

Now open for 2026 entries
For all aspiring children's book
ILLUSTRATORS



Closing Date:
Friday 24th April 2026
17:30

Open to non-professional illustrators
who are aged 18+ and UK residents

No fees for entry

Full terms and conditions at

www.panmacmillan.com/mac-prize-terms-and-conditions

 **MACMILLAN**
Children's
Books



NOW OPEN FOR ENTRIES

<https://www.panmacmillan.com/mac-prize-entry-page>

Closing date: Friday, 24th April 2026 17:30

The Macmillan Prize for Illustration is awarded for an unpublished Children's Picture Book. The award was established by Macmillan Children's Books in 1985 in order to stimulate new work that helps creatives begin their professional careers.

The Brief

All entrants must submit:

- A.** Pencil roughs or sketches for a children's picture book – cover to cover – including text or a clear indication of the storyline.
- B.** Finished artwork for at least four double-page spreads, or at least three spreads and a front cover.
- C.** There is no theme for the competition and entries may work on different levels, but it is important to remember that the main audience for the book is a child.
- D.** The competition is for a series of outstanding illustrations that show the artist understands how to match pictures to text. The pictures should also demonstrate the entrant's grasp of narrative, pacing, and characterisation.
- E.** The judges are ultimately looking for high-quality illustrations suitable for children's books, which are considered to be an original contribution to the field.

The Format

Length: Picture books should be between 24-32 pages long; this includes the front and back endpapers, a title page and a copyright page. The cover is not included in this page count.

Format: Although submissions are digital only, we can accept books with novelty elements (e.g. flaps, fold-out pages), and these should not exceed 24 pages. Pop-up books should not exceed 6 double-page spreads. Novelty entries should be scanned artwork. Photographs to demonstrate novelty elements may also be included but should be part of the PDF.

Size: The page size of the finished book should not exceed 300mm in width or height.

The Text

Text created wholly or in part by generative AI technologies is not eligible and should not be used.

- A.** The book may be fiction or non-fiction.
- B.** The entrant may:
 - i.** Devise their own text/story
 - ii.** Collaborate with a writer
 - iii.** Use a traditional story (e.g. a fairy tale)
- C.** A published text that is in copyright would not be eligible and should not be used.

email:

macmillanprize@macmillan.co.uk

see full terms and conditions:

www.panmacmillan.com/mac-prize-terms-and-conditions

The Artwork

Artwork created wholly or in part by generative AI technologies is not eligible and should not be submitted.

Size: Artwork may be prepared either to the same size, or up to 30% larger than the page size of the finished book. Corner marks to show the trim (i.e. the edge of the final printed page) should be clearly indicated outside the area of the actual work.

Bleed: Allow at least 5mm extra (after reduction) outside the trim if the artwork is to come to the edge of the printed page. Avoid putting important details within 5mm of the edge of the page, or where illustration crosses the spine.

Medium: Any medium may be used, but it is advisable to avoid luminous paint, fragile collage or other media that will not reproduce well.

Lettering: Any lettering should be in black, please incorporate it as part of the page design and make it as legible as possible.

Eligibility

To be eligible for the 2026 competition, you must:

- A.** Be aged 18 or over and resident in the United Kingdom at point of entry.
- B.** Have less than one year of paid or unpaid work experience working as an illustrator at a book, magazine, journal, comic book, or graphic book publisher.
- C.** Not be a professional illustrator in the book, magazine, journal, comic book, or graphic book publishing sectors, where your income is derived exclusively or mainly from illustrating books, magazines, journals, comic books, or graphic books (which includes covers for each of the aforementioned). This includes in print and online publications.
- D.** Not have entered into a publishing contract or accepted an offer of publication from a book publisher in the UK or elsewhere in respects to any of your illustrations (including for a cover illustration).
- E.** Not be a director or employee of Macmillan (or members of their immediate families or households) or be connected with the running or judging of the competition.
- F.** Entrants may only submit one entry.
- G.** There is no fee to enter the competition, although entrants are responsible for all costs associated with preparing and submitting their entries.

First Place: £1,000

Second Place: £500

Third Place: £250