselves in an unwanted or unexpected situation.

Write an original short story about dealing with a circumstance and the choices that follow. The crossroads could be personal, emotional, moral, social, technological or environmental. It may involve family, friendship, ambition, identity, courage, climate, AI, belonging, truth, loss, love or the future. Your story should show what is at stake, why the moment matters, and what results from the character's choice or action.

Top 50 stories from this category will be published in a separate Penguin Random House anthology featuring outstanding young authors from **Grades 9–12**.



LEARN MORE



Penguin
Random
House

GET PUBLISHED BY PENGUIN RANDOM HOUSE

Penguin Random House isn't simply a publisher; it is one of the world's most respected storytelling institutions.

For generations, Penguin has introduced readers to timeless classics, bestselling novels, award-winning literature, and some of the greatest literary voices in history.

With a publishing legacy spanning more than a century and books written by over 80 Nobel Prize-winning authors, Penguin continues to shape readers and writers across the globe.

As part of National Young Authors Challenge 2.0, your story could become part of that remarkable legacy.

APPLY NOW!

WHAT'S NEW IN NYAC 2.0?



NOW OPEN TO GRADES 5-12

Building on the success of the first edition, NYAC now welcomes students from **Grades 5-12**, making the competition accessible to an even larger community of young writers.

2 TWO CATEGORIES. TWO THEMES.

Both categories fall under the umbrella theme:

The World We Inherit

Entries will be evaluated in two age-appropriate categories:

Grades 5-8 — “What If?”

Stories built around a problem, unexpected situation, mystery, adventure, challenge or question.

Grades 9-12 — “At the Crossroads”

Stories exploring a significant circumstance, choice, dilemma or turning point and its consequences.



TWO PENGUIN RANDOM HOUSE ANTHOLOGIES

For the very first time, Penguin India will publish:

- One anthology featuring the Top 50 stories from Grades 5-8
- One anthology featuring the Top 50 stories from Grades 9-12

That's 100 published young authors in a single season.



EVEN MORE RECOGNITION

The opportunity doesn't end with publication.

The **Next 50 stories** from each category will also receive national recognition by being featured on the **official Penguin website**, giving another **100 young writers** the opportunity to showcase their work to readers across the country.

YOUR JOURNEY FROM WRITER TO PUBLISHED AUTHOR WITH PENGUIN

STEP 1 – THE SPARK

Every great story begins with an idea.
A character. A question. An emotion.
A world waiting to be explored.

Take that idea and transform it into a story that only you can tell, inspired by this year's theme, **The World We Inherit**.

STEP 2 – ENTER THE CHALLENGE

Choose the category for your grade and write an original short story based on its theme:

Grades 5–8: What If?

Grades 9–12: At the Crossroads

Your imagination starts the journey.
Your voice makes it unforgettable.

STEP 3 - LEARN FROM PENGUIN AUTHORS & EDITORS

Every registered participant receives access to **an exclusive 2-Day Publishing Bootcamp led by Penguin authors and editors**.

Discover storytelling techniques, character development, editing strategies, publishing insights, and what makes a story memorable.

STEP 4 - GET RECOGNISED

Every participant receives a **Certificate of Participation**.

Outstanding writers receive additional recognition for their creativity and storytelling excellence.

STEP 5 - BECOME A PUBLISHED AUTHOR

The **Top 50 stories from each category** will be published in **two exclusive Penguin Random House books**. Your story. Your name. Your published book.

RECOGNITION & AWARDS



PUBLISHED BY PENGUIN RANDOM HOUSE

The **Top 50 stories** from each category will be published in two separate Penguin anthologies. **100 young authors published by Penguin Random House.**



RECOGNITION FOR TOP 100 WRITERS

Both the **Top 50** and the **Next 50** writers from each category will receive special recognition for their outstanding work.



FEATURED ON THE OFFICIAL PENGUIN WEBSITE

The **Next 50 stories** from each category will be showcased on the **official Penguin website**, providing another **100 young writers with national visibility.**



CERTIFICATE OF PARTICIPATION

Every eligible participant receives an official **Certificate of Participation** recognising their contribution to the National Young Authors Challenge 2.0.

APPLY NOW!

THE PENGUIN WRITING BOOTCAMP

Every registered participant gains access to **an exclusive 2-Day Online Writing Bootcamp** before the final results are announced.

Led by Penguin authors and editors, the bootcamp offers invaluable insights into:

- Creative storytelling
- Character development
- Plot construction
- Editing techniques
- Publishing fundamentals

The journey from manuscript to published book.

This learning experience ensures that every participant grows as a writer, regardless of the competition outcome.





WHO CAN PARTICIPATE?

The National Young Authors Challenge 2.0 is open to:

- Students in **Grades 5–12**
- School students from **across the globe**

Participants will compete in two categories:

Junior Category: Grades 5–8

Senior Category: Grades 9–12



APPLY NOW!

SCHOOL REGISTRATION

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Students are invited to submit an **original short story in English**.

Format	Short Story
Genre	Original Fiction
Word Limit	700 Words (Excluding the title)
Submission Format	Word Document or PDF
Maximum Entries	Up to 3 unique stories per participant - Each story must be submitted separately.
Your Story Must:	• Be original fiction • Be written entirely by the student • Be previously unpublished • Not have been submitted for publication elsewhere • Have a clear beginning, middle and end • Be appropriate for the student's age category • Follow the assigned category theme • Stay within the 700-word maximum

Not Accepted

Poems, memoirs, fan fiction, scripts, reports and non-fiction pieces will not be accepted.

[LEARN MORE](#)

FORMATTING GUIDELINES

All submissions must **follow the required formatting:**

- Submit as a **Word document or PDF**
- Use **A4 page size**
- Use **Times New Roman, Arial or Calibri**
- 12 pt font size**
- 1.5 line spacing**
- Black text only**
- Do not include **images, illustrations, maps or decorative formatting**
- The **title** must appear at the **top of the first page**



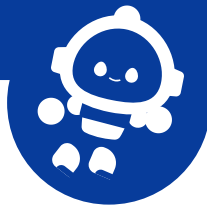
File Naming Format

All entries must be submitted using: **Name_Grade_Story[Number]**

Example: **AaravSharma_8_Story1**

If you are submitting multiple stories, number them according to the order of submission.

[LEARN MORE](#)



ORIGINALITY & RESPONSIBLE **USE OF AI**

Your story must be your own work.

Generative AI **must not be used** to:

- Create or draft the story
- Rewrite or translate the story
- Polish or edit the story
- Expand or improve the story
- Substantially assist with the writing

Students may use a **dictionary, thesaurus or standard non-generative spell-check tools.**

Parents, teachers and guardians may encourage students and discuss ideas, but must not write, rewrite, edit or substantially shape the story.

Students may be asked to provide **drafts, notes or outlines** to verify originality.

Any entry found to be **plagiarised, copied, AI-generated or not substantially written by the student may be disqualified at any stage**, including after selection.

JUDGING CRITERIA

Entries will be evaluated on:

Originality of Idea

**Connection to the
Theme**

**Story Structure &
Narrative Flow**

Characterisation

**Language &
Expression**

**Creativity &
Imagination**

**Age-
Appropriateness**

Overall Impact

LEARN MORE

CONTENT GUIDELINES

Stories should be **thoughtful, respectful and age appropriate**.

Students should avoid:

- Racist, sexist, ableist or discriminatory language
- Harmful stereotypes or misrepresentation of communities, cultures, religions, genders or disabilities
- Graphic violence, abuse, trauma or cruelty
- Explicit sexual content
- Defamatory statements or direct accusations against real people, schools, companies or organisations
- Private or confidential information about real individuals
- Song lyrics, poems, long quotations or characters/settings from existing books, films, games or shows
- Content that promotes hatred, bullying, self-harm, illegal activity or unsafe behaviour

Sensitive themes may be explored, particularly within the Senior Category, but must be handled with **care, context and respect**.

COMPLETE SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Have an idea? Know the rules before you write.

For complete information on **themes, story requirements, formatting, originality, AI use, content guidelines, judging criteria and the student declaration**, please refer to the official submission guidelines.

VIEW SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Celebrating The Success of National Young Authors Challenge - Season 1



A NATIONWIDE MOVEMENT OF YOUNG STORYTELLERS

The inaugural edition of the **National Young Authors Challenge** brought together some of the brightest young writers, transforming a creative writing competition into a nationwide celebration of storytelling.

What began as a platform for students in **Grades 5–12** quickly grew into a movement that inspired thousands of young voices to imagine, create, and share their stories with the world.

GLIMPSE INTO SEASON 1



65+

Schools
Participated



800+

Students
Participated



45+

Cities
Represented



1,000+

Original Story
Submissions



100

Young Writers
Recognised
Nationally

National Young Authors Challenge

Brought to You by:



Glimpses of the Ceremony

The overwhelming response demonstrated the remarkable creativity, imagination, and storytelling talent that exists among students across the country.

LEARN MORE

FROM PEN TO PUBLICATION

Season 1 gave students an opportunity that very few young writers ever experience.

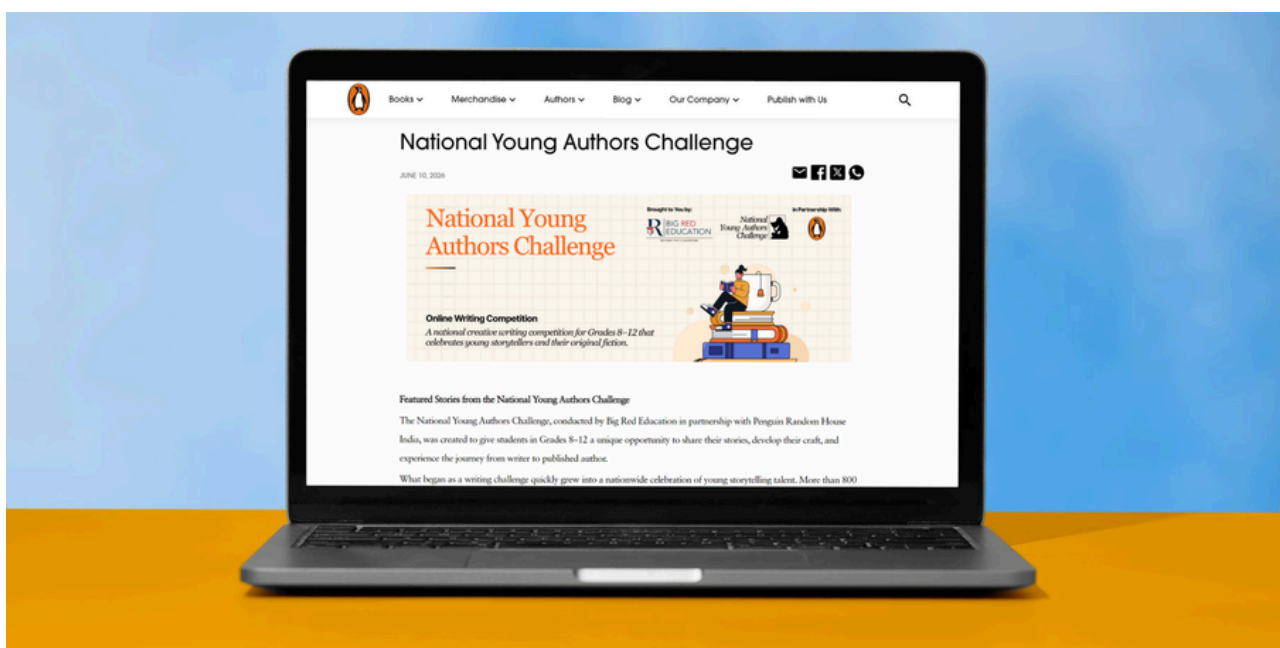
Top 50 Authors

The Top 50 stories were selected for publication in an exclusive anthology by **Penguin Random House**, curated and edited by acclaimed author **Vibha Batra**, giving students the opportunity to become **published authors** while still in school.



Next 50 Authors

The Next 50 stories were showcased on the official Penguin website, providing national visibility and recognition for another outstanding group of young storytellers.



Together, these students experienced the complete journey from writing a story to seeing their work recognised on a national platform.

VOICES FROM SEASON 1

STUDENT REFLECTIONS



Snigdha Yadav, Grade 10, Kendriya Vidyalaya

"Seeing my story selected by Penguin made me believe that my ideas truly matter. It has inspired me to continue writing and exploring new stories."



Aarav Khandelwal, Grade 10, Pathways School Gurgaon

"The bootcamp completely changed the way I think about storytelling. Learning directly from Penguin authors was an unforgettable experience."



Sahana Manjeri, Grade 9, National Academy For Learning

"The National Young Authors Challenge gave me the confidence to share my writing with the world. Becoming a published author while still in school is something I'll always cherish."

WHAT PARENTS APPRECIATED

National Young Authors Challenge

Brought to You By:
R BIG RED EDUCATION

National Young Authors Challenge

In Partnership With



Proud Parents of Top 50 Winners

National Young Authors Challenge

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Important Dates



Early Bird Registration



Register by
30th November 2026



Take advantage of the Early Bird Registration and secure your place in one of the world's biggest creative writing competitions at the best available registration fee.



Don't miss the opportunity to begin your journey towards **becoming a published author** with Penguin Random House!

Why Participate?

The National Young Authors Challenge is much more than a competition.

It is an opportunity to:



Develop your storytelling skills



Learn directly from Penguin authors and editors



Build a strong academic and creative portfolio



Receive national recognition



Join a community of promising young writers



Experience the complete journey from idea to publication



APPLY NOW!

Brought to you by: In-Country Representative:

In Partnership With:



National Young Authors Challenge 2.0

Your Story Could Be Published by Penguin Random House!

You don't have to wait until adulthood to call yourself an author.

All you need is a story worth telling.
Write your story. Find your voice. Inspire readers.

Become the next published young author with Penguin.

APPLY NOW

LEARN MORE

SCHOOL REGISTRATION



+971585001667

admissions@futuresabroad.com

Learn More