



## **Guidelines for Evaluating WILLA Entries in the Scholarly Nonfiction Category**

The purpose of Women Writing the West<sup>®</sup> is to become the internationally recognized organization of writers and other professionals engaged in writing and promoting writing about the North American West with emphasis on the experiences and sensibilities of women in that region. The WILLA Literary Awards are presented annually for outstanding literature featuring women's or girls' stories set in the North American West and includes Alaska and Hawaii.

Entries in the Scholarly Nonfiction category include autobiographical works and other creative nonfiction not geared toward children or young adults. The following rubrics were developed to help readers evaluate such diverse entries. They are intended to be guidelines only. Readers should use their own judgement in assessing how well each entry suits its target audience.

Points should be awarded as follows:

- 10 – exceptional in all regards
- 9 – excellent
- 8 – well done
- 7 – majority well done; room for polish
- 6 – good overall with strong points
- 5 – good overall
- 4 – good overall with some weak points
- 3 – good start but needs work
- 2 – good idea but poor presentation
- 1 – needs work throughout
- 0 – ineligible

Note that entries that do not warrant at least 4 points in the first benchmark, “Women of the West Theme,” should be disqualified.

## WILLA CATEGORY RUBRIC SCHOLARLY NONFICTION<sup>©</sup>

Scholarly Nonfiction	Ineligible	4 – 7 points	8 – 10 points
1. Women of the West Theme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Central focus and theme of the narrative is a male experience</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Book not set in or pertains to the West*</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Does not portray authentic western experience</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Theme &amp; content do not reflect WWW’s mission &amp; goals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> At least half the focus and theme of the narrative is a female experience</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Book set in the West but could have happened anywhere; or, book partly set in the West*</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Generally portrays authentic western experience</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Theme &amp; content generally well reflect WWW’s mission &amp; goals</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> The central focus and theme of the narrative is a female experience</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Western setting primary &amp; essential*</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Consistently portrays authentic western experience</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Theme &amp; content excellent reflections of WWW’s mission &amp; goals</li> </ul>
	<b>0 – 3 points</b>	<b>4 – 7 points</b>	<b>8 – 10 points</b>
2. Characterization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Depictions of people not well developed</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Stereotypes evident**</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat complex depictions of people</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Generally no gender, ethnic, racial, or other stereotypes presented**</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Complex depictions of people</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> No gender, ethnic, racial, or other stereotypes included**</li> </ul>
3. Setting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Setting not important</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Setting not described, or described poorly</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Setting not described accurately</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Illustrations (if used) rarely complement or match text</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Setting of moderate importance</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Setting described in conventional terms</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Setting usually described accurately</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Illustrations (if used) usually complement or match text</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> A sense of place is inherent in the book</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Setting vividly described, using all senses</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Setting described accurately</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Illustrations (if used) consistently complement or match text</li> </ul>



WILLA Rubric – Scholarly Nonfiction

Scholarly Nonfiction	0 – 3 points	4 – 7 points	8 – 10
4. Narrative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> (Biographical Work) Authorial knowledge of the subject not established</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> (Autobiographical Work) Straight story telling with no attempt at authorial introspection</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Poor presentation of facts, concepts, or idea</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Premise or subject predictable, or poorly considered</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Beginning slow, confusing: conclusion not satisfying</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Solicits no emotional response from the reader</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Reveals no universal truths about human nature</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> (Biographical Work) Authorial knowledge of the subject generally or partially established</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> (Autobiographical Work) Author integrates some introspection</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Fair presentation of facts, concepts, or ideas</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Premise or subject not new, but well done</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Slow beginning leads to more action; conclusion somewhat satisfying</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Solicits some emotional response from the reader</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Reveals some universal truths about human nature</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> (Biographical Work) Authorial knowledge of the subject fully and credibly established</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> (Autobiographical Work) Author engages in relevant and meaningful introspection</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Excellent presentation of facts, concepts, or ideas</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Premise or subject shows originality, freshness</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Opening draws reader in; ending is satisfying</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Solicits meaningful emotional response from the reader</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Reveals universal truths about human nature on several levels</li> </ul>
5. Voice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Narrative voice lacking, confusing</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Voice bland</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Voice insensitive or disrespectful</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Tone out of sync with the seriousness/lightness of the topic</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Dialog (if used) stilted</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Quotations (if used) poorly integrated</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Narrative voice dependable</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Voice generally engaging</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Voice generally sensitive and respectful</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Tone generally in harmony with the topic</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Some, but not all, dialog (if used) sounds natural and believable</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Quotations (if used) generally well-integrated</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Narrative voice highly dependable and believable</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Narrative voice engaging, fresh, distinct</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Voice exceptionally sensitive and respectful</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Tone harmonious with the topic</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Dialog (if used) effectively integrated</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Quotations (if used) effectively integrated</li> </ul>



WILLA Rubric – Scholarly Nonfiction

Scholarly Nonfiction	0 – 3 points	4 – 7 points	8 – 10
6. Literary Qualities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Clumsy language</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Imagery confusing, clichéd</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Text &amp; illustrations (if used) not well matched</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Not enjoyable or thought-provoking</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Smooth language</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Imagery clear</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Text &amp; illustrations (if used) generally well matched</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> A pleasant read and occasionally thought provoking</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Artful use of language</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Imagery vivid, fresh</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Text &amp; illustrations (if used) integrated fully</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Enjoyable, thought-provoking, timeless significance</li> </ul>
7. Technical Conventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Book difficult to follow; poorly organized</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Writing too wordy, or includes extraneous material</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Poor grasp of basic conventions of grammar, punctuation, etc.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Citations (if used) confusing, incomplete; or citations needed***</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Book generally readable; moderately well organized</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Writing generally tight, with some redundancies or extraneous material</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Good grasp of basic conventions of grammar, punctuation, etc.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Citations (if used) generally good***</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Book consistently easily readable, flows well; well organized</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Writing tight</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Clear command of basic conventions of grammar, punctuation, etc.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Citations (if used) clear, effective***</li> </ul>
8. Presentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Unattractive cover art &amp; design</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Interior design features lacking</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Font &amp; typesetting difficult to read</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Illustrations (if used) of poor quality, or irrelevant to text</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Illustrations (if used) not well balanced or matched with text</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Adequate cover art &amp; design</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Interior design features adequate</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Font &amp; typesetting adequate</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Illustrations (if used) of moderate clarity, mostly identified; may not always be germane to the text</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Illustrations (if used) provide good balance with text</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Attractive, appropriate, compelling cover art &amp; design</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Interior design features reflect book’s tone</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Font &amp; typesetting clear &amp; well chosen</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Illustrations (if used) appropriate, clear, identified</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Illustrations (if used) provide excellent balance with text</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Properly bound, i.e., audio books and eBooks</li> </ul>

\* WWW defines “the West” as all of North America west of the Mississippi River, and includes Alaska and Hawaii.

\*\* An author’s depiction of a real individual’s biases or stereotypical views, presented in context, may be appropriate.

\*\*\* Citations might include endnotes, an author’s note, glossary, suggested bibliography, or other supplemental information.



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