

Dear Parents and Carers,

We just wanted to share with you the news of a very exciting opportunity for our young budding writers and authors. The '500 Words' competition is now open!



What is it?

A writing competition that runs from September until **Friday 10th November 2023**. This year, there are two age categories: 5-7 years and 8-11 years. Children of all abilities are encouraged to use their creativity and imagination to write a story they would love to read without the pressure of worrying about spelling, grammar and punctuation.

Who are the judges?

Frank Cottrell-Boyce, Francesca Simon, Charlie Higson, Malorie Blackman and Lenny Henry.

What should the stories include?

All the stories **must**:

- Be 500 words or less (title is not included in the number)
- Be written by an individual and not a group
- Be a child's own original idea
- Be prose, not rap or poem

Stories **must not**:

- Give any personal details of the child, including their name
- Recount an historical event (but they can use a real person or historical character as a source of inspiration)

How will the stories be judged?

The judges will look at:

- Characterisation

- Plot
- Originality
- Language
- Enjoyment

What happens if you are a finalist/winner?

The 50 finalists along with their parents/carers will be invited to attend a grand event in February 2024. This has previously been hosted at Windsor Castle, Hampton Court and the Globe Theatre...this year it is Buckingham Palace! All finalists will receive a £20 Book Token and their stories will be put onto the website.

Children who get the Bronze, Silver or Gold place in each category will have their story read by a celebrity as part of a special TV show. They also win a big bundle of books. The gold winners will receive 'the height of Lenny Henry' in books and 500 books for their school. The silver winners will receive 'the height of Queen Camilla' in books. The bronze winners will receive 'the height of a 7/11 year old' in books. Their stories will be illustrated by famous illustrators and put into the 500 Words winners' book.

What do we need to do?

The children need to write their stories at home. The entry needs to be typed so a child could do that independently or an adult can help them. Entries are to be submitted online (must be done by an adult) on the '500 Words' website. The child must be living in the UK and in the correct age category on Friday 10th November. Once the story is submitted, edits cannot be made.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/500-words/how-to-submit/zqc8mbk>

Please encourage your child to get stuck in - we have so many marvellous writers and children BURSTING with creativity! Class teachers have shared about the competition with children so they may have some ideas already. The next '500 Words' winner could very well be from Maidensbridge Primary School!

Thanks for your continued support,
Miss Cleghorn