

# Brilliant Star

## SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

“Arts, crafts and sciences uplift the world of being, and are conducive to its exaltation. Knowledge is as wings to man’s life, and a ladder for his ascent.”—Bahá’u’lláh

Welcome to *Brilliant Star*’s worldwide community of contributors. If you have questions that are not addressed in these general guidelines, please email [brilliant@usbnc.org](mailto:brilliant@usbnc.org) or call 847.733.3409.

### What is *Brilliant Star*?

“Children are the most precious treasure a community can possess, for in them are the promise and guarantee of the future.”

Guided by this vision from the Bahá’í Faith, *Brilliant Star* empowers kids and junior youth as world citizens and supports parents, families, and teachers with helpful resources. We encourage kids to see themselves as spiritual champions and use their virtues to be of service to their families and communities.

Inspired by the Bahá’í teachings, our print and digital content invites kids of all faiths to explore universal concepts such as respect for nature, appreciation for cultural and racial diversity, the power of prayer, the equality of women and men, and the elimination of prejudices. These principles are central to the teachings of Bahá’u’lláh, the Prophet-Founder of the Bahá’í Faith, who wrote:

“Ye are the fruits of one tree, and the leaves of one branch. Deal ye one with another with the utmost love and harmony, with friendliness and fellowship.”

Designed for kids aged 8-12, years of important moral and emotional growth, *Brilliant Star* promotes the love of learning with compelling fiction, non-fiction, activities, games, puzzles, comics, interviews, music, and expressive art. Multiple learning styles are employed, such as interpersonal, intrapersonal, visual, and linguistic. Social and emotional challenges faced by children are addressed with respect for age-appropriate development.

*Brilliant Star* promotes universal values of good character, such as kindness, courage, creativity, and helpfulness. Readers can learn from the adventures of likeable fictional characters, as well as from outstanding real-life role models. Glimpses of Bahá’í history invite children to explore a faith which has members in every part of the world working toward global peace and unity.

*Brilliant Star Online*, our interactive website, enables kids to follow their curiosity and explore videos, interactive quizzes, stories, articles, crafts, comics, and interviews. The “Imagination Station 2” art app and “How to Draw” videos encourage creativity. The “Luminous Library” provides over 60 full issues of *Brilliant Star* magazine to search, download, or print. “Space Ace” videos with NASA astronauts add to the immersive experience. Our science content is informed by our STEAMS initiative (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Math, and Spirituality). A separate “Parents & Teachers” section on the website presents tools on education, fostering character strengths, family life, handling challenges, spirituality, and related topics. These materials come from a wide range of experts, professionals, educators, and parents. We recognize that kids are nurtured within diverse families and communities striving to help create positive change.

Published four times per year by the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá’ís of the United States, *Brilliant Star* magazine is an award-winning publication with subscribers in over 40 countries, coming from diverse backgrounds, cultures, and faiths. Kids aged 7-12 in the U.S. are provided with gift subscriptions as registered members of the U.S. Bahá’í community. *Brilliant Star* is created through collaboration between staff, contractors, and a network of volunteer contributors from around the globe. We welcome submissions from creators of all ages.

*Brilliant Star*’s name comes from the Bahá’í writings. From their earliest days, many Bahá’í children say a prayer by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, the son of Bahá’u’lláh and Interpreter of His writings:

“O God, guide me, protect me, make of me a shining lamp and a brilliant star.”

We think of our readers as brilliant stars. They illuminate the world with the radiant light of their character and talents. They can bring unity to our divided planet.

### Where do I send my work?

We welcome submissions by e-mail. Please send your work as an attachment (.docx, .doc, or .rtf files work best) to [brilliant@usbnc.org](mailto:brilliant@usbnc.org).

If you would like to submit your work by mail, please send it to:

**Brilliant Star**  
1233 Central St.  
Evanston, IL 60201

Please include your name, address, phone number, and e-mail address with your submission. If you’re under 21, please include your age as well. Send a self-addressed stamped envelope if you would like your submission returned.

Ask us for a list of our upcoming themes. If you would like us to consider your work for a particular theme, send it at least three months before the printer’s deadline indicated on the list to allow enough time for review and revision.

### How do you compensate contributors?

*Brilliant Star* gratefully relies on volunteer submissions. At this time, we cannot offer monetary compensation for published work. We will send you three complimentary copies of the issue in which your work appears.

### How do you decide what to publish?

Please note that we cannot publish all submissions. Decisions to publish submissions are based on many factors, including quality, appropriateness, overall theme, editorial approach, layout and design, deadline restrictions, and technical issues.

Word limits are approximately 350-450 for articles and 700-750 for most fiction, though we occasionally publish longer pieces. At the present time, we do not publish poetry or memoirs written by adults.

If we are unable to use your work, we will do our best to inform you by mail or email. If we have an interest in publishing your work, we will contact you about any suggested revisions.

### May kids and youth submit their work to *Brilliant Star*?

Yes! Since *Brilliant Star* is a magazine for kids, we are especially interested in contributions from kids and youth. We may ask to include a young contributor's photo and age along with the submission.

### How are different faiths and cultures represented in *Brilliant Star*?

*Brilliant Star's* readers come from many faiths and cultures. All religions and cultures are treated with dignity and respect. We encourage the use of characters and stories from diverse backgrounds, as well as stories that depict the value and beauty of interaction between different cultures.

When referring to Manifestations of God, such as Bahá'u'lláh, the Báb, Muhammad, Jesus, Buddha, Zoroaster, Moses, Abraham, or Krishna, please include a brief statement describing their role or teachings. The same principle applies to Bahá'í figures such as 'Abdu'l-Bahá (the son of Bahá'u'lláh and interpreter of His teachings) or Shoghi Effendi (the grandson of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and leader of the Bahá'í Faith after his passing).

Limit the use of names, places, and terms that our young readers may have difficulty understanding or pronouncing. When using a Bahá'í term such as "Local Spiritual Assembly," include a brief and simple definition.

Check and double-check any direct quotations used in your submission. Please include your sources of information. Avoid using long quotes that would be difficult for our young readers to absorb.

## How do I incorporate a child's perspective into my work?

*Brilliant Star's* content is developed with a focus on kids in their "tween" years, ages 8-12. This is a period of intense emotional, physical, and psychological development. Familiarize yourself with the interests and challenges of children in this age range.

Keep your language and concepts age appropriate. Your word processing program may offer an analysis of the reading level, which can be a helpful but not definitive guide.

## What helps to make a story or article appealing to *Brilliant Star's* readers?

Both fiction stories and non-fiction articles appeal to our readers. A non-fiction article can be more interesting when it incorporates fictional elements such as a unique character or descriptive setting.

Since kids enjoy reading about characters in roles to which they aspire, most of our characters are in the upper years of our age range, ages 10-12. However, some of our content is also geared to our younger readers.

The reading level of a story should match the age of the main characters. Perspective, language, tone, dialogue, and setting should be consistent with the characters and plot.

Use an active voice, not a passive voice. Hook the reader at the beginning with action, dialogue, or vivid description. Make sure that your story follows an engaging plot with conflict and resolution, and features an interesting setting.

Balance the action, dialogue, description, and thought throughout the story. Try to avoid straight, narrative storytelling. Show, don't tell. Use vivid description and action. Be positive. Even when writing about negative things like social problems, offer a constructive solution or positive outlook.

Use only one main viewpoint character, preferably a kid around 10-13 years old. Stories with an adult main character who bestows knowledge upon children in a lesson-oriented manner are not appealing to our readers. It's better if the kid makes the discoveries and resolves the conflict with minimal adult intervention.

Satisfy the young reader without moralizing. Avoid preaching. Avoid having the narrator or one of the characters give a convenient moralistic conclusion.

## May I submit activities and games?

Activities and games may be submitted in rough or final form. Editors will be happy to help you develop a rough concept for an activity or game if it is being considered for publication.

Send us a description of your activity along with short, simple instructions. We avoid long, complicated activities that require adult supervision.

If you think they will be helpful, please try to provide step-by-step rough sketches of the instructions. You may also submit photographs to illustrate the activity. Final illustrations need not be included. We typically produce final illustrations after a piece has been approved and edited for publication.

### May I submit photos and illustrations?

We welcome submissions of photographs with good lighting, composition, and sharp focus. Color or black and white prints are preferred. The best photographs evoke emotion or show interesting action. We avoid posed group pictures and try to capture candid, natural images.

Always include captions and identify the people in the photo. If the photo includes children, the photographer must provide written permission from their parents or guardians stating that it may be published in *Brilliant Star*.

Avoid sending photographs or illustrations via e-mail. Digital images from consumer-grade digital cameras or scanners are typically not suitable for publication. Please send original art or photos to us for scanning, or provide us with high-quality scans.

Illustrations are usually assigned to artists after a manuscript piece is approved. We like to feature a variety of styles, media, and techniques. If you are interested in being part of our network of artists, please write to us and send us samples of your work.

### Do you accept simultaneous submissions?

We prefer not to receive submissions that have been sent to other publications. If you do send us a piece that you have submitted elsewhere, please let us know, and inform us if your piece is accepted by another publication.

### Do you publish materials written by adults?

For the Parents & Teachers section of our website, we welcome submissions of original articles or previously posted content. Please send submissions or queries to Amy Renshaw, Senior Editor, at [arenschaw@usbnc.org](mailto:arenschaw@usbnc.org).

This special section of our website is a resource for parents and teachers of any faith. It features a collection of articles from diverse authors and specialists to inspire learning and dialogue about education, character-building, and community-building. The information and opinions expressed in the articles are those of the authors, and do not necessarily represent the views of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the U.S. Please review the content on the site before submitting:

<https://brilliantstarmagazine.org/parents-teachers>

Most articles range from 500-1,500 words, though the length is flexible. Please send your article as an attachment to an e-mail (Microsoft Word is preferable). In some cases, we will respond with feedback, often based on our audience and the tone of the site, and we'll request a revised version.

You're welcome to include links in your article to other relevant resources. In some cases, they may not be included in the final posted version, based on content, our non-commercial mandate, or other considerations.

Because our audience includes readers of any faith, the pieces we run must maintain an inclusive tone accessible to a multi-faith audience. When addressing topics specific to

any religion, please explain them clearly and simply.

Each article should include a brief author bio of about two or three sentences describing your background, expertise, or previous publications. We're happy to include a link to an informational blog or website. Due to the non-commercial nature of our site, we may not include links to websites focused on the sale of books, services, or other merchandise.

If possible, please submit a selection of photos to complement your article, including a publication-quality author portrait. Other relevant photos should come with bylines, captions, and copyright clearance from you or the owner. In some cases, we may provide an illustration for use with your article. The minimum resolution required for website photos is 72 dpi. Sizes can vary (horizontal, vertical, and square are all okay), but a good starting point is 600 x 400 pixels. We prefer to receive the original images, if possible, for optimum size and quality.

In the magazine, we occasionally publish articles by adults that offer a unique point of view and relate to the current theme. Please query [brilliant@usbnc.org](mailto:brilliant@usbnc.org) with your ideas.

### How is copyright handled?

With each submission, please indicate if you would like to maintain copyright ownership of your work or if you would like to give the copyright as a gift to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States. If you maintain copyright ownership, we will send you a license agreement to sign and return to us, granting us permission to publish the piece in print and online.

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