

# WOMEN<sup>®</sup>

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## Writing the West

### THE LAURA SHORT FICTION CONTEST AND AWARD RUBRIC

\* WWW defines “the West” as anywhere on the North American continent west of the Mississippi River, including Alaska and Hawaii, Canada west of Ontario, and Mexico.

\*\* Depiction of a character’s biases or stereotypical views, presented in context, may be appropriate.

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This rubric was created by and for Women Writing the West, May, 2011 [www.WomenWritingtheWest.org](http://www.WomenWritingtheWest.org)

	<b>Ineligible</b>	<b>4 - 7 points</b>	<b>8 – 10 points</b>
<b>1 - Women of the West Theme</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Male main character(s)</li><li>• Story not set in the West*</li><li>• Does not portray authentic western experience</li><li>• Theme &amp; content do not reflect WWW’s mission and goals</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Female main character(s)</li><li>• Story set in the West but could have happened anywhere; or, story partly set in the West*</li><li>• Generally portrays authentic experience</li><li>• Theme &amp; content generally reflect WWW’s mission &amp; goals</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Female main character(s)</li><li>• Western setting primary &amp; essential*</li><li>• Consistently portrays authentic western experience</li><li>• Theme &amp; content excellent reflections of WWW’s mission &amp; goals</li></ul>

	<b>0 - 3 points</b>	<b>4 – 7 points</b>	<b>8 – 10 points</b>
<b>2 - Characterization</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Character(s) not developed</li> <li>• Stereotypical character(s)**</li> <li>• Dialogue not convincing</li> <li>• Characters generic, not interesting</li> <li>• Reader does not sympathize with main character</li> <li>• Didactic, preachy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Main character somewhat developed</li> <li>• Generally no inappropriate gender, ethnic, racial, or other stereotypes**</li> <li>• Dialogue at times sounds unnatural</li> <li>• Character(s) interesting</li> <li>• Reader sympathizes somewhat with main character</li> <li>• Character’s “lesson” generally well presented</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Main character well developed</li> <li>• No inappropriate gender, ethnic, racial, or other stereotypes included**</li> <li>• Dialogue sounds natural</li> <li>• Character(s) original and unique</li> <li>• Reader sympathizes with main character</li> <li>• Any “lesson” subtle and organic</li> </ul>
<b>3 - Setting</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Setting not important to the story</li> <li>• Setting not described</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Setting of moderate importance</li> <li>• Setting described in conventional terms</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A strong sense of place is inherent in story</li> <li>• Setting vividly described, using most of the senses</li> </ul>
<b>4 - Plot</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Main character has no goal or problem she solves, or this is unclear</li> <li>• Story fails to hook reader; ending not satisfying</li> <li>• Implausible</li> <li>• Plot predictable</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Main character has goal or problem of marginal importance</li> <li>• Slow beginning leads to more action; or conclusion leaves some questions unanswered; or conclusion is not satisfying</li> <li>• Some points may strain credibility</li> <li>• Plot not new, but shows some freshness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Main character has difficulty achieving important goal or solving important problem</li> <li>• Opening draws reader in; conclusion satisfying</li> <li>• Suspension of disbelief consistent</li> <li>• Plot original, fresh</li> </ul>

	<b>0 - 3 points</b>	<b>4 - 7 points</b>	<b>8 - 10 points</b>
<b>5 - Voice</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Narrative voice lacking, confusing, distances reader from the story</li> <li>• Point of view confusing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Narrative voice dependable</li> <li>• Point of view wavers or occasionally jumps</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Narrative voice engaging, fresh, distinct</li> <li>• Point of view clear, consistent; or POV shifts clear and intentional</li> </ul>
<b>6 - Literary Qualities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poor or inappropriate command of language (slang, word choice, figurative language, etc.)</li> <li>• Imagery confusing or nonexistent</li> <li>• Premise conventional, simplistic, expected</li> <li>• Not enjoyable or thought-provoking</li> <li>• Story title ordinary, uninspired</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Moderate command of language (slang, word choice, figurative language, etc.)</li> <li>• Imagery clear</li> <li>• Premise not new, but well explored</li> <li>• A pleasant read</li> <li>• Title fitting, appropriate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consistently strong command of language (slang, word choice, figurative language, etc.)</li> <li>• Imagery vivid, fresh</li> <li>• Premise breaks new ground</li> <li>• Thought-provoking</li> <li>• Title intriguing or resonates with meaning</li> </ul>
<b>7 - Technical Conventions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Frequent problems with grammar, punctuation, spelling</li> <li>• Sloppy, wordy, repetitious writing</li> <li>• Poor balance between dialogue and narrative</li> <li>• <b>Ineligible:</b> Story does not have a beginning, middle, and end</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Occasional lapses of grammar, punctuation, spelling</li> <li>• Clear writing</li> <li>• Adequate balance between dialogue &amp; narrative</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear grasp of grammar, punctuation, spelling; or reader trusts that conventions purposefully set aside</li> <li>• Tight writing</li> <li>• Good balance between dialogue &amp; narrative</li> </ul>