

The 500 Words Story Competition

The 500 Words competition helps our children see themselves as real writers - with ideas that matter and stories worth sharing. Every story entered is a success in itself.

At Aston Rowant School, we are passionate about encouraging children to develop a lifelong love of writing. Each year, we actively promote and support pupils to enter the BBC's 500 Words competition, a national celebration of children's creativity and imagination.

We are especially proud to share that in Autumn 2025, Flo C in Year 2 progressed to the second round of the competition - an incredible achievement and a wonderful example of what young writers can achieve when they are encouraged to be bold, creative and confident.

Why We Love 500 Words

The 500 Words competition is all about storytelling for pleasure. It encourages children to write stories they would love to read themselves - stories that make the reader laugh, feel emotional, or be completely blown away by imagination and originality.

Unlike much school writing, the focus here is not on spelling, punctuation or grammar. Instead, it celebrates:

- Creativity
- Original ideas
- Storytelling voice
- Confidence and imagination

This makes the competition highly motivating and accessible for all young writers.

Linked English Homework

For a number of weeks over the Autumn term, our English homework is linked to the 500 Words competition. This allows children time and space to:

- Develop ideas
- Play with characters and settings
- Edit and improve their stories
- Enjoy the process of writing

Children are encouraged to take risks, experiment with ideas and have fun with language.

How the Competition Works

There are two age categories:

- 5–7 year-olds
- 8–11 year-olds

There are very few rules - just enough to give structure while allowing creativity to shine:

- Stories must be 500 words or fewer (the title does not count)
- Stories must be written individually (not as a group)
- The idea must be entirely original
- Stories must be prose (not poems or rap)

Within these simple guidelines, children are free to let their imagination take over.

Exciting Prizes and Opportunities

The 500 Words competition offers some truly inspiring rewards:

- Every winner receives a bundle of books
- Gold winners also win 500 books for their school library
- 50 finalists are invited to a star-studded grand final at Windsor Castle, hosted by Her Majesty Queen Camilla
- Winning stories are read aloud on television by superstar celebrities

For many children, the experience of writing and entering is reward enough - but the excitement of these possibilities makes taking part even more special.

Encouraging Young Writers

We encourage families to support children by:

- Talking about their ideas
- Listening to their stories
- Celebrating effort and creativity
- Focusing on enjoyment rather than perfection