



THANK YOU FOR VOLUNTEERING to judge the 2020 North Texas Great Expectations contest.

Without your help, our contest would not be possible.

Please mark your calendars to return the entries by February 24th or as they're complete.

To ensure a fair contest, our judges need to have a common point of reference, so please take a few minutes to read through these instructions before you begin judging and keep a copy handy so that you can consult it as questions arise.

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS:

- Mark your calendar, cell phone, or electronic reminder that entries are due **February 24th**.
- **IMPORTANT**--Run your computer system's virus protection software prior to opening entries. Every effort has been made to scan documents for viruses prior to sending, but another level of virus prevention is always a good idea.
- SAVE the panel of entries. DO NOT change the file names.
- Verify you have received the number of files indicated in your email.
- Open each file to verify you can read it. If the format of the contest document does not allow you access to the entry, please contact us and we will resend the document in a compatible format.
- **Send an email to gecoordinator@ntrwa.org verifying you've received your panel of entries.**
- **JUDGE TRAINING MATERIALS:** Our [blog](http://bit.ly/ContestTraining) << <http://bit.ly/ContestTraining> >> has posted judge training materials. We hope you'll take a look, especially if you have questions.
- Judge the entry, making comments and recording your scores, and SAVE the file. Continue to use the same file name. **Please do not change the file names.**
IF FOR ANY REASON YOU CAN NOT SAVE WITH THE SAME FILE NAME, please just add "-02" to the file name. Example:
Original: YA07-TotallyAwesomeStory-JYA22.docx
RENAMED: YA07-TotallyAwesomeStory-JYA22-02.docx
- As soon as you've finished an entry, please return to gecoordinator@ntrwa.org; please don't wait until they're all done. Verifying scores early prevents big delays in announcing finalists.
- Keep a copy of your scored entries on your hard drive until we send you an e-mail with the winners. At that point, it's safe to delete them.
- EACH category has four unique questions. If you have questions about the score sheet, we've posted explanations for each category on our [blog](http://ntrwagreatexpectations.blogspot.com/)
<<<http://ntrwagreatexpectations.blogspot.com/>>>

FILE NAME: The file names we have assigned are an important part of our tracking system, so please do not change the name on your file. The file name includes the unique entry number, the title of the manuscript, and your judge number.

For example: YA07-TotallyAwesomeStory-JYA22.docx

The entry “Totally Awesome Story” is the seventh entry in the young adult category. This particular entry has been assigned to Young Adult Judge #22. When we receive this file back, we know which judge returned it and which entry it is.

IF FOR ANY REASON YOU CAN NOT SAVE WITH THE SAME FILE NAME, please just add “-02” to the file name. Example:

Original: YA07-TotallyAwesomeStory-JYA22.docx

RENAMED: YA07-TotallyAwesomeStory-JYA22-02.docx

SCORE SHEETS: We designed our score sheets to reflect the individual sub-genres of romance. If you have entries in more than one category, you will have different questions unique to each. No matter which category you are judging, though, you will have 20 criteria to judge. For each individual blank on the score sheet, you should assign a score between 1 and 5 (with 3 being “average” for an unpublished manuscript). Add your scores or don’t worry about adding them. We will always calculate the scores one last time.

COMMENTS: Great Expectations hopes to be an **encouraging** contest. Please write constructive comments throughout the manuscript. **IF YOU USE TRACK CHANGES** you might want to change the identifying information. OR feel free to write your comments directly in the manuscript, using **colored** text, ALL CAPS, and **[[BRACKETS]]**. Use **highlighting** to identify portions of the manuscript you wish to reference. For example:

Jenna shivered in her shoes as she gazed out the window. **It was a dark and stormy night.**
[[THIS IS A CLICHE]]

NO WRONG CATEGORY & NO WRONG FORMATTING: Please do not count off for entries you feel may be in the "wrong" category or have different formatting.

Some entries can cross categories: for example, a manuscript targeted for Harlequin’s Intrigue line might be entered in either Romantic Suspense, Contemporary Series, or both. If you have a question regarding category placement of an entry or feel you cannot judge the entry, please contact gecoordinator@ntrwa.org immediately.

When a file is re-saved over multiple computers, sometimes it loses formatting. Sometimes it may change plain text to italics. **DO NOT COUNT OFF** for formatting errors. The Score Sheet does not have a place to score formatting.

USING ALL THE SCORES:

Remember, the Great Expectations Contest might be the first contest the author ever entered.

PLEASE BE KIND. Phrase constructive comments in a positive manner.

Please utilize the full range of the possible scores: 1 through 5 (but only use 1 or 2 if truly warranted):

5 -- Outstanding, suitable for submission

4 -- Very Good, needs some tweaking

The manuscript does not have to be perfect to receive a 5.

A section of the manuscript needs fine-tuning.

- 3 -- Good, problem areas noted
- 2 -- Has potential, needs work
- 1 -- Needs major revision

*More than one section or problem needs revisions.
Please give constructive comments and examples.
Please give constructive comments and examples.*

As in every contest with judges, when giving a score of one, two, or three, please try to point out specific passages in the manuscript that need help, examples of the author's problem, or specific reasons you believe the manuscript falls short. If possible, suggest to the author how she might improve her work.

Be constructive, not harsh. Do not assume a writer is a novice just because her or his writing needs work, and be encouraging even if the writer is struggling. **The Great Expectations Contest often is the first contest a writer ever entered.** Sharing one's work is a great accomplishment. If you don't have any resources for tips, we can provide you websites for 'Writing Tips'. The Great Expectations Contest provides a forum for writers to learn their craft and improve their writing, and you have an opportunity to help your fellow writers grow.

DO NOT SCORE A ZERO OR USE HALF POINTS. We encourage judges to comment throughout the manuscript and on the Score Sheet. If you score an entry low in a specific area, please let the author know (in a helpful manner) why he or she scored low on the particular section of the scoresheet. Any blanks will be awarded 3s. Do not deduct for manuscript formatting. Formatting is not a judged part of our contest and the manuscript may have changed during the transfer of the file or the addition of our contest score sheet—we reformat entries to ensure a consistency in appearance.

INTERNATIONAL SPELLINGS & QUOTATION MARKS: Keep in mind that many of our entries may have **international spellings**. With the increasing number of international participants, please do not count off for a consistent spelling or the use of one quote mark (which is standard in the United Kingdom). There is a difference between a typo and an internationally accepted rule. The *Chicago Manual of Style* is not always correct for international work.

Our training materials may be found on the Contest blog at <http://bit.ly/ContestTraining>.

We are available to answer your questions directly. Please send to gecoordinator@ntrwa.org.

ALWAYS keep a copy of your scores until winners are announced. We will send out an announcement when it is "safe" to delete your GE files.

Thank you again, and happy judging.

The Great Expectations Contest Coordinators

gecoordinator@ntrwa.org

[Great Expectations Judge Training Materials](#)

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