

The Crime Writers of Canada Awards of Excellence

2026 Submission Rules

The Crime Writers of Canada present the Awards of Excellence annually to recognize outstanding achievement in seven categories of crime writing:

- 1. Best Crime Novel**
- 2. Best First Crime Novel**
- 3. Best Crime Novel Set in Canada**
- 4. Best Traditional Mystery**
- 5. Best Crime Short Story**
- 6. Best French Crime Book**
- 7. Best Juvenile or YA Crime Book**
- 8. Best Nonfiction Crime Book**

I. General Qualifying Criteria

To qualify, all works submitted to the CWC Awards of Excellence must fulfill the following criteria:

1. The work must fit into the crime-writing genre which includes capers, detective stories, espionage, mystery, police procedural, suspense, cozy, thrillers and crime-themed literary works, as well as fictional or factual accounts of real crimes.
2. The author must be a Canadian citizen or have been granted Permanent Resident status in Canada.
 - a. Authors who are Canadian citizens do not have to be residing in Canada to be eligible.
 - b. Authors who are Permanent Residents of Canada may be of any nationality.
 - c. If the work is co-authored, at least one of the authors must be a Canadian citizen or a Permanent Resident of Canada.
3. The work must have been published in the preceding year (**January 1 to December 31, 2025**) in either English or French. The year of publication is determined solely by the copyright date of the work.
4. The work may be submitted by the author or by the publisher on the author's behalf.
5. Publication of the work may be either in print and/or digital (e-book) format.
6. Self-published works are eligible.
7. The work must be available for purchase in Canada through a Canadian retailer's regular channels; in other words through a bookstore or a recognized online vendor such as Rakuten Kobo, Chapters/Indigo or Amazon.ca.
8. A translated work that was originally published in a language other than English or French is eligible provided that:

- a. The work has been translated from the original language into English or French;
 - b. The English or French translation was first published in the preceding year, 2025.
9. Authors may enter as many categories as they wish, provided their work(s) meet(s) the special criteria of each category.
 - a. Each title may only be entered in one category.
 - b. A title cannot be moved from one category to another after the submission deadline of **December 15, 2025**.
10. A novel may be submitted in up to only THREE of the four novel categories provided that the work meets the Special Criteria for each of the novel categories chosen.
11. If a category has fewer than six (6) submissions in a given year (2026), they will be held over and re-entered for the following year (2027).
12. All works must be submitted in PDF format. Hard copies are no longer accepted.
13. The required entry fee must be paid for each submission. Entry fees not paid **IN FULL** by the required date will result in the submission being disqualified.
14. Use of AI: You cannot use AI to write your book. You can use AI for research and outlining, but you must disclose this. Failure to disclose AI's role in creating your book will lead to the immediate withdrawal of the work from the competition without a fee refund. The Awards Committee may also impose further penalties.
15. The deadline for submission is **December 15, 2025 11:59 PST**

II. Special Criteria

In addition to the General Qualifying Criteria, to qualify the work must also meet the special criteria for the chosen category.

1. **Best Crime Novel.**

- The novel must be a minimum of 50,000 words.

2. **Best First Crime Novel.**

- The book must be the author's first novel in any genre, including literary fiction.
- The novel must be a minimum of 50,000 words.
- An author who has published works ***other than novels*** is eligible to submit to this category. This would include short stories, novellas, non-fiction, plays/screenplays and poetry.
- An author is ***not eligible*** to submit to this category if they have published an earlier novel commercially in either print or digital form (e-book). This includes any novel that was:
 - Assigned an ISBN or ASIN
 - self-published
 - published in Canada or any other country
 - in any genre, including literary fiction
 - published under the author's given name or pseudonym, or
 - published jointly with another author.

3. **Best Crime Novel Set in Canada.**

- The novel must be a minimum of 50,000 words.
- The majority of the novel (60% or greater) must be set in Canada.
- An author cannot win this category more than two (2) consecutive years running. In other words, the winning author would have to submit their novel to an alternate novel category in Year Three (3).

4. Best Traditional Mystery.

- To be eligible, the novel must be a puzzle story that starts with a murder (or crime) and emphasizes its solution. The protagonist's job is to discover who committed the crime and why.
- Provided the novel is a puzzle story, it may be from a wide range of subgenres; for example: Classic Golden Age style (Agatha Christie, Sherlock Holmes), Amateur Sleuth, Cozy, Private Eye, Police Procedural, Historical, Humorous, and Locked Room.
- The novel must be a minimum of 50,000 words.

5. Best Crime Short Story.

- The maximum length for a short story is 8000 words.
- An author may enter up to three short stories in a given year.
- When submitting the short story, the author or publisher must include a copy of the table of contents of the periodical or book that lists the short story.

6. Best French Crime Book

- The book may be either fiction or non-fiction.
- The work must be originally published in French. Translations from English to French are ***not eligible*** for this category.

7. Best Juvenile or YA Crime Book.

- The book may be either fiction or non-fiction.

8. Best Nonfiction Crime Book.

- The book must be non-fiction, including factual accounts of real crimes.
- Fictionalized accounts of real crime are not eligible. These should be submitted in the appropriate novel category.

III. Submission Procedure

1. Click the following link to enter your submission and to pay online [\[insert link\]](#).
2. Entry fees are presented in the table below. CWC Members in good standing receive a 20% discount. All payments are in Canadian funds.

<i>2026 AWARD FEE SCHEDULE</i>	NOVEL	NOVELLA	SHORT STORY
MEMBER FEE*	\$44	\$32	\$24
NON-MEMBER FEE	\$55	\$40	\$30

1. Complete the submission form and upload your submission.
2. **For short stories**, remember to include the PDF copy of the table of contents of the anthology or publication as part of the short story upload.
3. Complete your payment.
4. Once your payment has been accepted, you will receive a **confirmation email**.
5. **For multiple submissions: before clicking Proceed to Payment, click the Save & Submit Another**

IV. Timeline

Submissions Deadline 15 December 2025 11:59 PST

The shortlists for all categories will be announced on **April 24, 2026**

The winners will be announced on **May 29, 2026**