2025-2026 Archibald Rutledge Scholarship Creative Writing Application

The South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) announces the Archibald Rutledge Scholarship Program for 2025-2026. This program offers twelfth-grade students the opportunity to compete for scholarships in creative writing, dance, music, theatre, or visual arts. The purpose of the competition is to encourage and recognize academic and artistic excellence.

Eligibility: Twelfth-grade students (graduating in the spring of 2026) enrolled in public schools are eligible to participate in the scholarship competition. Students receiving the scholarships must be U.S. citizens who have attended South Carolina public schools for the past two consecutive years. The scholarships may be used for tuition, campus room/board, and instructional resource expenses at any South Carolina college or university. A student may only apply for a scholarship in one of the five areas.

Maximum Number of Creative Writing Entries per School:

1-100 students = 1 entry	**301-400 students = 4 entries**	**601-700 students = 7 entries**
101-200 students = 2 entries	**400-500 students = 5 entries**	**701-800 students = 8 entries**
201-300 students = 3 entries	**501-600 students = 6 entries**	**801-900 students = 9 entries**

Classification: An entry is defined as an original composition, created by the applicant, utilizing any form of creative writing including, but not limited to, journals, diaries, letters, memoirs, essays, poetry, storytelling, speeches, and free writing. The composition should not exceed two, double-spaced pages in length.

Entries: Applicants must submit an original creation, reflection statement, process folio, and submission checklist.

Creation: The creation should be an original work produced by the applicant and should be a high-quality, final draft of the writing. The submitted creation will be used to evaluate the entry.

Reflection Statement: The reflection statement should address, in the artist's own words, the intent of the creation and compare the final product with the original concept. The reflection statement should be double-spaced and consist of no more than one page.

Process Folio: The process folio should contain documentation of the planning and development of the creative writing from the inception of the idea to the final draft. The process folio may include support materials such as drafts, notes from dialogues with peers and/or teachers, research, inspirations, interviews, pictures, and/or events upon which the creation is based.

Submission Checklist: Applicants must submit a signed checklist (attached below) indicating that they have submitted all required material to be considered for the competition.

Written creations produced in collaboration with others are not eligible for this competition. creations must be the original work of the applicant. Entries must be 8.5"x11" format. Applicants should keep a copy of all materials.

Note: **If requested,** submissions mailed to SCDE will be returned to the applicant by June 15, 2026. Entries will also be available for pick up at the SCDE (call 803-734-3461 for arrangements). An entry not claimed by the applicant by June 15, 2026, will become the property of the SCDE. Incomplete applications will not be scored. If minimum scores are not obtained, a scholarship will not be awarded.

Selection Criteria: Entries will be scored based on criteria listed in this section. The creation and process folio each count as 50 percent of the total score. The judges will consider the following when evaluating your work:

- **Organization—**Easy to read, neat, and understandable.
- **Creativity/Originality—**Innovative and interesting use of content, treatments, styles, and genres.
- **Quality of Expression—**Work expresses professional and emotional qualities that convey the writer's intent.
- **Process Folio—**Provides detail about the writing process and includes any research, inspirations, drafts, interviews, pictures, drawings, and/or events serving as a basis for the writing. The process folio is not merely a preliminary draft with grammar corrected.
- **Reflection Statement—**Addresses the process of creating the work, how the work relates to the writer, and the message or inspiration for the writing. The reflection statement is scored with the process folio.

Awards: One Archibald Rutledge Creative Writing Scholarship of approximately $2,000 will be awarded to attend a South Carolina college or university. Two alternates may also be selected. The scholarship awards will be determined from the pool of entries in each discipline. The scholarship recipient and alternates will be announced in May 2026.

Deadline: Monday, February 2, 2026. Entries submitted electronically or in-person must be received by 5:00 p.m. on the day of the deadline. Mailed entries must be postmarked on or before Monday, February 2, 2026. Use this link for electronic submissions: https://scde.formstack.com/forms/archibald_rutledge_scholarship

2025-2026 Archibald Rutledge Scholarship
Creative Writing Application

Please type or print this application and include it with each individual entry. The student's name should not appear on any submitted material except this application. Submit all required materials by Monday, February 2, 2026.

Student Name _____

Phone Number (include area code) _____

Home Address _____

City _____

Zip Code _____

Student's Personal E-mail _____

Parent/Guardian E-mail _____

School Name _____

School Phone Number (include area code) _____

School Address _____

City _____

Zip Code _____

School District _____

Creative Writing Teacher _____

Creative Writing Teacher's E-mail _____

School Counselor _____

School Counselor's E-mail _____

Number of Students in 12th Grade _____

I hereby verify this creation is the original work of this student who is a U.S. citizen and has attended South Carolina public schools for the past two consecutive years. Additionally, I certify that the number of entries from this school complies with SCDE guidelines.

_____ _____

School Counselor's Signature **Principal's Signature**

Telephone _____ **Date** _____

Mail (**postmarked** on or before February 2, 2026) or deliver to the SCDE (before or by 5:00 p.m. on February 2, 2026) to Stephen Stokes, Archibald Rutledge Scholarship Program, SC Department of Education, 849 Learning Ln, West Columbia, SC 29172. Applications may also be submitted electronically via this link: https://scde.formstack.com/forms/archibald_rutledge_scholarship
For more information, contact Stephen Stokes at sstokes@ed.sc.gov.

2025-2026 Archibald Rutledge Scholarship
Creative Writing Application

Checklist

Applicants must submit ALL required documents as outlined in this checklist. Incomplete applications will not be considered for scoring. Arrange the submission in the order listed below. Do not send any additional materials, such as transcripts or letters of recommendation. Do not place your name or other identifying information on the original creation, process folio, or reflection statement.

_____ **Completed creative writing application attached to the original creation and process folio.**

____ **One original creation —The original creation utilizes any creative writing form including, but not limited to, journals, diaries, letters, memoirs, essays, poetry, storytelling, speeches, and free writing. The creation does not exceed two, double-spaced pages in length. Do not send more than one creation per student. The creation counts toward 50 percent of the total score.**

_____ **One original process folio—The process folio includes documentation of the planning and development of the poem from the inception of the idea to the final draft. It may include support materials such as drafts and notes from dialogues with peers and/or teachers. The process folio counts toward 50 percent of the total score.**

_____ **One original reflection statement—The reflection statement is no more than one page, addresses the intent of the composition, and compares the final product with the original concept.**

_____ **One copy of this completed checklist.**

_____ **I request for my entry to be returned to me upon conclusion of the scholarship competition.**

I have submitted ALL documentation required to apply for the 2025-2026 Archibald Rutledge Scholarship in creative writing. I understand that I will not be eligible for the Archibald Rutledge Scholarship competition if any of the above required materials are not included in my scholarship packet.

_____
Student's signature

_____
Print student's name

_____
School

2025-2026 ARCHIBALD RUTLEDGE SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

Deadline for applying is Monday, February 2, 2026.

What is it? The Archibald Rutledge Scholarship program, named for South Carolina's first poet laureate, offers twelfth-grade students (enrolled in a public school in South Carolina) the opportunity to compete for a scholarship in creative writing, dance, music, theatre, or visual arts as well as encourages and recognizes academic and artistic excellence among South Carolina students.

What does the program include? Students will mail or deliver original creations, process folios, and other required documentation in one of the five arts disciplines (creative writing, dance, music, theatre, or visual arts) to the South Carolina Department of Education.

When does the program begin? Applications will be available online in October 2025. All application material may be submitted online or by mail; however, artwork for the visual arts competition must be mailed or delivered in person to the SCDE. The deadline to submit an entry online or in-person is Monday, February 2, 2026, by 5:00 p.m. Mailed entries must be postmarked on or before Monday, February 2, 2026. Entries will not be accepted after the deadline. Entries should have been created during the 2024-2025 or 2025-2026 school year.

How will the students be recognized? Five scholarships (approximately $2,000 each) will be awarded in May 2026. The South Carolina Department of Education will make the necessary arrangements to transfer the scholarship funds directly to the South Carolina college or university of the student's choice. Students planning to attend an out-of-state college or university are ineligible to receive an award. The recipients may also be recognized by their local schools/school districts.

Eligibility criteria:

- Students must currently be enrolled in twelfth grade in a public school in South Carolina.
- Students must plan to attend a South Carolina college or university.
- Students must be a U.S. citizen and have attended public school in South Carolina for the past two years.
- Students may only apply for a scholarship in one of the five arts disciplines.

General composition criteria include (click on the individual arts form to access the application and criteria for that arts form):

- **Creative Writing**—An entry is defined as an original composition, created by the applicant, utilizing any form of creative writing including, but not limited to, journals, diaries, letters, memoirs, essays, poetry, storytelling, speeches, and free writing. The composition should not exceed two, double-spaced pages in length.
- **Dance**—An entry is defined as an original creation of dance choreography timed at three to six minutes created for solo dancer or ensemble in any appropriate movement style. The applicant must perform in the recording of his or her creation.
- **Music**—An entry is defined as an original vocal or instrumental composition created by the applicant timed at four to ten minutes for solo performer or small ensemble (recommended no more than five parts) utilizing any appropriate compositional technique. Arrangements of existing works will not be permitted for this competition.
- **Theatre**—An entry is defined as an original one-act script created by the applicant with a runtime of eight to fifteen minutes.
- **Visual Arts**— An entry is defined as original artwork that must be a completed, rendered visual creation, produced by the applicant. Art is limited to two-dimensional work such as drawing, painting, mixed media, printmaking, and collage. Artwork must not be copies of master artworks or comic art.

Additional Information:

- Entries produced in collaboration with others are not eligible for this competition.
- A panel of professionals in each of the five scholarship areas will select a recipient for each of the disciplines. The decision of the judges is final.
- Students may compete in one scholarship area only.
- Student creations and process folios each count toward 50 percent of the total score.
- Student names or other identifying information should not be permanently written on the original creation, process folio, and reflection statement.

Additional criteria that each applicant/creation must meet are included on the individual entry forms.

How do students apply? Eligible and interested students apply through their school counseling office between December 2025, and February 2, 2026. For more information, contact your school counseling office or Stephen Stokes at sstokes@ed.sc.gov.

LINK for electronic submissions: https://scde.formstack.com/forms/archibald_rutledge_scholarship