



## The 2009 Big Write, A youth writing contest!

*It Sounded Like Someone was scratching at the window.*

### Official Contest Guidelines

The Big Read festival, St. Louis Writers Guild, and No Waste Publishing invites students in grades 4-8 (in Fall 2009) to participate in the fourth annual youth writing contest, The Big Write! **The contest officially opens on Sunday, February 15, 2009 and will close on Friday, September 4, 2009. Entry(ies) must be postmark dated on or before September 4, 2009.**

#### **The Prizes!**

There will be six winners--three in each of the two grade level categories for (1) Grades 4 & 5, and (2) Grades 6-8. Winners will receive cash prizes of \$100 for 1st place, \$50 for 2nd place, and \$25 for 3rd place, an Award Certificate, and an invitation to read their winning entries before a live audience at The Big Read festival on Saturday, October 10, 2009. The winning stories will also be published on The Big Read website at: [www.bigread.net](http://www.bigread.net) and all students that submit qualified entries will receive a special commemorative bookmark from The Big Read.

#### **The Contest Rules!**

Write an original story that begins with the sentence: "**It sounded like someone was scratching at the window.**" The story may be scary, adventurous, humorous, or just plain fun. Judging will be based on originality, cohesiveness, spelling, punctuation, and grammar.

#### **Your entry must meet the following guidelines to be eligible to win:**

1. You may submit more than one entry, but the Official Contest Entry Form (See other side of this document) must be stapled, not paper-clipped, to the front of each story you submit. A missing entry form for any story will disqualify that story. You may copy this form.
2. Each entry may not contain less than 250 words or more than 500 words (Title doesn't count).
3. Each entry must begin with the exact sentence: "It sounded like someone was scratching at the window." It must be placed below your story title, to begin the first paragraph.
4. Each entry should be typed or neatly hand-printed on plain white paper. If you type, you must use a standard 12-point black font. No fancy fonts or colored paper! Use black ink if you hand-print your entry. Print neatly.
5. Do not include pictures with your entry.
6. Do not write your name or include any identifiable marks on the story pages.

#### **Announcement of Finalists**

*See other side >>>.*

The names of all finalists will be posted on The Big Read website prior to the festival. All entrants are invited to attend to the Award Ceremony at The Big Read festival where the winners will be announced. See [www.bigread.net](http://www.bigread.net) for finalists' names and festival details.

*It Sounded Like Someone was scratching at the window.*

## Official Contest Entry Form

Follow all Official Contest Guidelines on other side of this form.

A separate contest entry form must be attached to every story you send us. You may photocopy this form and print additional copies off The Big Read website at: [www.bigread.net](http://www.bigread.net). Copies are also available at St. Louis City Libraries, St. Louis County Libraries, Jefferson County Libraries, St. Charles City Libraries, and St. Charles County Libraries. For more information, visit: [www.bigread.net](http://www.bigread.net) or call 314-863-0278.

Mail your entry(ies) with postmark dated on or before Friday, September 4, 2009 to:

St. Louis Writers Guild  
Attention: The Big Write Contest  
P.O. Box 411757  
St. Louis, MO 63141

Entries will not be returned, so keep copies before mailing.

**SHOW THIS PART TO YOUR PARENTS:** If your entry wins an award, The Big Read and St. Louis Writers Guild may make light editing changes to your story to improve its readability for publication online.

**PRINT NEATLY** and be sure to fill out this form completely!

Name of Young Author \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_

Grade in Fall of 2009 (Home schoolers, indicate customary grade for age): \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Young Author's Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Name \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher's/Sponsor's Name (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

School/Organization Name: \_\_\_\_\_

School/Organization Phone Number with area code: \_\_\_\_\_

I have read all the Official Contest rules and followed them. I promise that the attached story is my own fictional work and contains my own, original ideas.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Young Author's Signature

