



WRITING CONTEST

Department 29—Open Show

Amount Offered: \$144.00

Entry Fee: \$1.00 per Class (2 entries per Class maximum)

Late Entry Fee – Approval Required: \$25.00 per entry

Entries Due Electronically for Judging: Sunday, July 19th, 2026, 3:00pm

Location of Exhibits on Display: Building E (Photography Area)

Superintendent: Debbie Ehlenberg.....(815)276-2238

Rules and Regulations

NEW THIS YEAR: Curfew Enforced – Quiet time and curfew is 12:00am midnight – 5:00am.

All exhibits are closed. This includes grandstands, midway, barns and campgrounds. Anyone under the age of 18 must be accompanied by an adult during these times.

1. Entries must be filed with the fair office by 2:00 pm on July 19th, 2026, **online entries are due at midnight. LATE ENTRIES WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED. WE HIGHLY RECOMMEND THAT YOU REGISTER ONLINE!**
2. **The piece of work being entered is due for judging on or before July 19th, 2026, at 3:00pm INCLUDING online entries.**
3. All exhibitors are required to purchase a week-long exhibitor pass which provides daily entry to the fair.
4. Home Arts General Rules apply.
5. Home and Creative Arts/Home Art exhibits will be released on the **SUNDAY of fair week between 5 pm and 7 pm OR MONDAY AFTER FAIR (AUGUST 10th) from 8 am-10 am, exhibits may not be removed before then.** Ribbons and exhibits will be available for pick up at these time slots only. Any exhibits that remain unclaimed after 4 pm on the Friday following the Fair will be donated or discarded.
6. The piece must be original work of the author and may not have been previously published. It may, however, have been submitted as a student assignment.
7. Entries must be typed, double spaced, on one side of white 8 ½" X 11" paper with a title at the top and pagination on each sheet. It should follow MLA format, however there should be no author name on the work itself.
8. The Essay, **"A Letter to America on Its 250th Birthday"** must be between 500 and 1000 words and follow the MLA Essay style for layout.
9. Each entry must be accompanied with a cover sheet containing the author's name, address, phone numbers, title, number of pages in the entry, email address, and a signed statement that the work is original and has never been published.
10. Copies of work may be submitted in person to the office, by mail, or by email (mcfaoffice@mchenrycountyfair.com)
11. By entering the contest, the contestant agrees that his/her entry may be published the following year in a fair booklet and or on the McHenry County Fair website.
12. First through third place will be awarded ribbons and premiums as listed below. Judging will be based on content, clarity, and skill communicating the central thought of the work. Please proofread the work as spelling and grammatical errors are part of the judging. Where entries have been judged equal, those that express a thoughtful understanding of life in McHenry County will be given additional consideration.
13. The McHenry County Fair Association, for the safety of those attending the Fair (including the rider), prohibits the use of bicycles, scooters, skateboards, hoverboards, and similar wheeled riding items of the Fairgrounds, during the Annual Fair, including set-up and take-down.

Age Groups: Not 14 by the date of entry; 14-18 (by date of entry); Over 18

Premiums First-\$5; Second-\$4; Third-\$3

Best of Show-Rosette (one awarded for each Age Group)

Plaque or Trophy (one awarded for the best entry of the entire contest)

Division	Class
A Poetry	01 Under 14 02 Ages 14-18 03 Over 18 Years Old
B Fictional Short Story	01 Under 14 02 Ages 14-18 03 Over 18 Years Old
C Non-Fictional Short Story	01 Under 14 02 Ages 14-18 03 Over 18 Years Old
D Essay- "A Letter to America on Its 250 th Birthday" Write a reflective essay expressing your thoughts, hopes, and perspectives on the nation at this milestone.	01 Under 14 02 Ages 14-18 03 Over 18 Years Old

Writing Open Entry Form

- Register online at www.mchenrycountyfair.com or in the office at 11900 Country Club Road, Woodstock, IL 60098 on Monday – Tuesday from 9 am – 2 pm. In person registration dates: Tuesday June 2nd, Tuesday July 7th 2-7pm and July 19th 11 am-2pm ONLY.
- Entries must be filed with the fair office by 2:00 pm on July 19, 2026, **online entries are due at midnight. LATE ENTRIES WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED. WE HIGHLY RECOMMEND THAT YOU REGISTER ONLINE!**
- Entries will NOT be taken by phone, fax, or email. NO REFUNDS!
- One entry per line. Note changes in Division and Class numbers!

Last Name: _____ First Name: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

	Dept. Number	Division Letter	Class Number	Description of Entry
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
9				
10				

I have read and understand, and in consideration for being permitted to exhibit at the 2026 McHenry County Fair, agree and consent to abide by the rules of the competition. This includes the McHenry County Rules and Regulations and the Home Arts Department Rules as stated in the Rule section in the McHenry County Fair Book and on the Website: mchenrycountyfair.com

Exhibitor (Owner/Exhibitor) Date

Guardian/Parent of Exhibitor (if under 18 years of age) Date

#	Fee	Total
	\$1.00 per Open entry	
	\$25.00 Late Entry Fee – per entry	
	\$15 Exhibitor Pass (one required per Exhibitor)	
	Total	\$