

2008 WILLA CATEGORY RUBRIC

FICTION

Novel	Ineligible	4 – 7 points	8 – 10 points
1. Women of the West Theme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Male main character(s) • Book not set in the West • Does not portray authentic western experience • Theme & content do not reflect WWW’s mission & goals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Female characters prominent • Book set in the west but could have happened anywhere; or, book partly set in the West* • Generally portrays authentic experience • Theme & content generally reflect WWW’s mission & goals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Female main character(s) • Western setting primary & essential* • Consistently portrays authentic western experience • Theme & content excellent reflections of WWW’s mission & goals
	0 – 3 points	4 – 7 points	8 – 10 points
2. Characterization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Characters not well developed • Stereotypical character(s)** • Dialogue not convincing • Characters indistinct from those in similar books • Didactic, preachy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most characters complex • Generally no inappropriate gender, ethnic, racial, or other stereotypes** • Dialogue at times sounds unnatural • Characters similar to others within the genre, but well developed • Character’s “lesson” generally well presented 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All characters complex, well developed • No inappropriate gender, ethnic, racial, or other stereotypes included** • Dialogue sounds natural • Characters distinct, original • Any “lesson” subtle & organic

	0 – 3 points	4 – 7 points	8 – 10 points
3. Setting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Setting not important to the book • Setting not described 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Setting of moderate importance • Setting described in conventional terms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A strong sense of place is inherent in book • Setting vividly described, using all senses
4. Plot	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plot confusing • Subplots (if used) sporadic, or not well balanced with main plot, or left unresolved • Book fails to hook readers; ending not satisfying • Implausible • Plot predictable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plot moderately well developed • Subplots (if used) not always balanced or well resolved • Slow beginning leads to more action; or conclusion leaves some questions unanswered; or conclusion is not satisfying • Some points may strain credibility • Plot not new, but shows some freshness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plot well developed • Subplots (if used) well integrated & resolved • Opening draws reader in; conclusion satisfying • Suspension of disbelief consistent • Plot original, fresh
5. Voice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Narrative voice lacking, confusing, distances readers from the story • Point of view confusing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Narrative voice dependable • Point of view wavers, or occasionally jumps 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Narrative voice engaging, fresh, distinct • Point of view clear, consistent; or POV shifts clear & intentional

	0 – 3 points	4 – 7 points	8 – 10 points
6. Literary Qualities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor or inappropriate command of language (slang, word choice, figurative language, etc.) • Imagery confusing or nonexistent • Premise conventional, simplistic, expected • Book not suited for intended audience, unappealing • Not enjoyable or thought-provoking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderate command of language (slang, word choice, figurative language, etc.) • Imagery clear • Premise not new, but well explored • Book generally suited to the intended audience, moderately appealing • A pleasant read 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistently strong command of language (slang, word choice, figurative language, etc.) • Imagery vivid, fresh • Premise breaks new ground • Well suited to intended audience, appealing • Thought-provoking
7. Technical Conventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Word count, sentence structure, vocabulary inappropriate for target audience • Frequent problems with grammar, punctuation, spelling • Sloppy, wordy, repetitious writing • Poor balance between dialogue & narrative 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Word count, sentence structure, vocabulary appropriate for target audience • Occasional lapses of grammar, punctuation, spelling • Clear writing • Adequate balance between dialogue & narrative 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Word count, sentence structure, vocabulary excellent for target audience • Clear grasp of grammar, punctuation, spelling; or reader trusts that conventions purposefully set aside • Tight writing • Good balance between dialogue & narrative

	0 – 3 points	4 – 7 points	8 – 10 points
8. Presentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unattractive cover art & design • Interior design features lacking • Font & typesetting difficult to read • Illustrations (if used) of poor quality, or irrelevant to text 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adequate cover art & design • Interior design features adequate • Font & typesetting adequate • Illustrations (if used) of moderate clarity, or not always germane to the text 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attractive, appropriate, compelling cover art & design • Interior design features reflect book's tone • Font & typesetting clear • Illustrations (if used) appropriate, clear

* WWW defines “the West” as all of North America west of the Mississippi River.

** Depiction of a character’s biases or stereotypical views, presented in context, may be appropriate.

This rubric was created by and for Women Writing the West, October, 2006.