



# OutStanding

LGBTIQ Short Story Competition

[www.outstandingstories.net](http://www.outstandingstories.net)

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## **Check list for Short Story Writing**

We suggest you have a look at 2017 winning story by Stacey Malacari, *He/Him*, which illustrates all these points very well. You can read the story, or listen to it at <http://www.outstandingstories.net/entry-details/2017-2/>

Choose a story to tell.

**Structure.** Establish a beginning, middle and end. Or set up the end first going backwards to beginning. Or do something else, but work out the structure and timeline before you start.

**Point of View.** Whose story are you telling? Who is your focus? Do you support that character, or maybe two points of view can be presented in a short story. Keep it simple and keep the focus on that character and their point of view.

**Tense.** Stick to one. Past is the most common, present is immediate. Be careful not to change tense mid story.

**Grammar and punctuation.** Is important. Do your best.

**Opening sentence.** Make it memorable and eye catching. Grab your reader's attention.

**Characters.** How many characters will you have and how do you establish them? Keep it simple, with not too many characters, and avoid confusion. Establish them with just a few memorable descriptive points.

**Progression.** Something must happen in the story that moves it from the beginning to the end. So things are different at the end than they were at the beginning.

**Tone.** Happy? Sad? Silly? Funny? Mysterious? What sort of story are you telling?

**Tension and pace.** Is it a fast or slow moving story? Does it have a surprise ending? Is there a mystery unfolding?

**Climax.** The last sentence should leave the reading wanting to know more. It could provide a satisfactory conclusion or a question hanging in the air. The last sentence is as important as the first.

**Editing.** Ask for feedback and help from a friend you trust. Read the story aloud to yourself and aloud to a friend. Ask someone to be observant re spelling, punctuation, grammar, tense, paragraphs etc. Use WordCount and SpellCheck.

**Writing dialogue.** Some dialogue in a story makes it real, provides interest in the characters, and engages the reader.

**Action sequences.** Make things happen to move the story forward, with characters doing something.

Read or listen to the winning stories from past years on our website.

Make every word count. 750 is not a lot, so be sure that each word is necessary and has a point. Don't waffle with unnecessary words that don't add to the story.

And finally, have fun and good Luck

Gail and Robert