The Storyshares library is home to a unique collection of easy to read, hard to put down books specifically created to engage teens & adults who struggle with reading.

Here are some tips & guidelines for creating these "just right" stories.

The goal is to generate content for preteen and teen readers that corresponds to the *Hacked!* fiction series published by ReadWorks. You will need to create a free ReadWorks account to access the series.

FORMAT & READABILITY:

- Stories should be no more than **800 words** in length. Write short and well-spaced paragraphs, avoiding long, unbroken paragraphs.

- Illustrations and pictures are not necessary and do not need to be included in the written submission.

- Use familiar words and repetitive vocabulary. Help readers deduce the meaning of complex words by providing context clues or subtle definitions within sentences. For example: "The soup tasted horrid. I wanted to spit it out."

- Write sentences that are concise, concrete, and straightforward. Construct sentences in a way that is engaging and easy to read for a middle-school audience.

- Avoid idioms or misleading phrases. Replace expressions and clichés with direct language. For example: instead of "She decided to bite the bullet and she picked up the phone," try "She took a deep breath. She picked up the phone."

- To track the readability of your books as you write, you can use our new text analyzer. View the reading level stats through the button on the left, and select "show analyzer" to watch your readability chart as you input new text.

CONTENT:

- **Alternate Ending:** This writing category requires you to read the *Hacked!* series published by ReadWorks and write an alternate ending to the series. There are five books in the series and your new ending would be a part of the fifth book, *Fearless Fatima*.

- **Characters:** Since this is an established series, make sure to include the prominent characters, such as Fatima, Julia, Felipe, Professor Green, Brianna, and Danger, in your new ending. When writing these characters, note their behavior and personalities in the previous books and incorporate that into your writing. You are free to create any new characters you'd like for the series as long as they make sense with the previous installments. New characters should be relatable to a diverse reader audience. Make sure they are at least as old as your intended reader.

  Intriguing characters are developed through their actions, choices, and words. Create characters who make decisions that develop the plot. Give readers someone to root for. Distinguish your characters with something unique and memorable.

- **Plot:** Create a new ending that is exciting, unique, and relevant to your readers. Since this is an alternate ending to an established story, make sure that you have read all the previous installments in the *Hacked!* series and that your new ending makes sense with previous story events.

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

ReadWorks Rubric: 2024 Story of the Year Contest

Criteria for Success: Readability

Readability & Level	Length	**5%**	No more than 800 words
	Sentence Structure	**15%**	Sentences are concise, concrete, straightforward, and focused on the subject (without multiple clauses).
	Vocabulary	**10%**	Tier 1 and Tier 2 vocabulary words only: **Tier 1 words** (commonly used in spoken language): happy, run, baby, hat **Tier 2 words** (used in mature language + content areas): explain, complexHigher-level words are supported by text (context clues, repetition).

Criteria for Success: Content

Creativity, Intrigue, & Relevance for Audience	Overall	**10%**	Is the story thoughtfully presented and does it show a deep understanding of the material? • Excellent • Adequate • Poor • Not at all
	Topic & Title	**5%**	• The topic is relevant and engaging to the intended teen / young adult audience • Titles are not necessary for this category since authors will be writing a new ending to an existing story.
	Characters	**20%**	Are the prominent characters (Fatima, Julia, Felipe, Professor Green, Brianna, and Danger) included and/or accounted for? • Yes • No Do the characters you include from prior installments behave in a way that makes sense based on the previous installments? • Excellent • Adequate • Poor • Not at all Do any new characters you create make sense to the previous installments? • Excellent • Adequate • Poor • Not at all
	Plot	**20%**	Is it a logical conclusion to the series? Does it make sense based on how the previous installments have unfolded? • Excellent • Adequate • Poor • Not at all

Creativity, Intrigue, & Relevance for Audience	Writing & Grammar	5%	Are sentences engagingly constructed? • Excellent • Adequate • Poor • Not at all Does the text follow basic grammar rules? • Excellent • Adequate • Poor • Not at all
	Creativity & Originality	10%	Is the story unique? (For example… Is it clever? Is it exciting and fresh?) • Excellent • Adequate • Poor • Not at all
	Total Score	100%	

Definition of Rating Categories: ReadWorks

EXCELLENT
Overall strong
A few errors or missteps that do not have a major impact on the overall engaging nature and quality of the writing

ADEQUATE
Overall solid
Moments when the writing achieves excellence, balanced by moments when the writing is inconsistent/not effective/not engaging

POOR
Overall inconsistent
Many errors or missteps that impact the overall nature and quality of the writing

NOT AT ALL
Overall ineffective
Qualities called out by the rubric categories are not present in the writing