

THE NATIONAL BOOK PRIZE 2026 - REGULATIONS

National Book Prize for Adults and the National Book Prize for Children and Young Adults 2026 (Books 2025)

Definitions and Structure

The National Book Prize, organised by the National Book Council, is the highest literary prize assigned in Malta to authors, editors, translators, publishers and illustrators for work published locally during the preceding year.

The National Book Prize comprises 15 categories, which include Novels, Short Stories, Poetry, Drama, Non-Fiction, Prose Fiction in Translation, Research and Historiographic Research (NBP), and seven categories of children's books known as the National Book Prize for Children and Young Adults – Picture books for children (ages 0–7), Children's Literature (ages 8–12), Sport Literature for Children and Young Adults (ages 8–16) and Young Adult Literature, as well as Picture books in Translation (ages 0–7), Children's Literature in Translation (ages 8–12), and Young Adult Literature in Translation.

Sport literature is to be included as a category within the 2026 National Book Prize. This inclusion was facilitated through an agreement between SportMalta and NBC, fostering a collaboration by which sport could receive warranted exposure from a literary aspect. This integration is to furthermore be facilitated through the inclusion of a category in this year's National Book Prize for Children and Young Adults 2026, falling under titled Sport Literature for Children and Young Adults (ages 8–16). Submissions must be original work either fiction or non-fiction and should promote themes of sport and physical activity. Translations are not eligible.

The shortlisted titles and the winning titles in the 8 NBP for adults categories and the 7 National Book Prize for Children and Young Adults 2026 are selected by an independent adjudication board. The members of this board are to follow a set of criteria in their evaluation

in order to ensure the highest degree of transparency and fairness as is appropriate for such important and prestigious prizes.

The 2026 award-giving ceremony will be held on Thursday, 17th of September.

For the purposes of these regulations, the National Book Council is providing these definitions:

Author – the living writer of creative works of an original nature.

Translator – the living writer who concerns himself with translation of literary texts.

Book – a printed book or an ebook with an ISBN issued by the National Book Council.

Publisher – an individual or group of individuals that have published at least one book.

Illustrator – the living illustrator of creative works of an original nature.

NBP – short for National Book Prize categories including Novels, Short Stories, Poetry, Drama, Non-Fiction, Prose Fiction in Translation, Research and Historiographic Research

Eligibility

1. Submissions for the National Book Prize are accepted in either Maltese or English for original works.
2. The publication date for books submitted for the 2026 edition must be 2025.
3. Only original works are eligible to receive the National Book Prize. At least 80% of the book's content must be previously unpublished.
4. Literary adaptations for different demographic groups (such as adaptations for children) are not considered original works.
5. Works published online, for example in a literary journal, but which is submitted in printed form, will be considered as an original printed work and hence eligible for submission.
6. Collected works or anthologies are only eligible if at least 80% of

the content has not been previously published.

7. Textbooks, defined as publications intended for use as a standard work for the study of a particular subject in school (all levels), are not eligible for the National Book Prize.

8. The ISBN number for the submitted books must have been issued by the National Book Council (Maltese ISBN).

9. Books which were granted funding by the Malta Book Fund or were published after having won the Novels for Youth Literary Contest are eligible for submission to the National Book Prize.

10. A copy of the submitted publication must have been legally deposited at the National Library of Malta.

11. The National Book Prize is awarded only to living authors. Only books by living authors are eligible to be submitted for consideration and can receive the National Book Prize. In any other eventuality the book will be considered ineligible to receive the National Book Prize.

12. Employees of the National Book Council cannot submit works, as authors, translators or publishers, to be considered for the National Book Prize.

13. Books published by agencies whose primary goal is to distribute copies for free – often funded by government departments and not sold in bookstores – are not eligible for the Prize. As these publications are not commercially available, they fall outside the scope of the National Book Prize, which aims to support and promote books within the market.

Adjudication process and Prizes

1. Every book will be evaluated according to criteria set by the National Book Council and outlined in the guidelines and criteria for each respective category. All decisions taken by the National Book Council and the adjudication board are final and binding.

2. The adjudication board is responsible for compiling a list of all submitted and eligible books. The list of eligible submissions will be published on the 30th of March 2026. During the compilation of the

list of eligible submissions, adjudicators are not required to assess works through marking or provide any further comments on the quality of the submissions. The classification exercise verifies eligibility according to the NBP Regulations, including the following criteria:

- Correct year of publication (2025).
- Local ISBN number.
- At least 80% original content.
- Submitted to the appropriate category.

3. First adjudication stage (shortlisting): After 15 weeks from the publication of the list of eligible submissions, the adjudication board is responsible for compiling a shortlist of a maximum of 5 (five) titles and a minimum of 2 (two) for each category, from which the adjudicators may later choose a winner. At the shortlisting stage, the adjudicators are to ensure each shortlisted publication satisfies the set criteria, but no marks are given.

4. Adjudicators are to provide consolidated comments for the books that are NOT shortlisted, answering the following question: *based on the criteria of the respective prize category, why is this book not being shortlisted?* Comments are to be provided to the NBC administrators according to templates provided through the reviewing platform. Those publications that do not meet the set criteria will not feature in the shortlist. Adjudicators may choose not to shortlist any entries for any given category should they not meet the set criteria.

5. Second adjudication stage (winners): During the second and final adjudication stage, the adjudication board will judge each of the shortlisted publications, if any, according to the established criteria and marking scheme for each respective category according to templates provided through the reviewing platform. **A winner is selected only if the required level (90 marks) is reached.** The board may not award the prize if no publication satisfies the set criteria and does not reach the required level.

6. The shortlisted nominees for all categories in both NBP for Adults and National Book Prize for Children and Young Adults 2026 will be announced on 25th of August 2026. The winners will be announced on 17th September 2026.

7. Only one prize in each category may be awarded, if the required level (as per point 5) is met.

8. Any winning publication in every category (excluding the Translation categories of the National Book Prize for Children and Young Adults 2026– see point 10) will be given an award of €4,000, a trophy and a certificate.

9. Publishers of awarded books of the NBP for Adults and National Book Prize for Children and Young Adults 2026 receive €1,000 for each prize-winning book, as well as a certificate.

10. The prizes in the categories for original books for the National Book Prize for Children and Young Adults 2026 are awarded to both the writer and the illustrator, if any. The prize is split between writer and the illustrator, if any.

11. The National Book Prize for Children and Young Adults 2026' prizes in the categories for translated books for children and young adults are awarded to the translator only. Awarded translators of books submitted to the National Book Prize for Children and Young Adults translation categories receive a prize of €2,000, alongside a trophy and a certificate.

Special prizes

1. A trophy, certificate of merit and a prize of €4,000 will be awarded to the publisher behind the best-produced book published in 2025. The Prize for Best Book Production will be awarded to a maximum of three of the publications from the list of eligible submissions of the NBP for Adults and NBP for Children and Young Adults, one publication will be chosen from each of the following categories: fiction, research and children and young adults. Evaluation encompasses aspects like design, print quality, formatting and innovation and adjudicators will be assessing criteria that include cover design, print quality, typesetting and accessibility (see Annex II for the full set of criteria).

2. A trophy, a certificate of merit and a monetary prize of €4,000 will be awarded to one writer who has given a notable contribution to the fields of literature or book publishing (Lifetime Achievement Award). The recipient of this award is nominated by the National Book Council

and chosen by the Council's Board. The name of the winner will be announced during the award-giving ceremony.

3. A certificate of merit and a grant of €2,500 to invest in professional development and training will be awarded to an illustrator for outstanding achievement in the field of book illustration. The Illustrator Recognition Prize, supported by Arts Council Malta, will be awarded to an illustrator following the National Book Prize open call for submissions and selected from the longlist. The selected awardee will be chosen by a board established by Arts Council Malta and the National Book Council and will include an external evaluator (see Annex III for the full set of criteria).

National Book Prize Categories

Adults

1. Novels
2. Short stories
3. Poetry
4. Drama
5. Prose Fiction in Translation
6. Literary Non-fiction
7. Research
8. Historiographic Research

Children and Young Adults

1. Picture books for Children (ages 0-7)
2. Children's Literature (ages 8-12)
3. Sport Literature for Children and Young Adults (ages 8-16)
4. Young Adult Literature
5. Picture books in Translation (ages 0-7)
6. Children's Literature in Translation (ages 8-12)
7. Young Adult Literature in Translation*

Submissions

Participants must submit an online application on <https://ktieb.submittable.com/submit> for every book to be entered for the competition.

Entries for the competition may be submitted by:

- the authors themselves or those who own the authors' publishing rights with the consent of the publishers;
- the publishers with the consent of the authors or those who own the authors' rights.

Applicants are to indicate clearly under which category the book is being entered. The National Book Council reserves the right to change a category indicated by the authors and/or publishers if, in the opinion of the adjudicating board, the book was entered in the wrong category. Participants will be notified accordingly.

As part of the application form, participants should also submit an author's bio note of a maximum of 150 words and a profile picture in .png or .jpeg.

Four copies of the book submitted for consideration should be sent to the National Book Council by post, or delivered at the address below by Friday, 20th of February 2026 until end of day:

**National Book Council
Bice Mizzi Vassallo Complex,
Arnhem Road,
Pembroke - PBK 1776**

The National Book Council offices are open Mon-Fri from 08:00-16:00. For any queries email Ivania Attard on ivania.attard@gov.mt or Matthew Borg on matthew.borg@ktieb.org.mt

The submission of the online application form and the delivery of the books should be effected by not later than Friday, 20th of February 2026 until end of day. Late entries will not be accepted.

If a book is found ineligible and is not included in the list of eligible submissions, the applicant will be contacted and the copies submitted may be returned. However, books that enter the shortlisting process shall not be returned.

Annex I - The 2026 National Book Prize - Criteria

1. Novels

Technique 20%

Does the author present his/her work with a distinctive and original voice? (5 marks)

Is the story told in a clear and focused manner? (4 marks)

Is the pacing appropriate for the unfolding story? Does the rhythm work to sustain interest? (4 marks)

To what extent does the author balance *showing versus telling* to make the flow of the story active and engaging? (7 marks)

Plot, Situation and Conflict 20%

Has the author constructed convincing and compelling storyline/s and/or situations? (6 marks)

Is there sufficient conflict (internal and/or external) to sustain the reader's interest? And does it arise from the characters' motivations and goals? (4 marks)

Does each scene have a clear and necessary relationship with the scenes that precede and follow it? (4 marks)

Is/are the plot and/or situation/s well handled? (6 marks)

Characterisation and Dialogue 20%

Does each major character exhibit a unique voice and distinguishing personality traits and is this voice consistent and appropriate given his/her role in the narrative? (4 marks)

Are the main characters multidimensional, with evidence (or at least hints) that they have weaknesses as well as strengths? And do they behave, speak and interact appropriately for the time period and genre of the novel? *Note that this criterion need not be applied to characters that are clearly intended to be prototypes and caricatures.* (4 marks)

Are the various points of view in accordance with the narrative strategy? (4 marks)

Do the dialogue and narrative provide characterization and move the story and/or relationships forward? (4 marks)

Is the dialogue natural or stylistically appropriate (that is, not stilted or overly explanatory)? (4 marks)

Mechanics 20%

Does the novel open with a compelling hook that makes you want to continue reading? (5 marks)

Do the introductory pages establish the narrative setting in an artful and well-balanced manner? (5 marks)

Does the rhythm of the prose enhance the meaning? (3 marks)

Is the publication free of typographical, spelling, punctuation and grammatical errors? (4 marks)

Are the dominant themes well developed? (3 marks)

Overall Impression 20%

Does the author manage to concretize his/her ideas through the characters and their actions and not through a didactic voice? (6 marks)

Is the usage of language good, fresh and innovative? (6 marks)

Does this story engage your emotions and do you feel stimulated and enlightened by the experience of reading this story? (8 marks)

2. Short-stories

Technique 20%

Does the opening of each story set the tone of the entire story? (7 marks)

Are the stories told in a clear and focused manner? And is the use of language appropriate? (6 marks)

To what extent does the author balance *showing versus telling* to make the flow of the story active and engaging? (7 marks)

Plot, Situation and Conflict 20%

How much would you say that the stories aim at unity of effect and often concentrate on the creation of the mood? (7 marks)

Are the scenes well described and do they sustain the reader's interest? (3 marks)

How much would you say that the plot is just a means to an end and that the real interest of the author centres on the analysis and exposition of a character? (5 marks)

Do the stories culminate in surprising twists? (5 marks)

Characterisation and Dialogue 20%

Does each major character exhibit a unique voice and distinguishing personality traits and is this voice consistent and appropriate given his/her role in the narrative? (8 marks)

Do the various points of view play out in accordance with the narrative strategy? (4 marks)

Does the author present his/her work in a distinctive voice and an engaging style of expression? (4 marks)

Is the dialogue natural or stylistically appropriate (that is, not stilted or overly explanatory)? (4 marks)

Mechanics 20%

Do the short stories possess unity of form? (8 marks)

Does the author artfully balance the facts to suppress and the facts to elaborate? (4 marks)

Does the rhythm of the prose enhance the meaning? (4 marks)

Is the publication free of typographical, spelling, punctuation and grammatical errors? (4 marks)

Overall Impression 20%

Is the form that the author has chosen suitable to what he tells? (5 marks)

Does the author manage to concretise ideas through the characters and their actions and not through a didactic voice? (3 marks)

Do the stories grab you and engage your emotions? Do you feel enlightened by the experience of reading this work? (4 marks)

How much would you consider these short stories as an "art of miniaturisation"? (8 marks)

3. Poetry

Originality 20%

To what extent do the poems in this anthology strike you as authentic and imaginative? (6 marks)

Is the subject matter tackled in a fresh and unique way? (5 marks)

Would you consider the phraseology, rhythm and style of the poems distinct? (4 marks)

How unusual and fresh is the imagery (metaphors, similes, etc)? (5 marks)

Technical Excellence 20%

Is there a proper “economy” of thoughts and words? (4 marks)

To what extent are the poems sensitive to the theme/s they treat? (6 marks)

Do the poems connect with the reader? (4 marks)

Is the publication free of typographical, spelling, punctuation and grammatical errors? (6 marks)

Form 20%

Do the poems display a fluid writing style? (2 marks)

Do the poems have a flow and a texture? (8 marks)

Does the rhythm create a pleasant effect? (4 marks)

Does the persona maintain a consistent voice? (6 marks)

Choice of words and readability 20%

Is the voice in each and every poem strong and distinct? (3 marks)

How much do you think the poems manage to avoid clichés, unless these are clearly intentional? (5 marks)

How much would you say that the poem pay attention to the sound of the words? (4 marks)

Do the poems have more than one level of meaning? (8 marks)

Overall impact 20%

Do the poems “work” – do they accomplish what they set out to do? (6 marks)

Do these poems engage your emotions? (7 marks)

Would you consider these poems powerful? (7 marks)

4. Drama

Technique 20%

Does the author manage to present his work in a distinct and original voice? (4 marks)

Are these stories retold in a clear and focused manner? (4 marks)

Does the author make sure to take into consideration the space in which the play unfolds? (4 marks)

Is the length of the play adequate and well planned? (4 marks)

Do the characters' entrances and exits from one scene to the next (as well as on and off set) work? (4 marks)

Plot, Situation and Conflict 20%

Are the plot/situations convincing and exciting? (4 marks)

Is there enough conflict (internal or external) to keep the readers interested? And does this conflict come across via the motivations and scope of the characters themselves? (4 marks)

Do the scenes/situations bind coherently with previous and following scenes? (4 marks)

Are the plot and/or situations well wrought? (4 marks)

Are the analepsis and prolepsis techniques well used? (4 marks)

Characterisation and Dialogue 20%

Does every main character have a unique voice and distinctive characteristics? Do you feel that this voice is consistent and adequate for the role of the character? (4 marks)

Are the main characters multidimensional, with evidence (or at least hints) of both weaknesses and strengths? (4 marks)

Do they act, speak and appear in tune with the genre and the time in which the play is set? (Naturally, this criterion is dispensed with in cases where a character is intended to appear as a prototype or caricature. One must however be aware of equally valid instances

where a multidimensional/realistic character also serves as a caricature/stereotype/prototype.)

Do the dialogue and actions help build the characters and transport the plot and/or relationships forward? (4 marks)

Is the dialogue natural as opposed to forced and/or too didactic? (Naturally, this depends on the genre of drama – for example, in the Theatre of the Absurd one would expect the dialogue to be less natural and more heightened.) (4 marks)

Are the stage directions clear and well-wrought and do they help the director and reader? (4 marks)

Mechanics 20%

How effective are the opening and closing of the play? (4 marks)

Do the first pages establish the setting in a balanced and artistic way? (4 marks)

Is the rhythm of the play adequate for the themes explored throughout? (4 marks)

Is this text faultless in terms of typography, orthography and grammar? (4 marks)

Is/are the main theme/s well developed? (4 marks)

Overall Impression 20%

Does the author manage to put into effect his ideas via his characters and their actions rather than via a didactic voice? (8 marks)

How fresh and innovative is the use of the language? (6 marks)

Does this play manage to evoke emotion in you? Can you visualize it being produced on stage? (6 marks)

5. Prose Fiction in Translation

Definitions

The definition of *Translation* in this context for the purpose of competing for the National Book Prize is the following:

a linguistic interpretation of a literary text of universally-accepted literary genres originally written in any language (to be referred to as the Source Language) into Maltese or English (to be referred to as the Target Language).

The phrase *Linguistic interpretation* is hereby defined as:

a textual rendering where a reasonable balance is kept between 'faithfulness' to the original authorial intention in both content and form, and the translated/interpreted text incorporating intrinsically accepted literary values in its own right.

The only accepted literary genre for translated books into Maltese is prose fiction (novels and short stories).

Ideally, all translated texts should be translated directly from the source text. In the case of bridge translations or translations of other translations, the version/edition used is to be declared. Additionally, any other sources or intermediary/bridge translations consulted by the translator must also be disclosed.

A copy of the source text, a photocopy or digital copy of the original in the case of the translation of rare texts, is to be submitted.

Books submitted for the Prize unaccompanied by the original version or bridge language text will not be considered as eligible.

Judges proficient in both the source and target languages will be engaged locally. In cases where specific language combinations require additional expertise, an additional external judge may be brought in. The National Book Council will make every effort to appoint adjudicators with the necessary linguistic competencies. However, if this is not feasible, applicants must provide an English version of the submitted book to ensure a fair and thorough evaluation of the translation.

Significance of the translated work (25%)

In its source culture (5 marks)

In its target culture (20 marks)

Translation accuracy and precision (40%)

Retaining of the content/spirit of the original text (8 marks)

Accuracy and consistency of idiomatic rendering (8 marks)

Translator's experience (understanding of the sense and meaning of the original author and historical, political, socio-cultural & literary context in which the text was produced; knowledge of both source language and target language) (8 marks)

Evidence of close, critical and creative reading of original text leading to valid & faithful interpretation and lack of overt errors (not-translated words or phrases, change in meaning - slight or significant - or distortion of meaning, breach of the language system, creative translation, cultural filtering) (8 marks)

Additions and deletions (comments, footnotes/endnotes, bibliography, etc.) instrumental to finding an equivalence of meaning (8 marks)

Translation stylistics and aesthetics (35%)

Distinctive and original voice (15 marks)

Nuanced sense and appreciation of the discourse-stylistics of the original (i.e. use of language for the desired effect/s) (10 marks)

Readability and smoothness (10 marks)

6. Literary Non-fiction

Definition

The non-fiction category includes: prose works that employ the literary techniques usually associated with fiction or poetry to report on persons, places and events in the real world in the form of travel writing, nature writing, science writing, sports writing and the genres associated with life writing more broadly, including the biography, autobiography or memoir, the interview, and both the familiar and personal essay.

Technique and Literary Style (40%)

The ideas and content are creative, evocative and compelling. (10 marks)

The structure is clear and focused. The author conveys clear ideas and messages. (10 marks)

There is a distinctive literary style that gives distinctive characteristics to the book. (10 marks)

The book has a distinctive narrative voice and tone. (10 marks)

Originality and objectives (30%)

The book is well researched. (7 marks)

The nature of the research is original. (6 marks)

The book is built on a consistent theme. (7 marks)

The book achieves a desired goal (persuade, inform, inspire, amuse etc.) (10 marks)

Relevance (30%)

The book provides an overall interesting read and it arouses curiosity in the reader on its subject matter. (10 marks)

The book conveys new information. (10 marks)

The book is relevant. (10 marks)

7. Research

Definition

Books submitted to the Research category may cover a wide range of topics and may adopt an interdisciplinary approach, incorporating findings from various fields. Books in this category may include books that address current issues or advancements in a particular field. Books specifically focused on historical research and interpretation should be submitted to the Historiographic Research category.

Importance and Originality of the Subject 20%

Research enters uncharted territory, and discovers new theories and new facts which were previously unknown. (5 marks)

The study can be considered as a contribution to advancing the field of the humanities/sciences. (5 marks)

The research work is sound, original and persuasive. (5 marks)

Theories used are well-founded and put into context. (5 marks)

Research Methodology 30%

The objective of the study is sufficiently and clearly described. (8 marks)

The study design is evident and appropriate. (5 marks)

The study provides a connection, a theoretical framework and a wider body of knowledge. (7 marks)

The research strategy described is relevant and justified. (5 marks)

Statements and conclusions are sustained with evidence/results. (5 marks)

Evidence and Support 20%

All evidence used is properly referenced. (5 marks)

The work is extensively documented and has an extensive bibliography or a list of works cited. (5 marks)

The text contains illustrations, diagrams, charts and tables. (5 marks)

Figures and illustrations are properly presented, analyzed and referenced. (5 marks)

Clarity and Style 15%

The context for the study is clear. (5 marks)

The work presents a clear and effective argument. (5 marks)

The language used includes jargon, terms and/or statistical figures that are used in the discipline. (5 marks)

Overall Impression 15%

Mastery of the subject. (5 marks)

Excellence in research. (5 marks)

Excellence in writing, organization and presentation. (5 marks)

8. Historiographic Research

Definition

Books submitted to the Historiographic Research category should be specifically focused on historical research and interpretation with an emphasis on the study of past events, people and societies. Historiographic research involves critical analysis and interpretation of historical sources and may explore different methodologies and perspectives. Books in this category should make significant contributions to our understanding of history, possibly challenging existing interpretations or offering new insights.

Importance and Originality of the Subject 25%

The work identifies the major debates in the field. (5 marks)

The study can be considered as a contribution to advancing the field of historiography. (5 marks)

The work is relevant to Maltese History. (5 marks)

The work adheres to issues of historical interest. (5 marks)

The work presents new research questions and areas which still need to be investigated. (5 marks)

Research Methodology 25%

The objective of the study is sufficiently and clearly described. (8 marks)

The study uses a theoretical approach. (5 marks)

The study is based on a working hypothesis. (7 marks)

Statements and conclusions made are supported by evidence/results. (5 marks)

Evidence and Support 20%

All evidence used is properly referenced. (5 marks)

The work is extensively documented and has an extensive bibliography or a list of works cited. (5 marks)

The text contains illustrations such as diagrams, charts and tables.
(5 marks)

Illustrations are properly presented, analyzed and referenced. (5 marks)

Clarity and Style 15%

The context for the study is clear. (5 marks)

The work presents a clear and effective argument. (5 marks)

The language used includes jargon, terms and/or statistical figures that are used in the discipline. (5 marks)

Overall Impression 15%

Mastery of the thesis. (5 marks)

Excellence in research. (5 marks)

Excellence in writing, organization and presentation. (5 marks)

The 2026 National Book Prize for Children and Young Adults - Criteria

1. Picture books for children (ages 0-7)

Technique 20%

Does the author present his/her work with a distinctive and original voice? (4 marks)

Is the story told in a clear and focused manner? (5 marks)

Is the subject matter presented in a fresh and original way? (6 marks)

Does the opening set the tone of the entire story? (5 marks)

Text and Characters 30%

Does the text flow naturally when read aloud? (4 marks)

Are there pleasing sounds, rhymes, rhythms or repetitions? (5 marks)

Does the plot structure engage the readers? (4 marks)

Are the characters enjoyable and fun? (5 marks)

Is the usage of language good, fresh and innovative? (5 marks)

Is this work free of typographical, spelling, punctuation and grammatical errors? (7 marks)

Text/Illustration relationship 30%

How much would you say that the illustrations relate to the text? (5 marks)

How much would you say that the illustrations relate to each other? (5 marks)

Do the pictures follow a logical sequence? (4 marks)

How much would you consider the illustrations to be fresh, rather than old-fashioned? (6 marks)

Is there an overall sense of unity in the illustrations? (5 marks)

Do the illustrations take the story beyond its words? (5 marks)

Overall Impression 20%

Does the book “work” – that is, does it accomplish what it sets out to do? (6 marks)

Would you consider the book as a fun read? (8 marks)

Would you consider the subject matter appropriate for the age group it is addressed to? (6 marks)

2. Children's Literature (ages 8-12)

Technique 20%

Does the author present his/her work with a distinctive and original voice? (4 marks)

Is the story told in a clear and focused manner? (5 marks)

Is the subject matter presented in a fresh and original way? (6 marks)

Does the opening set the tone of the entire story? (5 marks)

Text and Characters 40%

Has the author constructed a convincing and compelling story? (6 marks)

Are there pleasing sounds, rhymes and rhythms? (3 marks)

Does the plot structure engage the reader? (5 marks)

Is the usage of language good, fresh and innovative? (5 marks)

Is the dialogue natural, that is, not stilted or overly explanatory? (6 marks)

Are the characters in this work sufficiently interesting? (6 marks)

Does the author manage to concretise his/her ideas through the characters and their actions and not through a didactic voice? (4 marks)

Is this work free of typographical, spelling, punctuation and grammatical errors? (5 marks)

Text/Illustration relationship 20%

To what degree would you say that the illustrations relate to the text? (5 marks)

How much would you consider the illustrations to be fresh, rather than old-fashioned? (6 marks)

Is there an overall sense of unity in the illustrations? (4 marks)

Do the illustrations take the story beyond its words? (5 marks)

Overall Impression 20%

Does the book “work” – that is, does it accomplish what it sets out to do? (6 marks)

Would you consider the book as a fun read? (8 marks)

Would you consider the subject matter appropriate for the age group it is addressed to? (6 marks)

3. Sport Literature for Children and Young Adults (ages 8-16)

Definition

Submissions for this category must be original works, either fiction or non-fiction, and should promote themes of sport and physical activity. Translations are not eligible.

Technique 20%

Does the author present his/her work with a distinctive and original voice? (4 marks)

Is the story told in a clear and focused manner? (5 marks)

Is the subject matter presented in a fresh and original way? (7 marks)

Is the pacing appropriate for the unfolding story? Does the rhythm work to sustain interest? (4 marks)

Text and Characters 40%

Has the author constructed a convincing and compelling story? (6 marks)

Does the plot structure engage the readers? (3 marks)

Are the scenes/situations well described and do they sustain the reader's interest? (6 marks)

Is the usage of language good, fresh and innovative? (5 marks)

Is the dialogue natural, that is, not stilted or overly explanatory? (8 marks)

Are the characters in this work sufficiently interesting? (6 marks)

Does the author manage to concretize his ideas through the characters and their actions and not through a didactic voice? (6 marks)

Mechanics 20%

Does the novel open with a compelling hook? And does the opening set the tone for the entire story? (8 marks)

Does the rhythm of the prose enhance the meaning? (6 marks)

Is this work free of typographical, spelling, punctuation and grammatical errors? (6 marks)

Overall impression 20%

Does the book “work” – that is, does it accomplish what it sets out to do? (6 marks)

Would you consider the book as a fun read? (8 marks)

Would you consider the subject matter appropriate for the age group it is addressed to? (6 marks)

4. Young Adult Literature

Technique 20%

Does the author present his/her work with a distinctive and original voice? (4 marks)

Is the story told in a clear and focused manner? (5 marks)

Is the subject matter presented in a fresh and original way? (7 marks)

Is the pacing appropriate for the unfolding story? Does the rhythm work to sustain interest? (4 marks)

Text and Characters 40%

Has the author constructed a convincing and compelling story? (6 marks)

Does the plot structure engage the readers? (3 marks)

Are the scenes/situations well described and do they sustain the reader's interest? (6 marks)

Is the usage of language good, fresh and innovative? (5 marks)

Is the dialogue natural, that is, not stilted or overly explanatory? (8 marks)

Are the characters in this work sufficiently interesting? (6 marks)

Does the author manage to concretize his ideas through the characters and their actions and not through a didactic voice? (6 marks)

Mechanics 20%

Does the novel open with a compelling hook? And does the opening set the tone for the entire story? (8 marks)

Does the rhythm of the prose enhance the meaning? (6 marks)

Is this work free of typographical, spelling, punctuation and grammatical errors? (6 marks)



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Overall impression 20%

Does the book “work” – that is, does it accomplish what it sets out to do? (6 marks)

Would you consider the book as a fun read? (8 marks)

Would you consider the subject matter appropriate for the age group it is addressed to? (6 marks)

5. Picture Books in Translation (ages 0-7)

Definitions

Definition of *Translation* in this context for the purpose of competing for the Award is the following:

a linguistic interpretation of a literary text of universally-accepted literary genres originally written in any language (to be referred to as the Source Language) into Maltese or English (to be referred to as the Target Language).

Linguistic interpretation is hereby defined as:

a textual rendering where a reasonable balance is kept between "faithfulness" to the original authorial intention in both content & form, and the translated/adapted text incorporating intrinsic and accepted literary values in its own right.

Faithfulness, accuracy and precision (60%)

Significance of the translated work in terms of subject matter for the target culture/audience (15 marks)

Evidence of close, critical and creative reading of original text leading to valid & faithful interpretation (15 marks)

Translator's knowledge of the *source text* historical, political, socio-cultural & literary context in which the text was produced (15 marks)

Nuanced sense and appreciation of the discourse-stylistics of the original (i.e. use of language for the desired effect/s) and use of additions and deletions to find an equivalence of meaning (15 marks)

Technique 10%

Does the translator present the work with a distinctive and original voice? (5 marks)

Is the text presented in a clear and focused manner? (5 marks)

Text effectiveness 20%

Does the translation flow naturally when read aloud? Is the use of language good, fresh and innovative? (4 marks)

Are there pleasing sounds, rhymes, rhythms or repetitions? (4 marks)

Is this work free of typographical, spelling, punctuation and grammatical errors? (7 marks)

Do illustrations relate to the text, do they follow a logical sequence, and do they relate to each other? (5 marks)

Overall Impression 10%

Does the translation “work” – that is, does it accomplish what it sets out to do? (6 marks)

Would you consider the translated text as a fun read? (2 marks)

Would you consider the translation appropriate for the age group it is addressed to? (2 marks)

6. Children's Literature in Translation (ages 8-12)

Definitions

Definition of *Translation* in this context for the purpose of competing for the Award is the following:

a linguistic interpretation of a literary text of universally-accepted literary genres originally written in any language (to be referred to as the Source Language) into Maltese or English (to be referred to as the Target Language).

Linguistic interpretation is hereby defined as:

a textual rendering where a reasonable balance is kept between "faithfulness" to the original authorial intention in both content and form, and the translated/adapted text incorporating intrinsic and accepted literary values in its own right.

Faithfulness, accuracy and precision 60%

significance of the translated work in terms of subject matter for the target culture/audience (15 marks)

evidence of close, critical and creative reading of original text leading to valid & faithful interpretation (15 marks)

translator's knowledge of the *source text* historical, political, socio-cultural & literary context in which the text was produced (15 marks)

nuanced sense and appreciation of the discourse-stylistics of the original (i.e. use of language for the desired effect/s) and use of additions and deletions to find an equivalence of meaning (15 marks)

Technique 10%

Does the translator present the work with a distinctive and original voice? (5 marks)

Is the text presented in a clear and focused manner? (5 marks)

Text effectiveness 20%

Does the translation flow naturally when read aloud? Is the use of language good, fresh and innovative? (4 marks)

Are there pleasing sounds, rhymes, rhythm or repetition? (4 marks)

Is this work free of typographical, spelling, punctuation and grammatical errors? (7 marks)

Do the illustrations relate to the text, do they follow a logical sequence, and do they relate to each other? (5 marks)

Overall Impression 10%

Does the translation “work” – that is, does it accomplish what it sets out to do? (6 marks)

Would you consider the translated text as a fun read? (2 marks)

Would you consider the translation appropriate for the age group it is addressed to? (2 marks)

7. Young Adult Literature in Translation

Definitions

Definition of *Translation* in this context for the purpose of competing for the Award is the following:

a linguistic interpretation of a literary text of universally-accepted literary genres originally written in any language (to be referred to as the Source Language) into Maltese or English (to be referred to as the Target Language).

Linguistic interpretation is hereby defined as:

a textual rendering where a reasonable balance is kept between "faithfulness" to the original authorial intention in both content and form, and the translated/adapted text incorporating intrinsic and accepted literary values in its own right.

Faithfulness, accuracy and precision 60%

Significance of the translated work in terms of subject matter for the target culture/audience (15 marks)

Evidence of close, critical and creative reading of original text leading to valid & faithful interpretation (15 marks)

Translator's knowledge of the *source text* historical, political, socio-cultural & literary context in which the text was produced (15 marks)

Nuanced sense and appreciation of the discourse-stylistics of the original (i.e. use of language for the desired effect/s) and use of additions and deletions to find an equivalence of meaning (15 marks)

Technique 10%

Does the translator present his/her work with a distinctive and original voice? (5 marks)

Is the text presented in a clear and focused manner? (5 marks)

Text effectiveness and mechanics 20%

Does the translation flow and does the rhythm of the translation enhance the meaning? (4 marks)

Are the scenes/situations and characters well rendered in translation and do they sustain the reader's interest? (5 marks)

Is this work free of typographical, spelling, punctuation and grammatical errors? (7 marks)

Is the usage of language good, fresh and innovative? Is the dialogue natural, that is, not stilted or overly explanatory? (4 marks)

Overall Impression 10%

Does the translation "work" – that is, does it accomplish what it sets out to do? (6 marks)

Would you consider the translated text as a fun read? (2 marks)

Would you consider the translation appropriate for the age group it is addressed to? (2 marks)

Annex II - The 2026 National Book Prize – Best Book Production Criteria

The Prize for Best Book Production will be awarded to a maximum of three of the publications from the list of eligible submissions of the NBP for Adults and NBP for Children and Young Adults, one publication will be chosen from each of the following categories: fiction, research and children and young adults.

This is the only prize awarded to a publisher and not an author. The selection of the best-produced book for the National Book Prize involves assessing various aspects of a book's production quality, including the following criteria:

Design and Layout

1. The book's cover design, typography, and layout.
2. The use of visuals, illustrations, and graphics, if applicable.

Print Quality

3. The paper quality, printing, and binding, to ensure they meet industry standards.
4. The clarity of the text and visuals, which should be well-reproduced.

Formatting and Typesetting

5. Evaluate the formatting and typesetting to ensure readability and consistency.

Cover and Jacket Design

6. The book cover's visual appeal and its relevance to the content.
7. High-quality printing and finish.

Illustrations and Artwork

8. The quality of the illustrations or artwork and how it is integrated with the text, if applicable.

Innovation and Creativity

9. Innovative or creative elements that enhance the book's production quality.

Paper and Materials

10. The choice of paper and materials for durability and aesthetics.

Binding and Durability

11. The strength and durability of the binding, especially for hardcover books.

Accessibility

12. The book's accessibility, such as the use of fonts and layouts, catering to readers with visual impairments.

Overall content and Literary Merit, Impact and Contribution

13. The book's content, including its literary quality, originality, and overall impact.

14. The book's impact on literature, culture, or society and its contribution to the national literary landscape.

Annex III - Illustrator Recognition Prize criteria

The Illustrator Recognition Prize will be chosen from the National Book Prize longlist. This is the only special prize awarded to an illustrator. Selecting the winning illustrator for the National Book Prize involves assessing various aspects of their work throughout 2024, including the following criteria:

Artistic Quality and Portfolio

1. The illustrator's output in 2024
2. The illustrator's level of artistic quality, which should meet industry standards.

Cover and Jacket Design

3. The book cover's visual appeal and its relevance to the content.
4. High-quality printing and finish.

Visual Plot Development

5. The relationship between text and illustration.

Innovation and Creativity

6. Innovative or creative elements that enhance the illustrator's quality.

Accessibility

7. The accessibility of the illustrations to a wide and diverse audience.