

San José Public Library

2026 Graphic Novel Making Contest Guidelines

When is the Contest: June 1 - July 31, 2026.

Submission Deadlines: Entries and registration forms must be submitted by Friday, July 31, 2026.

Who Can Enter:

- **All Ages:** Submissions will be categorized into 5 different age groups: 0-7, 8-9, 10-12, 13-17, 18+.
- **Located in California:** This contest is only open to California Residents.
- **Amateur Authors/Illustrators Only:** Contest is limited to amateur authors and illustrators only.

How to Enter:

- **Submitting Your Work:**
 - **Paper Entries:** Submit at a SJPL location, no later than end of business day on July 31, 2026.
 - **Digital Entries:** Submit on our website or email to graphicnovels@sjlibrary.org as a PNG, JPG, or PDF attachment. Please see our website for more details.
- **Doublecheck Your Entry:** Check all names, graphic novel titles, contact info, grammar, and spelling!
- **Limit 1 Entry:** There is a limit of one entry per contestant or co-authored group.

Content Requirements:

- **Original Work Only:** Each submission must be the creative and original work of the submitting author/illustrator.
- **Maximum Length:** 8 pages, including cover page.
- **Black and White:** Must have black-and-white or gray scale drawings.
- **Paper Size & Binding:** Use letter-size paper (8.5x11"). Please use a paper clip, do not staple.
- **Multiple Authors or Illustrators:** Any submissions with more than one author/illustrator will be considered a single entry judged under the age category of the oldest author/illustrator listed and share awarded prizes.
- **No AI or Copyrighted Material:** Artificial intelligence (AI) content will not be considered. Use of computer-generated images (via A.I. tools or clip art) or copyrighted material will be deemed ineligible.
 - **Digital Artwork:** Digital Illustrations are allowed as long as they are original artwork.
- **World Languages Accepted:** Other languages are accepted, please see our FAQ for more information.
- **Audience Level:** Submissions should be appropriate for general audiences. We will not accept entries with explicit language or mature content.
- **Limited Assistance:** Assistance should be limited to critiquing, feedback, proofreading, and spell checking.
- **Photocopy Recommended:** Consider submitting a photocopy or digital scan that is an accurate reflection of the original work. SJPL cannot guarantee the return of paper submissions.

How Scoring Works: Entries will be judged using a rubric scale. The detailed judging criteria and rubric used for this contest is available on our website.

Contest Prizes and Winners:

- **1st, 2nd, 3rd:** Prizes will be awarded to first, second, and third place winners for each age category.
 - **Honorable Mentions:** Honorable mentions may be selected in each age group.

Winner Notification & Announcements:

- **Attend the Award Ceremony:** Winners will be announced during an In-Person Award Ceremony.
- **Where to Pick Up Prizes:** Prizes will be available for pickup at the In-Person Award Ceremony.

Publication:

- **Publishing Winners:** All eligible works will made available in SJPL's teen collection.
- **Reproduction & Reuse:** San José Public Library reserves the right to reproduce your work. You can reuse all your work after the contest.

For more information, including FAQ's and the judging criteria, please visit <http://www.sjpl.org/graphicnovels>. SJPL staff may not enter submissions for the General Public contest.

San Jose Public Library

2026 Graphic Novel Making Contest Entry Form

Name: _____ Age: _____ (Check here if 18 years or older___)

Pen Name (if used): _____

Title of Graphic Novel: _____

Library Branch: _____

Email: _____ Phone #: _____

Photo / Creative Works Release

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE CREATIVE WORKS AND TO PHOTOGRAPH OR RECORD VIDEO AND/OR AUDIO

I _____ am 18 years or older.
(Name, please print)

I _____ am the parent or legal guardian of _____.
(Name, please print) (Name, Age)

I give my permission for the City and the University to reproduce creative works resulting from my (or my child's) participation in the Graphic Novel Making Contest. I understand that the purpose is to promote the City of San José (and/or San José State University) and its services/programs. I give my permission with the following understanding: **No compensation of any kind will be paid to me (or my child) at this time or in the future for the use of my (or my child's) creative works.** Permission is **not required** to take part in City or University programs.

I understand that the City of San José or San José State University may record via photo, video and/or audio the events or activity in which I am (or my child is) participating. I give my permission for the City and the University to use photographs, audio, and/or video of me (or my child) for the purpose of promoting the City of San José (and/or San José State University) and its services/programs. I give my permission with the following understanding: **No compensation of any kind will be paid to me (or my child) at this time or in the future for the use of my (or my child's) likeness or audio contributions.** Permission is **not required** to take part in City or University events.

Signature _____ Date _____

Address _____

City _____ Zip _____

