

Are you a Bristol student who loves to write? Here's your chance to shine! Enter the **Young Writers Competition**—a platform to showcase your creativity.

This Year's Theme for all categories: “The Voice” or “Voices”

Who Can Enter?

Open to students at Bristol Schools entering **Years 9 to 13** in the 2026/27 school year. Submit your work in one of the following categories:

- Fiction - Year 9 to Year 11
- Fiction - Years 12 & 13
- Non-Fiction & Allegory - Year 9 to Year 11
- Non-Fiction Years & Allegory - 12 & 13

Prizes (Per Category)

1st Place – £100
Runner-Up – £50



Submission Guidelines

Word Count: no minimum word count, maximum 800 words for both fiction and non-fiction.

Format: MS Word or PDF

Deadline: Midday, 16th October 2026

Submit to: youngadult@cliftonlitfest.com

Eligibility: You must attend a Bristol-based school, academy, or college or be home schooled and live in the city.

Winners will be announced at a special event during the **Clifton Literary Festival on 14th November 2026**, where winning pieces will be celebrated and excerpts read aloud by Paul McGann, an award-winning actor!

Go All In. Find Your Voice.

If you would like more information, please contact Phil Leonard at youngadult@cliftonlitfest.com



National
Year of
Reading
2026

Why “The Voice” or “Voices”?

(2) the 2026 Theme

We chose the theme to coincide with the National Year of Reading 2026. The theme celebrates the power of stories, ideas and self-expression. Reading allows us to hear voices from different cultures, communities, generations and experiences.

Writing gives us the opportunity to add our own voice.

Whether real or imagined, spoken out loud or read silently, individual or collective, voices shape how we understand ourselves and the world around us. We invite young writers to explore what voices mean to them: the voices that inspire, challenge, unite, remember, question or create change. That might be in the form of a piece of fiction or a non-fiction / allegorical submission.

As the National Year of Reading encourages everyone to "Go All In" and discover the transformative power of reading, this competition encourages young people to become creators as well as readers, sharing their own unique voice with others.



Terms and Conditions

1. Eligibility

The competition is open to pupils currently enrolled in schools in the City of Bristol. Pupils who are home schools and live in the city are also welcome.

Entries may be submitted through a school or individually.

Entrants must be in the forms specified in the categories (Years 9 to 11 or Years 12 and 13)

2. Entry Requirements

Each entry must be an original piece of writing created solely by the entrant.

Submissions must be fiction or non-fiction pieces based on the competition theme “The Voice” or “Voices”.

Word count: no minimum word count, maximum word count of 800 words excluding the title.

Students are welcome to submit pieces for both fiction and non-fiction categories in their year range. Therefore, a maximum of two submissions is permitted per student.

3. Submission Process

Entries must be submitted by the deadline stated on the competition website/materials.

Late, incomplete, or incorrectly submitted entries may not be accepted.

Entries must be submitted by email to youngadult@cliftonlitfest.com

4. Judging

Entries will be judged by a panel selected by the organisers.

The judging criteria are outlined in Slide (4)

The judges’ decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into regarding the outcome.

Shortlisting and winners will be announced on the date(s) specified in the competition details.

5. Prizes

Prizes will be awarded as outlined in the competition announcement.

No cash alternatives will be offered.

The organisers reserve the right to substitute a prize of equal or greater value if necessary.

6. Copyright and Usage

Entrants retain the copyright to their work.

By entering, participants grant the organisers a non-exclusive, royalty-free licence to publish, reproduce, and promote their work in connection with the competition (e.g. websites, or in promotional materials).

Entries will always be credited to the author where possible.

7. Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Each entry must be written entirely by the entrant without the use of artificial intelligence (AI) tools or services. The use of AI to generate, draft, rewrite, paraphrase, expand, edit, or otherwise contribute to any part of an entry is strictly prohibited.

8. Safeguarding and Consent

Schools may be contacted to verify the pupil enrolment.

Winners and finalists may be asked to provide a signed parental/guardian consent form for publicity purposes (including name, school, and photo).

9. Data Protection

Personal details provided will only be used for the purposes of administering the competition.

Information will not be shared with third parties.

10. General

The organisers reserve the right to amend, withdraw, or cancel the competition in exceptional circumstances.

Participation in the competition constitutes acceptance of these Terms and Conditions.

Judging Criteria and Weightings

1. Creativity & Originality (40%)

- Does the piece show fresh ideas or a unique perspective?
- Is the voice authentic and engaging for the reader?
- Does the writer take risks in theme, style, or form (while still being coherent)?

2. Structure & Organisation (25%)

- Is the writing well-structured, with a clear beginning, middle, and end?
- Does the pacing hold the reader's attention?

3. Language & Style (20%)

- Is vocabulary appropriate, expressive, and effective?
- Does the writer use literary devices (imagery, metaphor, dialogue, description) well?
- Is the tone consistent and suited to the piece?

4. Technical Accuracy (15%)

- Are spelling, grammar, and punctuation used correctly?
- Do errors distract from the meaning, or is the writing polished and easy to read?