



FIFTY STATES AWARD



We're looking to create a collection of books, starting with our own backyard, that allows readers from across the globe to travel broadly just by turning a page. From the salmon-swollen rivers of Alaska to the skyscraping towers of New York, we're looking for stories set against intimate, detailed, real-life settings here in the US.

- Submissions must be **between 1,000 and 15,000 words**
- Intended audience is **teens and adults** (anyone 10 and older) who read below their age or grade level
- Stories should be set in one specific state per book, and include detailed elements that highlight the unique culture and history therein.
- Use familiar **vocabulary** and straightforward sentences. Avoid long, unbroken paragraphs or chapters

TIPS AND INSPIRATION

- Choose a region. Pennsylvania (home of Storyshares!) for example, is the 5th most populous state (in both landmass and population) and the cultures/mannerisms/ways of life vary greatly by region. Philadelphia and its suburbs are steeped in art museums and national landmarks, and so bristle with history. The Laurel Highlands, on the other hand, are dominated by outdoor attractions, beautiful waterfalls, and great state parks. Narrowing your focus to a specific region will help you find the level of detail we're looking for in these stories!
- Create a list of news articles/human stories, etc. from a specific state that might provide prompts or texture for story ideas. For example, [here's a news story from PA that would translate into a great book.](#)
- Research [famous local places for settings](#) in which to place your story/characters. You can find several tours on YouTube that will help you to feel that you have actually visited the places you are writing about!

- Check out this [great list of interesting, historic facts by state](#)! Use one as the basis for a storyline. For example, did you know that Alabama was the first state to observe Christmas as a legal holiday?
 - Or, [learn about a state flag](#) and use that information as your plot! For example, did you know that the Alaskan flag was designed by a thirteen-year-old as part of a state contest?
 - Don't be afraid to cross genres in your story. As long as the details of the state in which you set your story are accurate, you can take as much creative control with the other elements of your story as you'd like. For example, you could tell the story of a time-traveling teenager from the 1920s navigating modern-day Boston. Or the story of a werewolf teen celebrating Mardi Gras in Louisiana for the first time.
 - Research the following elements of a state for additional inspiration: weather and environmental conditions, politics, attire / styles, laws, local food and eating habits/customs, schools and policy, wildlife and plants, local festivals
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WRITING PROMPTS

- Many states have [prominent art scenes](#). Research the different art sectors for inspiration for story settings. Ex. Austin, Texas.
- Text a bench? Text a lamppost? Write about a character exploring a U.S. state via this [cool, new installment](#).
- Imagine a natural disaster or, okay, a Zombie apocalypse. You have the ability to save one historic site or natural wonder in your state. What do you choose?
- Write about a searchlight on a ship, a police car, a homeowner's deck, or somewhere else where a searchlight might be available and write about what is revealed in the light!
- Turn to social media. Visit instagram or Pinterest and search the name of a U.S. State. Choose an image as the starting point for your story.

Questions? Send us a note: support@storyshares.org

