



BEYOND WORDS (MALAY & TAMIL) 2015

OPEN CALL 8 JUN – 31 AUG 2015

Open call for Children's picture books and Young Adult (YA) fiction

The National Book Development Council of Singapore invites Malay and Tamil children's and Young Adult fiction writers, illustrators and publishers/self-publishers to submit their unpublished manuscripts or out-of-print books for the publication of the following under the Beyond Words project:

- (a)(i) Children's picture books**
- (ii) Children's picture book apps/enhanced apps/eBooks**

- (b)(i) Young Adult fiction books**
- (ii) Young Adult fiction book apps/enhanced apps/eBooks**

About Beyond Words

Beyond Words is a National Arts Council (NAC) initiative to support the creation and development of children's picture books and Young Adult (YA) fiction across the different media (print to apps/enhanced apps).

The manuscripts which are selected for publication into picture books and book apps/enhanced apps will be funded under the Beyond Words scheme.

The open call will be held from 8 June – 31 August 2015.

Guidelines for application

Eligibility

You can apply if you meet the following criteria:

- Are an individual writer with an original manuscript for the young;
- Are a Singapore citizen or Permanent Resident (PR);
- Write in Malay
- Write in Tamil
- Own all the rights to your submission, whether it is unpublished or out-of-print.

Note that you cannot submit work that is currently in print/circulation. Published authors may submit either unpublished works or works that are out-of-print.

1. Is this scheme for unpublished or published authors?

It does not matter where you sit on the publishing spectrum, whether you are an emerging or first-time writer, or a writer with countless titles to your name. Everything depends on the merit of the manuscript you submit to us.

2. Can I submit a manuscript for a book that is part of an existing series?

Yes, as long as you own all the rights to the new work and you are not legally obliged to publish your book with your previous publisher (if any).

3. How do I apply?

Your application must include the following items:

1. **Application form:** Fully completed. Please download the application form on our website [here](#).
2. **Synopsis:** 4 printed copies of a 50-word synopsis for
3. **Manuscript:** 4 printed copies of the complete typewritten manuscript, properly bound. Illustrations are not required.
4. **Curriculum Vitae of the Author**

Submissions must be in hard copy and mailed to:

*Beyond Words 2015
National Book Development Council of Singapore
Geylang East Public Library
50 Geylang East Avenue 1
Singapore 389777*

Alternatively, you may also drop off your application at the National Book Development Council of Singapore office from Monday through Friday, 9am – 12pm or 2pm – 6pm.

4. What are the genres eligible for submission?

Picture Books

A picture book is a book in which the illustrations play a significant role in telling the story. Traditionally, picture books are 32-page books of 500 – 1000 words. Plots are simple (no subplots or complicated twists) with one main character who embodies the child's emotions, concerns and viewpoints.

Target age group: 3 – 7 years old

Not eligible: The following types of books are not eligible:

- Baby books (lullabies, nursery rhymes, fingerplays)
- Concept books (teaching alphabets, colors, shapes, numbers etc)
- Board books
- Wordless books
- Pattern books
- Colouring books

Young Adult (YA) Novels

Also known as teen novels, these are narratives generally read by children aged 12 and above. These manuscripts are 130 to 200 pages long (or 40,000 words and above). Plots can be complex with several major characters, though one character should emerge as the focus of the book. Themes should be relevant to the problems and struggles of today's teenagers.

5. Do you have examples of titles that fit the above categories?

Yes. The Moonbeam Children's Book Awards lists winning titles across the years [here](#). You can also check out the past winners of the [Red Dot Book Awards](#). Another resource would be the bestseller lists of Amazon and Barnes and Noble.

6. What do you look for in a children's picture book?

There is no one-size-fits-all answer to this question or to the two questions below. There will always be manuscripts that don't follow the rules but which surprise and delight. However, the following pointers might be helpful for you:

- Ensure that your story has a plot and a narrative with a beginning, middle and an end.
- Picture books are usually based on one very strong idea/theme that often reflects the child's world.
- Avoid preaching or talking down to by adult characters in the story.
- Avoid too many characters. Create a distinctive character of your own.
- Be sure to have enough scene changes to allow for varied illustrations.

7. What do you look for in a young adult (YA) novel?

The best YA novels appeal not only to teenagers, but also to adults. We look for incisive, sophisticated and compelling novels. A few tips:

- Plot and characters must be well-developed and may demonstrate greater complexity than fiction for younger readers.
- Avoid crowding your novel with an excess of adult characters who may distract from the young heroes or heroines in your novel.
- Angle your novel to the specific age group you want to target i.e. teenage characters and their family units for the 9 – 12 year-olds who are just emerging into teenage-hood, and teenage issues for the 13 – 18 year-olds.
- Unlike picture and chapter books, YA novels are decidedly wordier, so pay particular attention to typographical and grammatical errors, as well as inconsistencies in plot continuity and voice.
- Content may contain strong themes and elements, but should not contain any sexually explicit, disparaging, defamatory, libellous, obscene or other inappropriate content. Any depictions of violence, nudity or sexual activity, drug/alcohol use or the inclusion of strong language must be at a level suitable for the intended audience and justified by the narrative or documentary context of the work, and not be gratuitous or exploitative.
- Material that promotes or incites or instructs matters of crime and/or violence is not permitted.

8. Manuscript format guidelines

Those who wish to submit a manuscript for:

(a) (i) Tamil or Malay children's picture books

- 1) Submit a complete manuscript of text.
- 2) The word length for the manuscript should be between 500 to 700 words.
- 3) If you would like to submit illustrations done by you, please submit a separate storyboard with illustrations to accompany the manuscript.
- 4) If you are submitting the manuscript with the proposed layout with illustrations, the industry standard guideline for picture books is 32 pages. (picture books can also be in multiples of 8: 16, 24, 40 or 48 pages).
- 5) The manuscript should show the by-line and word count on the title page.
 - *For Tamil books, the font should be in 12 –point Latha or Vijaya font double-spaced, and paginated.*
 - *For Malay books, the font should be in 12- point Cambria, Times, Times New Roman, Garamond, double- spaced, and paginated.*

(b)(i) Tamil or Malay Young Adult fiction novel

- 1) Submit a complete manuscript of text.
- 2) The word length for the manuscript should be between 55,000 – 90,000.
- 3) Please include a 1 –page plot and character summary of the work.
- 4) The manuscript should show the by-line and word count on the title page.
 - *For Tamil books, the font should be in 12 –point Latha or Vijaya font double-spaced, and paginated.*
 - *For Malay books, the font should be in 12- point Cambria, Times, Times New Roman, Garamond, double- spaced, and paginated.*

9. How will my manuscript be assessed?

Submissions will be assessed based on the following criteria:

- Originality and creativity of the work;
- Potential for adaptation to other media beyond print;
- Potential for local and international commercial viability;
- Readership appeal;
- Appropriateness of language and stylistic elements to the genre and target age group;
- Cultural and universal relevance of the work.

A selection panel of book publishing industry professionals to shortlist and choose the top 5 manuscripts in each genre. All decisions are final.

10. Do I need to set my story in Singapore?

You are free to set your story anywhere, though an Asian-inspired context is preferred. While we wish to nurture our own pool of uniquely Asian stories, it is just as important that your message should transcend borders and be universally relevant, regardless of where it is set.

11. What dates do I need to be aware of?

	Children's Picture Books
Open Call	8 JUNE 2015
Deadline for Submission	31 AUGUST 2015
Announcement of Results	30 NOV 2015

12. Do I need to illustrate my work as well if I am thinking of submitting a story only?

If your work gets selected, our appointed publisher will choose an appropriate illustrator for your manuscript. If you submit an illustration along with your manuscript, we will review the suitability of the illustrations for the manuscript along with the publisher and propose changes where necessary.

13. How many manuscripts will you select and what adaptations can I expect?

Our target number of selected manuscripts is 5 and they will each be adapted into Print and Enhanced eBooks or App formats.

14. Will the appointed publishers also be producing the digital adaptations?

They will be managing and overseeing the whole process, but both publishers will work with carefully selected digital publishers to adapt your work digitally.

15. Why are picture books adapted to apps?

Apps by nature are highly interactive media that depend on the illustrations to engage a user. Picture books thus lend themselves well to adaptation to apps.

16. What about other adaptations like theatre, film, animation, TV and interactive multimedia?

We will facilitate the pitching and matchmaking of successful manuscripts with local theatre and media production companies and overseas literary agents. The producers and literary agents will decide if the work can be adapted.

17. Can I submit multiple manuscripts?

Yes, you can. However, we can only support a maximum of one title per category per author.

18. Who owns the rights to my work?

The writer owns the copyright to the work. Publishing, translation and distribution rights however will reside with the publisher for 10 years, while electronic rights will remain with them for 5 years. All other subsidiary rights (e.g. merchandise, theme park, animation, film, TV, theatre etc.) will remain with you until you or your agent successfully negotiates a rights sale with buyers (e.g. media or theatre producers).

19. What makes Beyond Words so different from other publishing or writing grants?

The key difference is that selected works are taken through a structured pathway that includes print and digital adaptations, as well as matchmaking with stage and screen producers for potential adaptation. In addition, Beyond Words is characterised by publishing contracts that favour the writer, especially in terms of rights ownership and royalty escalation pegged to book sales.

20. Will this cost me anything?

No. Other than your personal costs in applying for this scheme (e.g. printing of manuscripts, postage etc), there are no additional production costs for the writer.

21. What happens if my work is selected?

Once your manuscript is selected, your publisher (to be announced at a later date) will sign a contract with you for the print and digital production of your book. The publisher will then go on to appoint illustrators for your work (if you don't already have one). The print and digital production schedule will take approximately 6 months from the date of announcement of the results.

The finished print and digital products will then be launched at various platforms, including potentially the Asian Festival of Children's Content 2016, Bologna Book Fair 2016 or Singapore Writers Festival 2016, among other events. Your work will also be made available on both local and international distribution platforms, including the Kindle, iBookstore, iTunes app store, Kobo, Nook etc.

Networking sessions will also be held with theatre and media producers to interest producers in potentially adapting and producing your work for the stage and screen.

22. What happens if my work is not selected?

You are free to publish the book in whichever way you feel is best for it, whether it is through the traditional publishing route, digital publishing, self-publishing or even getting a literary agent to represent you. Other grants you or your publisher can apply for include the [Publishing and Translation Grant](#), which supports up to 50% of your qualifying costs for publishing and promoting your book.

23. Can I ask for feedback if my work is not selected?

We expect to receive a large volume of submissions and regret that we will not be able to offer feedback or reasons for not selecting any manuscripts.

24. Is the book contract for this initiative similar to those offered by other publishing houses?

Yes, the contract is drafted according to or better than prevailing market terms.

25. Who do I contact if I have more questions?

Premadevi, E-mail: prema@bookcouncil.sg, Tel: (65) 6848 8297

Kenneth Quek, E-mail: kenneth@bookcouncil.sg, Tel: (65) 6848 8292