

CREATIVE WRITING

Nelspruit Eisteddfod 2026

082 408 2083

ITEM KS 01: POETRY

General Rules

The writing takes place under supervision.

The theme will only be announced on the day of adjudication.

1. Participants from Grade 4 and up may enter.
2. Each participant may submit only ONE poem.
3. The poem must be original and written by the participant.
4. Participants are given 45 minutes to complete their poem.
5. The poem must have an appropriate title.
6. There is no fixed word limit.
7. Plagiarism or the use of existing work is strictly prohibited.
8. The participant's name, grade, and school must clearly appear on the written piece.
9. School uniform is not compulsory.
10. Adult participants write under supervision together with the learners.
11. No work may be read aloud to the adjudicator – only the written piece will be assessed.
12. The Nelspruit Eisteddfod upholds a strict policy of honesty and integrity.
13. Results will be made available at the end of August.

ITEM KS 02: SHORT STORY

General Rules

The writing takes place under supervision.

The theme will be announced on the day.

1. Entries are open to participants from Grade 4.
2. Each participant may submit only ONE short story.
3. The story must be original and independently written.

4. Participants are given 60 minutes to complete their story.
5. Each short story must have a title.
6. **Word Count:**
 - Grade 4 – 7: Minimum 250 and maximum 350 words
 - Grade 8 – 10: Minimum 450 and maximum 550 words
 - Grade 11 – 12: Minimum 650 and maximum 700 words
7. This item is specifically for a short story – not an essay or speech.
8. Any genre may be used (e.g., humour, adventure, romance, suspense, etc.).
9. No plagiarism will be tolerated.
10. The participant's name, grade, and school must be clearly indicated.
11. School uniform is not compulsory.
12. No oral presentation to the adjudicator will take place.
13. Afrikaans and English sections are judged separately – translations of existing work are not allowed.
14. Honesty and academic integrity are strictly enforced.
15. Results will be announced at the end of August.

Short Story Writing Guidelines

1. Start with a strong core idea

Think about:

- A problem that must be solved
- An unusual event
- A “What if...?” question

Stick to one main idea.

2. Create a clear main character

Decide:

- Who is the main character?
- What does he/she want to achieve?
- What obstacle stands in the way?

One strong character is usually enough for a short story.

3. Determine setting and time

Where does the story take place?

When does it take place?

Keep it simple and relevant to the theme.

4. Plan your beginning

A good beginning:

- Introduces the character
- Establishes setting and time
- Hints at the conflict or problem

Capture the reader's attention from the first paragraph.

5. The Middle (Conflict Development)

Here the core of your story unfolds:

- The problem deepens or becomes more complicated.
- Unexpected events may occur.
- The main character must make important choices.

The middle is the heart of the story — tension builds and emotions intensify.

6. Write a satisfying ending

The conclusion must:

- Resolve the conflict or clearly show its consequences.
- Feel complete and thoughtful — not rushed or unfinished.

An ending may be happy, sad, surprising, or even open-ended, as long as it is meaningful.

7. Enrich your story

Add:

- Descriptive details (what is seen, heard, smelled, or felt).
- Dialogue to reveal character and emotion.

Balance is important — avoid overloading the story.

8. Revise and refine

Ask yourself:

- Is the storyline clear and logical?
- Are any parts confusing?
- Can unnecessary information be removed?

Check spelling, punctuation, and sentence construction carefully.

9. Choose an appropriate title

A good title:

- Connects to the theme.
- Refers to an important element in the story.
- Sparks the reader's curiosity.

NEW EXAMPLE SHORT STORY

The Day the Wind Kept a Secret

When Grandma insisted that the wind could talk, we thought it was just another one of her stories.

“Listen carefully,” she would say, tilting her head toward the hills behind her house. “The wind remembers things.”

On the morning of the great storm, the air felt heavy and restless. The sky hung low, the colour of unpolished silver. I was staying with Grandma for the weekend, secretly wishing for electricity and Wi-Fi instead of candlelight and old wooden floors.

By afternoon, the wind began to howl. Windows rattled. Trees bent low like bowing dancers.

“Close the shutters!” Grandma called.

I rushed to help her. As I fastened the last latch, I heard it — not just wind, but something sharper. A cry.

“Did you hear that?” I asked.

Grandma froze. “The wind doesn’t cry without reason.”

We grabbed our coats and stepped outside. The storm pushed against us, wild and urgent. Near the old oak tree at the edge of the field, we saw movement — a small boy, no older than six, crouched and terrified.

He had wandered from the nearby farm, chasing his runaway kite before the storm swallowed the sky.

We brought him inside, wrapped him in blankets, and phoned his frantic parents.

Later that night, when calm returned and stars pricked holes into the darkness, I sat beside Grandma.

“You were right,” I whispered.

She smiled gently. “The wind carries many things — leaves, rain, sometimes even secrets. But only those who listen can hear them.”

Since that day, whenever the wind rises, I pause. And I listen.

Step-by-Step Application to the Example Story

Step 5: Middle (Conflict)

Guideline: The problem develops and intensifies.

In the story:

- The storm grows stronger.
- The mysterious cry creates tension.
- The main character must decide whether to investigate.
- The discovery of the lost boy raises emotional stakes.

The conflict shifts from doubt about Grandma's belief to real danger.

Step 6: Ending

Guideline: The conflict is resolved meaningfully.

In the story:

- The lost child is rescued.
- Grandma's wisdom is validated.
- The narrator's perspective changes.

The ending is calm, reflective, and emotionally satisfying.

Step 7: Description and Dialogue

- Sensory imagery: heavy air, silver sky, rattling windows.
- Dialogue reveals Grandma's personality and quiet wisdom.
- Action scenes (storm, rescue) maintain pace and tension.

Step 8: Revision

- The focus remains on one central idea: listening.
- No unnecessary subplots distract from the theme.
- Each scene contributes to building tension and resolution.

Step 9: Title

The Day the Wind Kept a Secret

- Refers directly to the central event.
- Suggests mystery and curiosity.
- Symbolically reflects wisdom, awareness, and belief.