

The Alligator's Mouth Award 2026

Submission Guidelines



The Alligator's Mouth Award is a children's book prize for highly illustrated early fiction, set up by The Alligator's Mouth bookshop and The Bright Agency. The award, returning for its eighth year, celebrates the best books for readers aged 6-8, and champions authors and illustrators.

Submission criteria

UK publishers are invited to submit highly illustrated early fiction that meets the following criteria:

- The book should be aimed at readers aged 6-8 and have illustrations on the majority of internal spreads. No picture books or graphic novels, please.
- The book should have been first published in the English language on a children's list by a UK publisher.
- The book should have been first published between 1st October 2024 and 31st December 2025.

Judging criteria

Entries will be judged against the following criteria:

- Readability
- Interplay between text and illustrations
- Quality of illustrations
- Overall enjoyment for children

How to enter

Please complete one entry form for each book you wish to submit. Send the form and a PDF of the book to award@thealligatorsmouth.co.uk. The PDFs must be finished copies with a double spread per page, under 70MB. (Please note, for longlisted titles, publishers will also be required to send in ten physical copies of the book.)

Past winners

- 2025 winner – Gordon: the Meanest Goose on Earth by Alex Latimer (OUP)
- A full list of previous winners and shortlists can be found by [clicking here](#)

Rules of entry

- Submissions open on Monday 20th October 2025 and close on Friday 21st November 2025. Entries made outside of this will not be accepted.
- Publishers can submit up to three books per imprint.
- We do not accept books that are only available in e-format, have been self-published, or where the author or illustrator has contributed to or paid for the cost of publishing.
- Our wonderful partners, Gardners Books, organise a special discount offer for longlisted books. Please be prepared to participate in this – the discount is promoted vigorously, and is intended to encourage schools to order the longlisted books from indie bookshops.
- All shortlisted publishers, authors and illustrators will be invited to participate in digital marketing, social media and an award ceremony at a London venue in summer 2026, and should make all reasonable efforts to take part. Author and illustrator travel costs to the award ceremony should be covered by the publisher where possible.
- The winning author and illustrator will each receive a trophy. If the author and illustrator is the same person, only one prize will be awarded. The winner will be asked to be part of the judging panel the following year.

Key timings

- Submissions open Monday 20th October 2025
- Submissions close Friday 21st November 2025
- Longlist announced March 2026
- Shortlisted announced May 2026
- Winner announced June 2026 at Award Ceremony in London