

Flash Fiction Competition

Hints & Tips



Unfamiliar with flash fiction? Not sure what is required? Here is an example from a previous year:

The Unknown Voice

Francis was on the brink of breaking when a voice whispered, “Stand up, Francis.” It was gentle yet firm, like a mother encouraging a child, a wife uplifting her husband, and a father inspiring his child. Then she realised ... it was her own voice, pushing her to keep going. *Zhuriel De la Rosa*

The challenge for any writer of Flash Fiction is to grab your readers in a very short space of time. Every word is vital. A good Flash Fiction piece should tell a story. It should have a beginning, a middle and an end. Here are some thoughts to help you:

- If you are writing for a competition, it must be on the theme given. If you write something that doesn't fulfil the brief, just put it on one side for another time.
- A good theme will let you be very creative, so before you start, think of a number of ideas. ‘Hope’ could be about the hopes of a new year or new beginning or perhaps a character in a hopeful situation. To impress the judges you want to be as creative as you can.
- It should have something of a character, even if you can't do much in 50 words. In the story above, we get to know quite a lot about the person concerned – he is old, he is widowed, he is perhaps infirm or just frightened.
- It needs a plot, to tell a story. Here is a winning story from last year's theme of 'Voices':

The Ocean's Voice

Ivy found a seashell and held it to her ear. “Hello?” a tiny voice echoed. “Who are you?” Ivy whispered “I’m the ocean’s whisper,” the voice replied. “I tell stories of hidden treasures and dancing waves!” Ivy grinned, keeping the shell close. Now, she had a secret friend. *Logan Sparrow*

- It should have a good ending. Strong starts are often easy, but you need a pay-off for your story. Something to grab your readers' attention. Here is another example from another previous year's winner with the theme 'Space':

Hospital Waiting Room

The span between me and the doctor was only a few sterilised, back-ache inducing chairs away, yet the agonising emptiness between us felt as though he was as distant as last night's dream. He shook his head wanly, gaze lowered, and turned to the next waiting room victim. *Evie Alam*

There are many sites on the internet to help you – try <http://fiftywordstories.com/stories> for some examples, or <http://scottishbooktrust.com/reading/the-50-word-fiction-competition> for more useful advice.