

THE CHARACTER CODE

Submission Guidelines



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WHO CAN SUBMIT TO THE CHARACTER CODE DIGITAL PUBLICATION

Open to Story Studios Australia young writers enrolled in a Creative Story Writing Group or Private Mentorship for [the full Semester One](#).

A two week grace period will be given to ensure those trialling at the start of the semester can still take part. Those enrolling more than two weeks after the commencement of the semester (Monday 16 February, 2025) will NOT be eligible to submit stories to the digital anthology.

Young writers will be guided through writing their story during their weekly story writing sessions, however it is up to young writers and their families to ensure the final piece meets the criteria and is submitted on time.

Young writers/parents eligible to be published (i.e. enrolled for the full Semester One), will be emailed a code once submissions open that will allow submission via the online portal. If you should have received the code and can't locate it, please contact us on info@storystudiosaustralia.com.au

Publication is subject to approval by Story Studios Australia.

Submissions will open on Monday 23 March, 2026

Submissions close on Sunday 19 April (last day school holidays) at 11:59pm.

The digital publication will be available at the end of Semester One.

RULES

Entries that fail to meet the following rules/criteria will not be accepted.

- Nothing that has previously been published. These should all be new Term 1 stories.
- No assistance from AI tools, parents or any third parties.
- Stories should not contain themes that are too dark, gory or violent. If it's too dark, it won't be published. Stories must be appropriate for all ages! Think PG rated. We encourage young writers to check with their Story and Writing Mentor if in need of advice on any particular stories before submitting.
- Stories up to 1000 words (not including title).
- No incomplete stories e.g. no excerpts or 'to be continued'
- Submissions must be made through the Story Studios **Submissions Portal via the website**. Emailed submissions will not be accepted.
- Submissions are FINAL. No edits can be made once you have submitted. If your submission does not meet the above criteria it will not be published.

CHECKLIST AND GUIDELINES FOR YOUNG WRITERS, PARENTS AND GUARDIANS

In-person young writers are encouraged to bring a tablet or laptop to type up their stories (however we suggest handwriting first drafts!).

Online young writers should type their stories in the Google Doc provided so that mentors can provide feedback each week.

Story Studios Mentors will NOT be able to submit on behalf of young writers. Please don't assume your story mentor will submit your work, even if it's being developed during sessions. Participation in the digital publication is entirely optional for all young writers.

Any feedback should be sought during weekly story writing groups/mentorships - mentors will not be able to provide feedback, nor any changes made to stories, after a story has been submitted.

Parents/guardians are encouraged to check in with young writers to see how they are tracking with their story during the term and check emails regularly for important communications. Your young writer may also require your assistance submitting via the Submissions Portal.

TONE AND STYLE

- Any genre or style welcome, however the term's emphasis will be on stories with strong and interesting character arcs.
- Stories that are too dark, gory or violent and stories that broach themes too mature for young audiences will not be accepted.

HOW TO FORMAT YOUR SUBMISSION

- Written submissions must be typed and submitted as a Word or Pages document.
- Text should be Arial size 12.
- 1.15 line spacing
- .5 indentation
- Text should be squared (not left aligned)
- “ ” Double quotation marks for dialogue
- ‘ ’ Single quotation marks for thoughts and quotes within dialogue
- Add the title and author name at the top of the document, like this:

Title

Author Name **Please don't add "by" to the author name.**

- Line breaks - get rid of them unless they are absolutely necessary. A new paragraph without a line break in between will usually suffice. Line breaks are necessary if there's a change in perspective, big leap in time (not just 'the next day'), or there's a significant change in the plot.

- Punctuation - check commas and full stops are *inside* quotation marks.
- Check spelling
- Check grammar - capital letters in all the right places etc.
- Indent dialogue - each time a new character speaks and you drop them onto a new line, that new line should be indented.
- NO 'the end'
- NO 'to be continued...'
- Be conscious of paragraph and section breaks: first lines will be indented, line breaks between sections/chapter
- Bold lowercase for section/chapter headings
- Use - instead of – (smaller dashes instead of bigger dashes)
- No ampersands - spell out 'and'
- Italics for onomatopoeia
- Numbers below 100 should be spelled out. E.g. fifty percent, one, two, three if used for countdown etc. Only use numerals for things like 5am (note that it would be five o'clock however).
- Change any Americanisms e.g. mom should be mum, realized should be realised.
- Remove any double question or exclamation marks
- Remove any excessive (three dots does the trick)
- Save document as 'Title - First Name Last Name'