



2026 Adult Learner Writing Contest

New Jersey Association for Lifelong Learning

Submissions Deadline: April 13th, 2026

The New Jersey Association for Lifelong Learning (NJALL) is holding its 12th annual adult learner writing contest. This year we will award cash prizes in seven categories - art, fiction, memoir, non-fiction, photography, poetry and video. Several winners will be invited to read their work as part of the annual NJALL conference in May 2026. All of the winners and selected other submissions will be published in a free magazine that will be available from our website in the summer of 2026. Winners will receive printed copies of the magazine, award certificates and prize checks.

Categories

Memoir Non-fiction Fiction Poetry Photography Art Video

1st Place - \$100

2nd Place - \$50

3rd Place - \$25

Download Previous Years' Magazines

[2017](#) [2018](#) [2019](#) [2020](#) [2021](#) [2022](#) [2023](#) [2024](#) [2025](#)

Previous Winners Reading Their Work

Check out videos on NJALL's YouTube Channel [here](#).

Acting as a Reviewer

If you are interested in serving as a reviewer, please send an email to njallmail@gmail.com. We are particularly interested in having learners serve on the review committee.

Guidelines

- * Eligibility: Adult learners in - adult literacy programs, adult high schools or HS equivalency programs, developmental education programs, English language classes and citizenship classes. If you have any questions about eligibility, please contact us as *njallmail@gmail.com*
- * Learners can send in submissions for multiple categories. Learners can submit one piece per category, except for poetry. Learners can submit up to five poems for consideration.
- * All submissions must be original and represent the work of the learner - not the work of their teacher or tutor. Teachers/tutors may help with spelling and grammar, but it should be limited in nature. We are using the honor system with regards to this.
- * English language learners can get help with translation, but the work should remain their own.
- * Memoirs typically involve personal experiences. Non-fiction entries typically focus on topics the writers are interested in. This can include informative essays, opinion pieces and advice.
- * Art is an open category, and includes drawing, painting or other forms of creativity. A photo or scan of the original should be submitted, along with an artist's statement about the piece.
- * Photographs should also include a statement about the piece.
- * Videos can be fiction, non-fiction or other genres. They should be creative works, not just raw videos. Videos must not be longer than five minutes.

Submitting

Submissions need to be received by **April 13th, 2026** at *njallmail@gmail.com*

The email should identify the category of the submission.

Submissions should include the learner's name and contact information and the name of the program or school they attend. If the learner wishes to remain anonymous or use a pen-name, this information should be provided when the work is submitted. By entering the contest, the learner agrees to have their piece published in the magazine if it is selected.

All those submitting work will be notified of the decisions by May 4th, 2026.

Please send any questions to *njallmail@gmail.com*