

The Cairo American College 70th Anniversary Short Fiction Contest

In the fall of 1945, a new school was founded and fifty students in grades one through eight enrolled at The Cairo School for American Children. Today's Cairo American College evolved directly from this institution.

To celebrate the imaginations of those visionaries who created the school we all love today, the English Department proudly introduces a writing contest commemorating the historic founding of CAC seventy years ago.

Many of the rules for the Cairo American College 70th Anniversary Short Fiction Contest are adapted from the 55Fiction contest held annually by *New Times*, a weekly paper in San Luis Obispo. More information about that contest can be found on-line at <http://www.newtimeslo.com/special-issue/8/55-fiction/how-to-enter/>.

The Rules

Rule #1: You must write fiction, not poems or essays or inchoate thoughts.

Your "story" must contain the four parts found in any good narrative: 1) a setting; 2) a character or characters; 3) conflict; and 4) resolution.

Steve Moss of *New Times* explains the requirements this way:

- **Setting:** "All stories have to be happening someplace, which means they have to have a setting of some kind, even if it's the other side of the universe, the inner reaches of someone's mind, or just the house next-door."
- **Character:** "Characters can have infinite variations. People, animals, clouds, microbes. Anything."
- **Conflict:** "By conflict, we merely mean that in the course of the story, something has to *happen*. The lovers argue. The deer flees. The astronauts wait in anticipation. Even in this last example, something is happening, even though no one is moving or talking."

- **Resolution:** “The outcome of the story, known also as the resolution. This doesn't necessarily mean that there's a moral ('Justice is its own reward,' 'In the end, love triumphs'), or even that the conflict itself is resolved. It may or may not be. But what it does mean is that when the story ends, someone has to have learned something . . . It's even possible that none of the characters learn anything. But if that's the case, then we the readers must.”

Rule #2: You may write about anything you like, but you may use neither more than nor fewer than **70** words. You must use **70** words. How many? Seventy. That's 15 more words than are allowed in the 55Fiction contest hosted by *New Times*.

Rule #3: No matter what your word-processor tells you, hyphenated words will not count as single words. For example, “wine-dark sea” is three words, not two. However, if a hyphenated word cannot be broken down into two words (for example, “re-entry”), it counts as one word. Numbers count as words and fall under this rule whether expressed as numerals (8, 28, 500, or 1984), or as words (eight, twenty-eight, etc.). “Twenty-eight” is two words when written out, but only one when expressed as “28.”

Rule #4: While your title does not count in your total word count, it may contain no more than six (6) words.

Rule #5: Contractions count as single words. “She will fall” is three words; “she'll fall” is two. Contractions that are shortened forms of longer words count as a full word. “I like them” is three words; “I like 'em” is three words.

Rule #6: An initial counts as a word. “James T. Kirk” is three words since “T.” is an abbreviation of a full word. Exception: when an initial is part of an acronym like “NBA” or “CAC,” the entire acronym counts as one word.

Rule #7: Punctuation marks are not words. Really, they're not.

Rule #8: No story may end with a character waking up and saying, “Gosh, it was all a dream.” We suggest that you avoid other clichés as well.

Rule #9: You may submit as many stories as you want, but each story must be typed on its own sheet of paper. Include your name at the top of the page.

Rule #10: Just **70** words. No more; no fewer.

Contest begins:

Contest ends: