

Rules: Margaret Sutton Writing Contest 2025

Introduction: Margaret Sutton was born and raised in Potter County, Pennsylvania. She was the author of more than 50 books for children and teens including the popular Judy Bolton Mystery series. Fans of Margaret Sutton's books frequently gather in Coudersport to visit the sites that inspired the series and to honor its author.

Purpose of the contest: Margaret Sutton enjoyed meeting her fans and encouraging their creative pursuits. The purpose of this contest is to encourage young writers to follow their dreams.

Theme for 2025: Escape from a scary place. Each year, Judy Bolton fans feature one or two books in the series. In 2025, the first book is *The Clue in the Ruined Castle*. It was inspired by the true story of a famous Norwegian violinist who attempted to start a colony in Potter County, Pennsylvania and planned to build a castle there. In this Judy Bolton mystery, Judy and her friends explore a damaged castle and become trapped in a dungeon!

Contest Rules:

1. Create an original short story that involves escaping from a scary place. Do not use the names of actual persons without their permission.
2. All students living and attending school in Potter County, Pennsylvania and enrolled in grades 7 through 9 as of September 24, 2025 are eligible to submit an entry to the contest.
3. Students must submit original work with minimal guidance from others.
4. The text of the story must be 300-500 words.
5. Entries must be typed and double-spaced.
6. Following Margaret Sutton's example, your characters will be realistic and not have supernatural powers.
7. Contestants must submit their story via email to MargaretSuttonBooks@gmail.com as a Word or Word-friendly attachment.
8. Submissions will be accepted beginning September 1, 2025. Submission deadline is midnight eastern time on September 24, 2025.
9. The First Place award winner will receive \$100 and publication of their story at www.MargaretSuttonBooks.com. The second place winner will receive \$50 and a certificate. The third place winner will receive \$25 and a certificate.
10. Winners will be notified via email and phone. The Margaret Sutton Essay Contest Committee will have the right to edit and publish submitted stories on the Margaret Sutton Books website without payment to the authors. After publication of the winning essays, all rights will revert to their authors.
11. Winners must agree to share a personal photo and to participate in an interview. This will allow the contest committee to create a bio of the winners for use on our websites and with the media.
12. Winners will be invited to a dinner and awards ceremony in Coudersport, PA on Saturday, October 11, 2025 during the 2025 Judy Bolton weekend. The top three finalists will be invited to read their essays to the audience. Dinner will be provided at no cost to the winners. Winners will be contacted to make dinner reservations for themselves and their guests. The ceremony will also be part of an internet Zoom meeting for those who cannot attend in person.
13. Contestants may submit only one entry during any given contest year.
14. Each entry must include the following biographical information on a separate cover page: name, age, grade, school, hometown, email, phone number, the title of the story, and a four-digit code number. This is necessary to differentiate between stories with the same title.
15. Each story must include a title, to be printed at the top of each page, and the four-digit code number. Do not include the author's name or any other information on the story pages, only on the cover page.
16. Any quotations or copyrighted material must be identified properly. Stories must be written in English.
17. All submitted stories compliant with these rules will be reviewed by a group of volunteer judges selected from published authors and writing teachers who have participated in previous Judy Bolton activities

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