**PLAGIARISM**

Plagiarism occurs when an author copies a previously published work without proper citation, and may even appear to be the author's own work. This can happen when an author is unaware of copyright laws. Even one unique sentence without proper citation is plagiarism, and such entries may subject the author to expensive copyright infringement suits. They may also result in a loss of reputation for the Arizona Authors Association Literary Contest. Therefore, it is critical that we detect serious instances of plagiarism before awarding a prize. If any item was published after 1927, assume it is copyrighted unless the author has explicitly placed his or her work in the public domain and says so, somewhere on the copyright page of the book.

The 2025 contest rules state a preference for end notes, with outside sources identified with an end note and cited at the end of the submission. For example:

Greenland is a wonderland of frozen delights, with pristine fjords and clear blue ice floes.

The mark at the end of the sentence will tell a reader to check the back of the article or book for an end note, which may look like this:

:John Smith, Greenland's Wonders pub. 1978

The citation will include the author's name, the book or article title, and the year (or exact date) in which it was first published, at a minimum. It may also include other information, such as publisher. Don't be too picky. Any citation that gives credit to the author and their work is acceptable, whether it's a recommended end note or an in-line citation or footnote.

**HOW TO CHECK FOR PLAGIARISM:**

Most plagiarism occurs when authors describe real places or persons. For example: "The Hoover Dam was completed by March, 1936, to accommodate the phenomenal agricultural and population growth in the West." The author would likely have had to look up the date, so it's possible that he or she took the whole sentence from the internet. An easy way to check is to copy the sentence and paste it into the Google search box. If the search brings up the exact sentence from a previous author, it's plagiarized, whether intentionally or inadvertently (unless the quote comes from the published book that you are judging). Discount all simple sentences, such as "The Hoover Dam was completed in 1936." That's not unique. Check only a few sentences using unique words, such as the example above.

You may also go to Grammarly.com (or other sites) and paste a passage into their plag-checker. It will tell you if the entry was likely plagiarized. If plagiarism is suspected, check the work more thoroughly. Deduct two points for each unique sentence plagiarized from another source.

Another way to detect plagiarism is if there is a change of "voice." If you've been reading an author's work and a passage suddenly sounds different from the rest, it may be plagiarized. Put one or two of the sentences into the Google search bar and check to see if your suspicions are correct. If it doesn't come up, then it's probably not plagiarized.

**Self-plagiarism** occurs when the author publishes a previous work and then uses his or her earlier work in a new piece without citation. If this happens in an entry represented as "unpublished," treat it as plagiarism but deduct only one point per sentence plagiarized. If it occurs in a published submission and the author failed to properly cite his own previous work, assume unintentional author error and do not deduct points unless there are multiple paragraphs or sections plagiarized.

There are many authors who do not understand plagiarism rules. Our goal is to remain charitable toward those authors who are basically honest and may make an inadvertent mistake, while at the same time protecting the Arizona Authors Association from reputational hazards.