

2026 Commonwealth Short Story Prize

Eligibility and entry rules

Please read these eligibility and entry rules before beginning the online entry process. The online form is available at <https://commonwealthfoundation.com/short-story-prize/> from the opening date: 1 September 2025.

Submission of an entry is taken as acceptance of the entry rules.

For any entry or eligibility queries not covered below, please email creatives@commonwealthfoundation.com for clarification before submitting an entry.

Opening date

1 September 2025

Entries must be submitted via the online entry form.

Closing date

Entries must be submitted via the online entry form by 1 November 2025, 11.59pm (GMT - [Time Zone Converter - Time Difference Calculator](#)).

No entries will be considered if submitted after this date.

1. About the Prize

- a. The Commonwealth Short Story Prize is an annual award for unpublished short fiction administered and funded by the Commonwealth Foundation.
- b. The prize covers the Commonwealth regions of 1. Africa, 2. Asia, 3. Canada and Europe, 4. Caribbean and 5. Pacific. (See Section 5 for countries in each region).
- c. The international judging panel comprises one judge from each of the five regions. Please note that while the entries will be judged regionally, all judges will read and deliberate on entries from all regions.
- d. There will be five winners, one from each region. One regional winner will be selected as the overall winner. The overall winner of the Commonwealth Short Story Prize will receive £5,000 and the remaining four regional winners £2,500. If the winning short story is a translation into English, the translator will receive additional prize money.

- e. The final selection will be judged by an international judging panel; experienced readers will assist the named judges in selecting the longlist.

2. Eligibility

- a. Entrants must be citizens of a Commonwealth country – please see Section 5 for the list of Commonwealth countries – or stateless persons currently residing in a Commonwealth country. The Commonwealth Foundation will request verification of citizenship status before winners are selected. Entries from citizens of non-Commonwealth countries are not eligible.
- b. For regional purposes, entries will be judged by country of citizenship. Where the writer has dual citizenship (of two Commonwealth countries), the entry will be judged in the region where the writer is permanently resident.
- c. There is no requirement for the writer to have current residence in a Commonwealth country, providing that they are a citizen of a Commonwealth country.
- d. Entrants must be aged 18 years or over on **1 November 2025**.
- e. All entries will be accepted at the discretion of the Commonwealth Foundation which will exercise its judgement, in consultation with the prize chair, in ruling on questions of eligibility. The ruling of the chair on questions of eligibility is final, and no further correspondence will be entered into.
- f. Entries from previous overall winners of the Commonwealth Short Story Prize are not eligible. Entrants who have won the regional prize three times are also not eligible to submit to the prize.
- g. Entries from current members of staff at the Commonwealth Foundation are not eligible.
- h. Entries must be unpublished and remain unpublished in any language until 1 May 2026.
- i. If your entry has been shortlisted or won a prize in other competitions, provided it has not been published, it is eligible.

3. Entry rules

- a. Entries, including those in translation, must be made by the original author.
- b. Entries will only be accepted via the online entry form.
- c. The deadline for receipt of entries is 1 November 2025 (11.59pm GMT).
- d. Only one entry per writer each year may be submitted for the Commonwealth Short Story Prize.
- e. The story must be the entrant's own work.

- f. The story must be original work and should not have been published anywhere, in full or in part, **in any language**, before **1 May 2026**. Published work is taken to mean published in any printed, publicly accessible form, e.g. anthology, magazine, newspaper. It is also taken to mean published online, except for personal blogs, personal websites and personal Facebook pages.
- g. Entries previously submitted to the Commonwealth Short Story Prize are not eligible.
- h. Entries should be submitted in English, with the following exceptions: entries from Commonwealth citizens who write in Bengali, Chinese, Creole, French, Greek, Kiswahili, Malay, Maltese, Portuguese, Samoan, Tamil and Turkish and who do not have an English translation of their story, may submit their stories in the original language. English translations of short stories written in other languages are eligible if submitted by the writer (not the translator) and provided that the translator is also a citizen of a Commonwealth country.
- i. Simultaneous submissions are eligible as long as the entrant informs the organisers (via creatives@commonwealthfoundation.com) immediately should the story be accepted for publication elsewhere or be selected for a prize.
- j. Entries must be 2,000 words minimum, 5,000 words maximum (not including title).
- k. Entries should be uploaded in a PDF document. **Please save your document as a PDF and use the title of the story as the file name. Please note** that the story must not be saved as 'Commonwealth Story', 'Short Story' or any other generic title. If it is not possible to save the entry as a PDF document, it may be uploaded as a Microsoft Word document, with the file name in the same format as above. **The first page should include the name of the story and the number of words.**
- l. The author's details should be included on the entry form. They must not be given anywhere on the uploaded document. All entries are judged anonymously.
- m. Where applicable, the translator's details should be included on the entry form.
- n. Entries in English should be submitted in Arial 12-point font and double line spacing. For entries in other languages, the appropriate font should be used. All pages should be numbered.
- o. There are no restrictions on setting, genre or theme.
- p. The story should be adult fiction and must not have been written for children alone.

- q. Entrants agree as a condition of entry that the prize organisers may publicise the fact that a story has been entered or shortlisted for the Prize.
- r. Worldwide copyright of each story remains with the writer. The Commonwealth Foundation will have the unrestricted right to publish the winning stories (the overall winning story and the four regional winning stories) online, in an anthology, or for promotional purposes where appropriate.
- s. The shortlisted writers, the regional winners, and the overall winner will be expected to take part in publicity activities including social media where possible.
- t. The overall and regional winners may be expected to undertake a mutually acceptable programme of regional outreach activities to develop and promote the Commonwealth Foundation.

4. Contact details

For any questions about eligibility or rules, please contact
creatives@commonwealthfoundation.com

5. Prize regions

Africa: Botswana, Cameroon, Eswatini, Gabon, The Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, Zambia. Overseas Territories: Saint Helena, Tristan Da Cunha, Ascension Island.

Asia: Bangladesh, Brunei Darussalam, India, Malaysia, Maldives, Pakistan, Singapore, Sri Lanka

Canada and Europe: Canada, Cyprus, Malta, United Kingdom. Overseas Territories: Gibraltar, Falkland Islands.

Caribbean: Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, St Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, St Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago. Overseas Territories: Anguilla, Bermuda, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Montserrat, Turks and Caicos Islands.

Pacific: Australia, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu. Overseas Territories: Cook Islands, Niue, Pitcairn.