

SCORING (100 points max)

- 5 = excellent
- 4 = good
- 3 = average
- 2 = fair
- 1 = poor

OPENING

Opening hook: is it a real attention grabber?

Opening pages: does the author reveal the right amount of information, not too much or too little, to compel you to read on?

Comments:

STORY

Is the story original and well-executed?

Is the pacing appropriate to the category?

Does the conflict arise naturally from the situation (is not forced)?

Does the author effectively create a suspenseful atmosphere throughout?

Comments:

CHARACTERIZATION

Are the characters skillfully developed?

Are the characters' back stories shared in an effective and meaningful way?

Do the internal and external conflicts the characters face drive the story forward to a satisfying conclusion?

Comments:

SETTING

Does the setting give a sense of time and place and set the mood of the story?

Is the setting interwoven into the plot and does it enhance the story rather than pull the reader from it?

Are the details significant to the story? Do they move the plot along?

Comments:

STYLE/VOICE

Is the writing vivid and evocative? Does it have a certain spark that keeps you reading?

Are sentence structure and length varied?

Is the entry free of typos and errors in spelling, grammar, and punctuation?

Comments:

DIALOGUE/NARRATIVE

Is there a good balance between dialogue and narrative?

Does the dialogue ring true (normal and conversational, not too stiff and unnatural)?

Comments:

CATEGORY SPECIFIC QUESTIONS MAY INCLUDE:

Is there an atmosphere of suspense and/or curiosity about the central puzzle/conflict that creates a desire to read further?

Is there sufficient concern for the protagonist(s) as they investigate and attempt to find a resolution?

Are there sufficient twists and turns, red herrings and real clues to keep the reader guessing?

Comments:

TIE BREAKER STATEMENT

Please mark ONE statement that best describes this particular entry. This question will only be used as a tie-breaker.