

Our Stories, A Collection of Writings
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

What is an anthology?

An **anthology** is a published collection of writings (such as poems, short stories or other pieces of writing), created by different authors and issued in one book. Our Stories, A Collection of Writings is an anthology. It includes writings from learners and tutors active within the Redlands Adult Literacy Program at A.K. Smiley Public Library.

Who can submit writings for Our Stories?

Any learner or tutor active within the Redlands Adult Literacy program is invited to submit up to two writings for publication within the anthology. Emergent or beginning writers as well as more experienced writers are encouraged to work through the writing process with their tutor. Tutors are encouraged to offer reflections on their tutoring or literacy learning experiences.

Should stories be written in English?

Our Stories is intended as an opportunity for authors to improve and showcase their English language writing skills as they share their voice and stories with the community. For this reason, stories should be predominantly written in English but may include words or phrases from other languages when appropriate to the story being told.

What writings can I submit?

Authors may submit up to two writings for inclusion in a volume of Our Stories. Poems, short stories, or other written work may be submitted. Each writing is limited to a maximum of 700 words. Writings do not need to be long. Even a few words, such as a Six Word Story, can communicate a meaningful story.

When and how often can I submit my writings?

Our Stories is an annual publication of the Redlands Adult Literacy Program. Writings can be submitted over the course of the year. Submission deadlines are set to allow time for review, organization, and printing.

No more than two writings from a single writer will be included in a volume. Occasionally, a special section may be added and authors invited to submit additional writings on a specific theme. Our Stories, Volume 3, for example, included a section of additional writings on the Covid-19 pandemic. Authors could submit two writings for the general anthology and a writing for inclusion in the special section.

Why is a completed Submission Form required to be submitted with my writings?

The form is required for two purposes. The first is simply to be sure that we know who authored a writing and the tutor who assisted in the writing process. The names of authors and their tutors are printed in the anthology. Authors and tutors communicate how they'd like their names printed within the publication. Authors may choose to remain anonymous, to not have their name printed.

The second purpose of the form is to be sure authors 1) grant permission to the library to include their writing in Our Stories, 2) are informed how their writing will be published and shared, and 3) are aware of their copyright protections.

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Adult Literacy Program

What if I choose to not have my name printed in the anthology?

Authors may choose to remain anonymous and not have their name printed in the anthology. For those choosing that their name not be printed, the author of a writing will be reported as Anonymous and the assisting tutor's name will not be printed.

How is Our Stories edited, organized, and prepared for publication and printing?

Each year, a volunteer editorial committee of tutors, learners, and volunteers is recruited by the Adult Literacy Coordinator to assist in review and editing submitted writings. While preserving each author's voice, the committee recommends light edits to catch typographical and basic grammatical errors. The committee also suggests print layouts. Authors may be asked to clarify a sentence or approve edits recommended to improve reader understanding.

The committee also assists the program coordinator in organizing writings within the anthology. Writings are grouped within sections reflecting common themes and ordered within the sections based on committee recommendations and practical layout considerations suggested by library staff responsible for preparing Our Stories for printing.

Who manufactures or prints Our Stories?

Our Stories, A Collection of Writings is published and printed using Kindle Direct Publishing (KDP), an Amazon self-publishing service. Once a volume is approved for publication by the Program Coordinator, as advised by the editorial committee, the volume is uploaded using KDP, listed among titles available for purchase on Amazon, and a requested number of copies are printed and delivered to the library for distribution to members of the Redlands Adult Literacy community.

Amazon Books maintains website(s) to manage this process and requires assurances as it does when it prints and/or sells any book available through its website. These include assurances that authors' rights are signed giving permission to distribute the writings. A.K. Smiley Public Library assures that all authors have signed the Submission Form and maintains copies of the forms in the library.

What rights do I keep in my Writing(s)? What if I want to give a copy to someone else?

You have only granted the right to the A.K. Smiley Public Library to print and publish your Writing(s) in the volume for which your writing was submitted. The library has agreed not to use it for any other purpose without your written permission. You are free to use your Writing(s) as you wish so long as it does not interfere with the above activity. You can give your copy away, for instance, but if you are interested in having the same writing included in another Library's anthology, you should discuss it with the Literacy Coordinator first.

Why is it important to include the date at the time I sign the Submission Form?

The date you put on the form will be your copyright date, the date the writing is in its final form. It provides you common law protection under the Copyright law. If you want full protection you should read the requirements under the Copyright Act and follow how to register a copyright.

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Why does the Submission Form say the library works with Amazon for limited marketing and sales?

Amazon includes Our Stories in the inventory of books available for purchase through its site. However, Amazon does not specifically advertise the availability of Our Stories. It is simply available for purchase through the site using Amazon search, selection, and purchasing tools. When uploading Our Stories for publication, the Redlands Adult Literacy Program sets purchase options for print volumes only and restricts shipping to addresses within the United States.

How are most copies of Our Stories purchased and distributed?

The Redlands Adult Literacy Program purchases copies of Our Stories at Amazon's author's price. Each year, sufficient copies are purchased to distribute the volume to its authors, their tutors, and every learner and tutor active within the program. Additional copies are purchased to be shared with the A.K. Smiley Public Library Board of Trustees, Friends of A.K. Smiley Public Library Board of Directors, Redlands City Council, and other members of the Redlands Adult Literacy community. Copies are also added to the A.K. Smiley Public Library Adult Literacy and Heritage Room collections.

Literacy teams are encouraged to use copies of Our Stories as a learning resource. If additional copies are needed, teams should contact the Adult Literacy Coordinator at A.K. Smiley Public Library.

Who pays for Our Stories to be published and printed?

The Friends of A.K. Smiley Public Library pays for publication and printing of copies to be distributed within the Redlands Adult Literacy community. Our Stories is not a fundraiser. In addition to sharing our stories with the community, volumes of Our Stories are used as learning materials within the Redlands Adult Literacy Program and provide evidence of learning in fulfillment of the library's educational mission.

What does it mean that Friends of A.K. Smiley Library may receive a royalty and how is the royalty used?

Print copies of Our Stories are available for purchase through the Amazon.com site. The price is set at the lowest price point Amazon allows. Most copies distributed in the community are purchased at an author price using a donation from the Friends of A.K. Smiley Public Library. If copies of Our Stories are purchased by others through the Amazon site, Amazon pays a royalty back to the Friends of A. K. Smiley Public Library. Any royalties received by the Friends from Amazon are used to support and improve the Redlands Adult Literacy Program.

What is the Celebration of Authors?

Each year, the Redlands Adult Literacy community celebrates its authors. The community is invited to listen to authors read their published writing and applaud their efforts. Attending authors are invited to sign two copies of the book, one for Adult Literacy and one for the Heritage Room collection. Event details are planned by the Adult Literacy Coordinator with the assistance of the Our Stories Editorial Committee. Tutors, learners, and other volunteers bring the celebration to life. You can see pictures from previous celebrations [here](#) and view videos of authors reading from Our Stories, Volume 3 [here](#):

<https://www.akspl.org/literacy/>