

Nebula Rules

Complete Nebula Awards® Rules

The following rules for the Nebula Awards® are effective starting with the award year beginning January 1, 2025:

1. The SFWA President shall, in compliance with the Bylaws and established operating policies and procedures, appoint a Nebula Awards® Commissioner, and if necessary, assistants to the Nebula Awards® Commissioner to oversee and administer the Nebula Awards® and to carry out the duties as outlined herein and any other related responsibilities that may arise during the course of said administration.
2. Works published by the Nebula Awards® Commissioner, assistants to the Nebula Awards® Commissioner or by any SFWA staff, contractors, or volunteers who possess administrative access to the Nebula Awards® nomination ballot or final ballot during the awards year shall not be eligible for nomination.
3. The SFWA President shall, in compliance with the Bylaws and established operating procedures, appoint a three (3) person SFWA Awards Rules Committee (SARC), to rule on questions pertaining to the Nebula Awards® rules.
4. Members of the SFWA Awards Rules Committee (SARC) who appear on the FINAL BALLOT must recuse themselves from any subsequent vote that concerns eligibility or interpretation of rules in the category in which they appear for that year's Nebula awards.
 1. These cases shall be referred to the Board of Directors for resolution, along with a report from the Nebula Awards® Commissioner stating the issue and the reason for the recusal.
5. The Nebula Awards® Commissioner will serve as a secretary to the SFWA Awards Rules Committee (SARC), but shall not be a voting member.
6. The award may be voted on by Full, Associate, and Senior members (including lifetime and family members) in good standing.
7. The Nebula Awards® year shall begin on January 1 and end on December 31 of the year for which awards will be presented.
8. Nebula Awards® will be made in the following categories:
 1. Short Story: fewer than 7,500 words
 2. Novelette: at least 7,500 words but fewer than 17,500 words
 3. Novella: at least 17,500 words but fewer than 40,000 words
 4. Novel: 40,000 words or more
 5. The Andre Norton Award for Middle Grade and Young Adult Fiction: Middle grade or young adult science fiction or fantasy (or related genre) books of any length.
 6. Game Writing: An interactive or playable story-driven work of any length which conveys narrative, character, or story background.

7. The Ray Bradbury Award for Outstanding Dramatic Presentation: Dramatic works of any length such as motion pictures, television, Internet, radio, audio, and stage productions.
 8. Comics: A science fiction or fantasy story of any length told using sequential art.
 9. Poetry: A science fiction or fantasy poem of any length.
9. Eligibility
1. All works first published in English, in the United States, during the calendar year, in the genres of science fiction, fantasy, or a related fiction genre are eligible for the Nebula Awards® in their respective categories.
 2. Works such as audiobooks, podcasts, and similar type works shall be placed in an existing category as deemed appropriate by the Nebula Awards® Commissioner, based on their word or page count and other qualities as determined by the Commissioner.
 3. Performance works such as dramatic podcasts may, in the judgment of the Commissioner, be placed in the Bradbury category rather than text categories.
 4. All works that are published and available to the public in a calendar year will be taken as eligible for that calendar year for purposes of the Nebula awards, regardless of the issue date on the cover or other label.
 5. Works first published in English on the Internet or in electronic form widely available to US readers during the calendar year shall be treated as though published in the United States.
 6. Word counts for translated works shall be based on the English word count.
 7. Translated works shall become eligible upon first publication in the English language in the United States.
 8. Works not yet released to the general public, including but not limited to: review copies for a forthcoming work, works published in a password protected or limited distribution workshop, or games published as early-access, shall not be eligible for nomination or the final ballot until the work is actually released and available to the general public.
 9. Works are eligible whether or not their authors are members of SFWA.
 10. Works are eligible whether or not they have been previously published outside of the United States.
 11. In order to be eligible for any award, the work must include at least one (1) credited writer.
 1. Works that are wholly written using generative large language model (LLM) tools are not eligible.

2. Works that used LLMs at any point during the writing process must disclose this upon acceptance of the nomination, and the nature of the technology's use will be made clear to voters on the final ballot.
3. The physical award will be given to one (1) designated writer of the work.
4. In the event there is more than one writer on the work, certificates will be awarded to all credited writers.

10. The Short Story, Novelette, Novella, and Novel Nebula Awards

1. The novel-length version of a previously published short story, novelette, or novella shall be eligible upon the novel's first English-language publication in the United States.
2. A short story, novelette, or novella based on a previously-published version of the work shall not be eligible.
3. A novel re-issued in expanded or modified form shall not be eligible unless previously withdrawn in accordance with the rules.
4. Serialized novels may be nominated in part or in whole.
 1. An individually published part (chapter, section, episode, etc...) of a serialized novel or a complete serialized novel in whole will be treated as discrete works, separately eligible, and nominations will be tallied for each separately.
 2. Nothing shall preclude one part of a series and the entirety of the serialized novel as a whole from appearing together on the final ballot.
 3. Serialized novels may include multi-author compilations consisting of separately published parts written by different authors.

11. The Andre Norton Nebula Award for Middle Grade and Young Adult Fiction:

1. Eligible works for this award shall be any book in its first appearance in the English language published as a middle grade or young adult science fiction or fantasy (or related genre) novel, including graphic novels.
2. Nothing shall preclude a work nominated in this category from being eligible for nomination in other categories.

12. The Nebula Award for Game Writing

1. Eligible works for this award shall be interactive or playable story-driven works. Games that are deliberately wordless shall be eligible.
2. A new iteration of a game (often, but not always referred to as "version" or "edition") shall be eligible provided substantive changes have been made to content, gameplay, or story.
 1. Decisions regarding the eligibility of new iterations of a game will be made by the Nebula Awards® Commissioner with support from the

Game Writing Committee. Decisions may be appealed to the Board. Board decisions will be final.

13. The Ray Bradbury Nebula Award for Outstanding Dramatic Presentation:

1. Eligible works for this award shall be dramatic works such as motion pictures, television, Internet, radio, audio, and stage productions.
2. Serial works may be nominated by individual episode or in whole.
 1. An individual episode of a dramatic series or a complete story arc of multiple episodes will be treated as discrete works, separately eligible, and nominations will be tallied for each separately.
 2. Nothing shall preclude an individual episode of a series and the entirety of a story arc from appearing together on the final ballot.

14. The Nebula Award for Comics

1. Eligible works for this award shall be any science fiction or fantasy story-driven narrative told using sequential art of any length.
2. A Trade (collection of serialized single issue comics) can be considered in this category.
3. A web or digital comic can be considered in this category if it contains a complete story arc.

15. The Nebula Award for Poetry

1. Eligible works for this award shall be any science fiction or fantasy poem of any length.
2. Multi-poem sequences may be nominated in part or in whole.
 1. An individually published part of a multi-part poem or a complete multi-part poem in whole will be treated as discrete works, separately eligible, and nominations will be tallied for each separately.
 2. Nothing shall preclude one part of a multi-part poem and the entirety of the multi-part poem as a whole from appearing together on the final ballot.
 3. Multi-part poems may include multi-author compilations consisting of separately published parts written by different authors.

16. Withdrawals

1. The author of any eligible work may withdraw it from consideration in a given year and request that a later edition be considered for the Nebula Awards®, but only in two specific cases:
 1. If the work appeared as a limited edition publication, or;
 2. If the author finds the published version unacceptable as the result of editorial changes or production errors.

2. An author must present a written request for withdrawal to the Nebula Awards® Commissioner by November 1 or within thirty (30) days after the publication, production, or broadcast of the work, whichever is later.
 3. For a later edition of a withdrawn work to be eligible, the author must present a written request for reinstatement to the Nebula Awards® Commissioner.
 4. Nominations shall not be accepted for a work withdrawn from eligibility.
 5. Nominations on file for any such work will not be carried over to the future.
 6. An author may permanently withdraw a work from eligibility by delivering a written request to the Nebula Awards® Commissioner.
 1. No work so withdrawn shall ever again be eligible for the Nebula Awards®.
 7. If a work published late in the year is withdrawn after November 1st and has received nominations, those nominations will be null and void.
 8. An attempt will be made to notify member(s) who nominated the work so that they may submit replacement nominations.
 9. All nominations must be submitted before the end of the NOMINATION PERIOD.
17. All Full, Associate, and Senior members (including lifetime and family members) of SFWA in good standing are eligible to make nominations during the NOMINATION PERIOD.
18. The SFWA Board of Directors, with a two thirds supermajority vote, may create additional categories.
19. A secure, web-based form will be provided for all classes of members to offer “suggested reading” throughout the year.
 1. ANY class of member will be eligible to add entries to this database.
 2. These entries shall be checked monthly for duplicates and errors by the Nebula Awards® Commissioner.
 3. Suggested reading works may be added by anyone who is a member, including their authors, editors, publishers, or agents.
 4. This suggested reading list is a courtesy, intended to allow the membership to share works of interest. Works on this list are not the only eligible works.
20. Works may not be nominated by their authors, editors, publishers, or agents.
21. The purpose of the Nebula Awards® is to honor works in each category as chosen by the Full, Associate, and Senior Members (including lifetime and family members) of SFWA as a collective whole.
 1. Any deliberate strategic coordination of nominations by sub-groups of voters for the purpose of placing one or more specific works on the final ballot (also known as slating) is prohibited.

2. Reciprocal voting or vote-trading among individual voters (also known as logrolling) is also prohibited. Ballot manipulation of this nature goes against the spirit of the awards and diminishes the perceived honor bestowed to recipients of the awards.
 3. Votes shown to have been influenced by a violation of these rules may be removed at the Nebula Awards® Commissioner's discretion. In extreme cases the Nebula Awards® Commissioner may remove a work from eligibility, and subsequent violations may impact eligibility for the Nebula Awards in future years. In either case, every effort will be made to notify the creator or creators of the work and an appeal may be made to the SARC and then to the Board. Decisions of the Board will be final.
22. The official NOMINATION PERIOD will remain open for at least six weeks and should begin no later than December 15th and extend through at least January 31st of the following year.
23. Nominations will be accepted via a secure online form.
1. Voting eligible members may request a paper ballot from the Nebula Awards® Commissioner up to two weeks prior to the close of the ballot.
 1. Paper ballots must be received by the Nebula Awards® Commissioner no later than the closing date of the ballot.
 2. Nominations made by paper ballot will override any online submissions.
 2. Only Full, Associate, and Senior members (including lifetime and family members) in good standing shall be eligible to nominate works for the FINAL BALLOT.
 3. Nominations shall be treated as confidential information.
 4. Each eligible member may nominate no more than five different works per category and may not nominate any work more than once.
 1. A member may nominate both a part of a larger work and the larger work, such as a single episode and the series in which it is a part, so long as each is eligible individually.
 5. The nominations will be counted by the Nebula Awards® Commissioner, who shall compose the FINAL BALLOT.
24. The FINAL BALLOT shall comprise the top six works in each category that receive the most nominations.
1. In the event that zero (0) works are nominated in a given category, then no award shall be given in that category.
 2. In the event that fewer than six (6) works are nominated in a given category, then all works will be listed on the FINAL BALLOT.
 3. In the event of a tie for the final place in a category, all tied works will be added to the FINAL BALLOT.

25. The FINAL BALLOT shall be made available for viewing within no more than fourteen (14) days following the close of nominations.
26. The FINAL BALLOT shall be made available for voting within no more than one month following the close of nominations via a secure online form.
 1. Voting eligible members may request a paper ballot from the Nebula Awards® Commissioner up to two weeks prior to the close of the ballot.
 1. Paper ballots must be received by the Nebula Awards® Commissioner no later than the closing date of the ballot.
 2. Votes made by paper ballot will override any online submissions.
 2. Only Full, Associate, and Senior members (including lifetime and family members) in good standing shall be eligible to vote.
 3. Votes shall be treated as confidential information.
 4. Voting will be open for a minimum of one month.
 5. No more than one vote may be cast per category, per member.
 6. All votes will be tallied within 48 hours following the close of the FINAL BALLOT.
 7. The work in each category that receives the most votes will be declared the winner.
 8. In the event of a tie after voting on the FINAL BALLOT, the total number of nominations received for each work will determine the winner.
 1. If the number of nominations is also tied, then the tie shall stand, and all such tied works shall receive the award.
27. The winners of the Nebula Awards® shall be announced at an annual Nebula Awards® ceremony.
 1. In the event that a multi-author work wins any of these awards, a single trophy shall be awarded and individual co-authors will each receive a certificate.
 1. Should writers of the winning multi-author work wish to order additional trophies at their own expense, arrangements may be made with SFWA staff.
 2. Translators will be treated as co-authors in this situation, also receiving a separate certificate.
28. The interpretation of these rules, and all questions regarding eligibility, withdrawals, nominations, ballots, etc. shall be decided by the Nebula Awards® Commissioner, subject to appeal to the SARC.
 1. In the event of an appeal, an effort will be made to contact the creator or creators of the work in question and inform them of any decisions regarding eligibility.
 2. If an author, a director, or writer of a dramatic production, or the responsible party for a playable or interactive work disagrees with a

decision made by the SARC, he or she may apply to the Board of Directors for a further appeal by presenting to them a brief summary of the reasons for the appeal.

1. At this time, the SARC shall provide a summary of their decision to the Board.
2. If two members of the Board then believe that an appeal is justified, the decision shall be voted on by the Board, which may overrule the SARC.
3. Board members who appear on the FINAL BALLOT must recuse themselves from any subsequent Board vote that concerns eligibility or interpretation of rules for that year's Nebula, Bradbury, or Norton Awards.

These instructions for the Corporation's operations shall be included in the Operating Policies and Procedures Manual (OPPM) as defined in Article III of the SFWA Bylaws. The Board shall make every attempt to avoid changing the rules during the active period of nomination or voting to increase clarity, but acknowledges that on occasion it may be unavoidable.