



ساي فيست دبي  
**SciFest Dubai**

You don't have to be  
a **scientist**  
to love **science**.

## **Science Fiction Writing Competition**

### Instruction Booklet

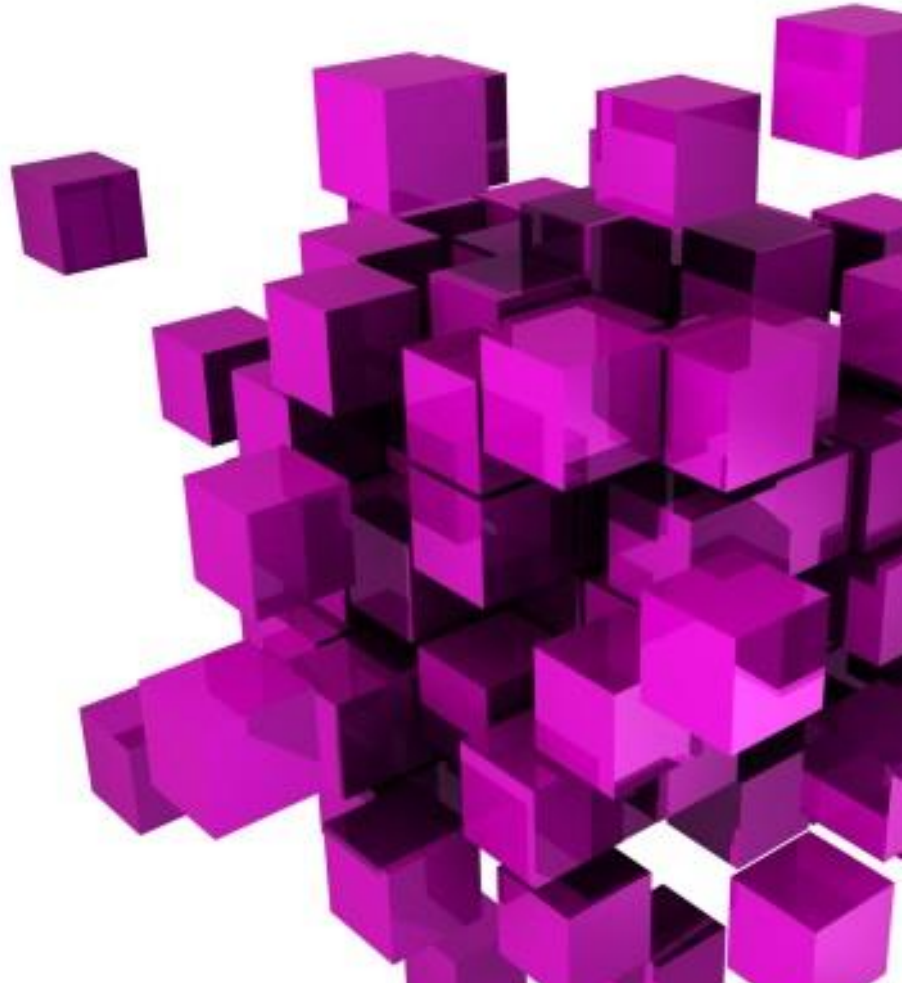
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## Aims of the Writing Competition

### Key Points:

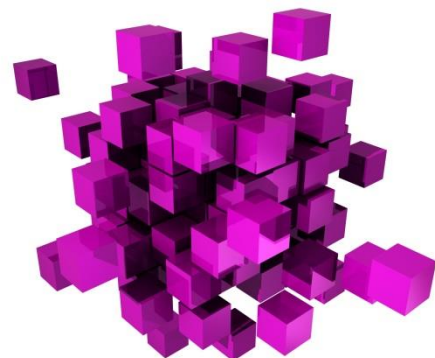
- There are two categories:  
Category 1: Ages 12-15  
Category 2: Ages 16-21
- Three winners will be selected under each category by the SciFest writing competition coordinator and a panel of judges.
- Do not submit stories that fall under the Fantasy genre.
- Word limit: 500 words minimum, 8,000 words maximum.
- Deadline to submit your sci-fi story: **20 October 2015**
- The theme of the sci-fi writing competition is: **Moonshot Thinking** (Feel free to interpret that literally, metaphorically, or any way you like) For more info about Moonshot Thinking, watch [this video](#) and read [this article](#).

### Prizes:

- All participants will receive a certificate of participation. (Certificates will be available for collection on Friday 4<sup>th</sup> November in the foyer of the Mohammed bin Rashid Academic Centre in Healthcare City.)
- The top 10 stories will be compiled in a book.
- The top 3 stories under each category will be published in the e-magazine for gifted writers:  
Phoebus Online | [www.phoebusonline.com](http://www.phoebusonline.com)

### Sci-Fi Writing Competition Coordinator:

Margaret Smallpeice | [m.smallpeice@gmail.com](mailto:m.smallpeice@gmail.com)



## Definition of Science Fiction

Science fiction is a genre of fiction in which the stories often tell about science and technology of the future. It is important to note that science fiction has a relationship with the principles of science—these stories involve partially true partially fictitious laws or theories of science. It should not be completely unbelievable, because it then ventures into the fantasy genre.

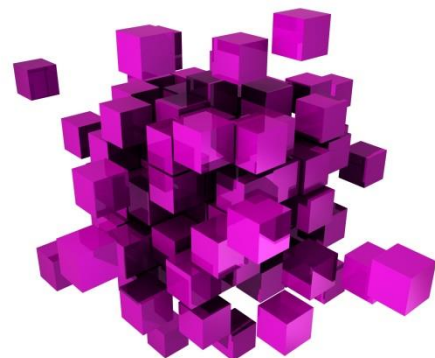
The plot creates situations different from those of both the present day and the known past. Science fiction texts also include a human element, explaining what effect new discoveries, happenings and scientific developments will have on us in the future.

Science fiction texts are often set in the future, in space, on a different world, or in a different universe or dimension.

Early pioneers of the genre of science fiction are H. G. Wells (*The War of the Worlds*) and Jules Verne (*20,000 Leagues Under the Sea*).

Some well-known 20th century science fiction texts include *1984* by George Orwell, *Brave New World* by Aldous Huxley. In addition, some of the more popular and well-recognised 20th century authors are Isaac Asimov, Arthur C. Clarke, Ray Bradbury, Stephen Baxter, and Robert Heinlein.

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## How to Write Science Fiction

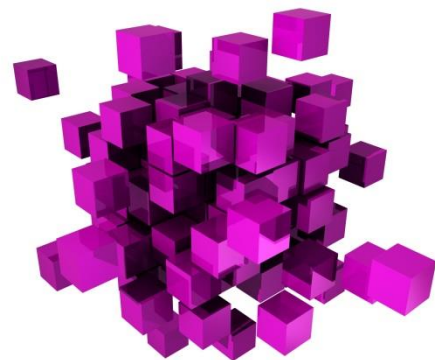
**Find a general topic;** this applies to any book. To write science fiction, you need to know a little about science fact, so search for your topic in modern science books, articles and magazines, or talk to a scientifically-inclined person. Write down anything interesting until you find the right topic for you.

**Ask yourself "What if?"** Remember, this is fiction. Play off your main scientific topic, but you can get a little crazy with it. E.g. science can't really successfully clone humans yet, but what if it could?

**Decide what your main conflict will be:** Man vs. Technology, Man vs. Man, etc. Aliens are probably the most popular enemy for science fiction books (and technology the most popular weapon against them), but don't be afraid to step out of the box.

**Decide your setting and time period.** Most science fiction happens in the near future and involves more than just planet earth, but there are lots of different types of science so don't feel bound to this scenario. Remember to stay within the limits of the time period you choose – if you choose only five years into the future, for example, we probably haven't developed flying cars yet.

**Know the difference between science fiction and fantasy.** Science fiction is more about scientific occurrences that could happen in this world, or aliens and amazing inventions. Fantasy is about events that are impossible to happen in this world, and usually has magic and creatures like elves or ogres.



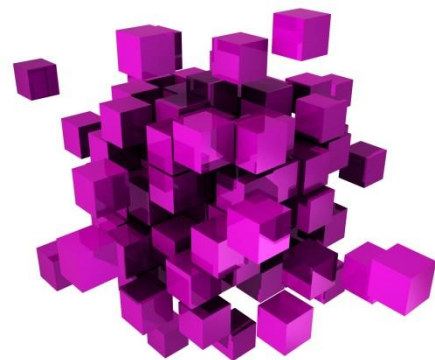


**Know the structure of a story.** Stories have a structure with an initial incident, or starting struggle, that escalates into a "dark moment" in which all seems lost for the main character, and then turns into a climax followed by a resolution.

**Make sure you know what all of your characters want.** Characters are driven by a goal, or want, and this should form the foundation of their behaviors. For instance, a character who wants to travel to a new existence may actually want to win the love and admiration of a fellow being, and the story plot will be driven by this double want.

**Choose your characters,** then write your basic outline. If you're not an outline person, then go ahead and dive into the first lines or prologue. Good luck!

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## Rules

The decision of the SciFest Writing Competition Coordinator and the judges will be final. There will be no discussion or negotiation on the results.

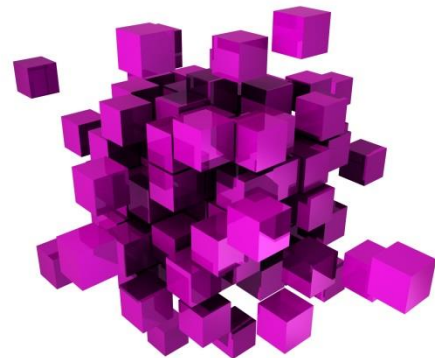
The most important rule is to read and re-read the rules below. Non-compliance will result in disqualification.

1. Be sure to register your story here or on the SciFest Dubai website.
2. Only participants between the ages of 13-21 may apply.
3. Plagiarism will result in summary disqualification.
4. Submit your story before the deadline.
5. Stick to the word limit (500-8,000 words)
6. Ensure your work is proof read.
7. Send your story in a MS Word format to [m.smallpeice@gmail.com](mailto:m.smallpeice@gmail.com)
8. Name your document as follows:  
Your name followed by SciFestWriting (e.g. John\_Smith\_SciFestWriting)
9. Ensure that the name you register with is the same as the name given in the header of your story. It will be the name written on the participation certificate.
10. Ensure the subject in your email is 'SciFest Writing Competition'
11. All stories to have a header with the title of the story, author's name and the age category they are entering
12. All stories to have a footer with page numbers

### Deadlines

Registration deadline: 5<sup>th</sup> October 2016 (register [here](#))

Submission deadline: 20<sup>th</sup> October 2016



## Points to Keep in Mind

- All work submitted must be the student's work.
- Proofread your submission. This is very important.
- Use Times Roman, black font, size 12
- Ensure your work is neat and well formatted.
- Don't try to create too many characters. You are not writing a novel.
- Try and focus on creating an element of suspense and building up to a climax/revelation.
- Avoid clichés.
- Don't go overboard with description.
- Ensure the story/plot moves along at a brisk pace.
- At all costs avoid fantasy – we are not interested in reading about orcs, unicorns, wizards, dwarves etc.

