**Invitation for Organisations to host the MaxLiteracy Awards 2025-26**

The Max Reinhardt Charitable Trust, Engage, the National Association for Gallery Education and the National Association of Writers in Education (NAWE), are delighted to announce the MaxLiteracy Awards 2025-26.

MaxLiteracy is a unique opportunity for collaborative and interdisciplinary learning between creative writers in education, visual arts engagement specialists and teachers/educators, to develop innovative and creative practices that nurture creative literacy with young people. To support a greater understanding of, and visibility for, visual arts and writing practices with children and young people, the 2025-26 Awards will support applications from across the United Kingdom, including those which explore art-inspired literacy and creative writing in English and other languages and dialects used within the United Kingdom. Projects with art-inspired literacy and creative writing in any language are eligible, however for this iteration of the Awards we are particularly interested in proposals which creatively explore Welsh, Scottish Gaelic or Irish Gaelic.

Visual arts organisations in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, including galleries and art museums, are invited to submit proposals to host MaxLiteracy in 2025-26 supported by the Max Reinhardt Charitable Trust, which will grant four organisations an Award of £7,000 to support a dedicated programme of art-based writing with young people in learning settings.

**Application Deadline: 10am, 15 September 2025**

**The MaxLiteracy Awards 2025-26**

Colleagues in galleries, museums and visual arts organisations of any size in the UK are invited to apply and submit proposals to host the MaxLiteracy 2025-26 Awards. Successful awardees will have a clear focus on developing or building on best practice in education and engagement, will demonstrate a commitment to partnership working on a local level, and will articulate plans to support the professional development of the visual arts learning/education specialists, writing educators, and learning setting staff members involved through an innovative art-based writing or creative literacy project with children, young people or young adults.

Four visual arts organisations will be granted an Award of £7,000 each to support a dedicated programme of art-based writing and creative literacy work in partnership with a formal or informal learning setting. Learning settings may include: schools (primary and secondary) colleges, youth support agencies, for example, virtual schools, agencies supporting young people in care or care leavers, those identified as vulnerable/at risk, youth justice settings and sanctuary agencies for young people seeking refuge. We also encourage Awardees to consider using a proportion of the Award to support a paid placement opportunity for a local early career educator to assist on the programme.

We are particularly interested in receiving proposals that address inequalities in arts, educational or health provision for young people, for example in localities in which the arts are historically underfunded, or supporting targeted young people who experience barriers to participation.

The aim of the 2025-26 Awards is to support a greater understanding of, and visibility for, visual arts and writing practices with children and young people. Within this, the objectives for this iteration of the Awards are:

* To develop new opportunities for bi-lingual or multi-lingual creative collaboration within the MaxLiteracy partnerships and peer learning programme, and evaluate the impact of this on participants, writers and organisations.
* To further understand how art-based literacy and creative writing may improve the life-chances of children and young people, for example through literacy learning, cognitive development, and wellbeing.
* To develop sustained geographical partnerships, peer-to-peer learning opportunities, and cross-sectoral exchange (e.g., with educational, youth and health sectors).
* To support visual arts engagement practitioners within organisations to lead their Award and test art-based writing/creative-literacy approaches within participation and engagement activity.
* To support creative writers to collaboratively work with visual arts engagement practitioners and learning settings on an art-based writing or creative literacy project, taking inspiration from the venue’s visual art collections, displays or buildings.
* To widely share resources within the arts and education sectors, including at a final sharing event, to encourage and promote the use of galleries, art museums and visual arts organisations as a context for art-based literacy and creative writing work.

MaxLiteracy 2025-2026 Awards will include:

* A collaboration between a visual arts organisation’s learning and engagement practitioner/team, a creative writer, and a learning setting.
* An enquiry, model or approach to be tested and explored. This might build on existing work or test a new way of working, devised in collaboration with the creative writer.
* A series of participatory workshops, activities or events that engage children, young people or young adults in art-inspired writing and literacy using language(s) appropriate for the group/setting.
* A visual source of inspiration, for example an art collection, exhibit, display or architectural space.
* A sharing of workshop outcomes coordinated by the visual arts organisation, e.g. a pop up exhibition, a performance, a publication, a film screening.
* An art-inspired/creative writing teaching resource, drawing on the learning and outcomes from the workshops. The resources created in 2025-26 should build on, rather than replicate those already produced through the Awards. Please view the resources, case studies and videos on [www.maxliteracy.org](http://www.maxliteracy.org)
* Where appropriate, Awards will support an early career writer to be involved in project delivery through a paid placement. This is optional.

Awardees will receive a programme of support:

* A dedicated MaxLiteracy Coordinator will act as a point of contact and offer support and advice for the delivery of Awards.
* Support with the selection and contracting of writers with experience of participation and education
* Online Induction and Planning Support session, compulsory for all visual arts organisations and learning settings partners.
* Attendance at three online Peer Learning events to share progress, challenges and insights between Awardees, for all visual arts organisations, learning setting partners and creative writers.
* Support with the creation of teaching resources
* A dedicated MaxLiteracy Evaluator, supporting with the design and collation of evaluative materials.
* Attendance at an in-person/hybrid final sharing day and celebration for all Awardees and partners.
* Online mentoring and coaching sessions for early career placements (if appropriate).

The Awards are run by Engage, the National Association for Gallery Education in partnership with the National Association for Writers in Education (NAWE). Awardees will work with the MaxLiteracy Coordinator.

**Value of the Awards**

£7000 will be awarded to four successful applicants to cover creative writer fees, project costs and materials. Should there be an exceptional project application, the MaxLiteracy programme panel

may offer an increased award. The panel is also open to applicants looking for match funding.

**Who can apply?**

Applications are invited from galleries, art museums and visual arts organisations in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland with an identified colleague (or colleagues) with responsibility for learning, education or engagement within their role acting as the lead contact. Applications should be in English.

Experience of working with creative writers and formal or informal learning settings is welcomed but not essential. Applicants with less experience are encouraged to use this opportunity to develop work in this area.

Applicants must name the learning setting (e.g. school) they wish to work with and evidence that they have discussed plans for the Award with them. Where the creative writer has already been identified, their details may be included in the application. However, NAWE and our partners and supporters in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland will support Awardees and learning settings to recruit creative writers if required, once the Award has been granted.

For further information on the role of the visual arts organisation, learning setting and creative writer see **Appendix 1**.

**Selection**

Award recipients will be selected by a panel that will include the Max Reinhardt Charitable Trust, Engage and external experts.

**Evaluation**

The Award will be evaluated by a consultant who will devise a methodology with the support of Engage and attend the planning and induction sessions to introduce the evaluation approach and methodology to the project partners.

The evaluator will conduct virtual support meetings with the learning settings, venue staff and creative writers to collect evaluation data. The evaluator will attend the final sharing day and write a final report. Findings from the evaluation will be used to plan future Awards. The executive summary and the key findings will be published.

**Documentation**

Awardees are requested to document their activities and outcomes, and provide information in English for case studies. Photographs/footage and case studies from the 2025-26 Awards will be added to the MaxLiteracy website.

An event is planned for Autumn 2026 to share learning from the MaxLiteracy Awards 2025-26 for those working in the arts and education sector with an interest in creative writing and literacy work stimulated by the visual arts.

Engage and NAWE will also seek opportunities to share learning from the Awards at seminars and events with the arts, cultural and education sectors.

**Important dates**

Key programme dates for the MaxLiteracy Awards 2025-26 are:

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| **MaxLiteracy Awards 2025-26** | **Activity** |
| **2 June 2025** | Applications open |
| **15 September 2025** | Applications close |
| **Week: 29 September 2025** | Successful applicants informed |
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| **Oct - Nov 2025** | Each venue holds an initial **planning meeting** with a representative of the learning setting |
| **Week: 17 November 2025** | All venues and lead representatives from each learning setting attend online **induction workshop** facilitated by Engage via Zoom (approx. time 10am-2pm) |
| **October 2025 - January 2026** | Recruitment of creative writers takes place (coordinated by venues, with support from Engage and partners). |
| **Week: 9 February 2026** | All venues and creative writers attend online **planning workshop** facilitated by Engage via Zoom (approx. time 10am-2pm) |
| **March 2026 – July 2026** | **Delivery of MaxLiteracy Award Activities**Participatory workshops and outcomes coordinated as a collaboration between Awardee venues, learning setting partners, and commissioned creative writers. |
| **Week: 30 June 2026** | **Sharing and Reflection Day**All venues, lead representatives from each learning setting and creative writers will attend sharing day. This will be held online, via Zoom, or in person at one of the MaxLiteracy Award host venues (approx. time 10am-4.00pm). |
| **31 July 2026** | Deadline for each Awardee venue to produce a draft copy of their **resource**  |
| **30 September 2026** | **Deadline for completion of venue resources and case studies.**Evaluation report delivered |
| **Oct-December 2026** | **Sector sharing opportunities**e.g. at Engage Gathering and NAWE conference. |

**Budget and Funding**

Applicants will be asked to provide an outline budget for how they propose to spend the Award in order to realise the proposed activity. See **Appendix 2** for a suggested budget.

Each Award can be used to cover:

* Fees for a Creative Writer to work with a Learning Setting and your venue e.g. the cost to engage a Creative Writer (inclusive of planning, attending MaxLiteracy activities, working with participants and evaluation). Please note we suggest that at least 45% of the Award is allocated to these fees.
* the Creative Writer’s travel costs (if appropriate),
* Costs incurred by the learning setting e.g. access, staff cover and participant travel (if appropriate),
* Costs of recruiting and supporting an early career writer as a work placement, apprentice or assistant for the project.
* Cost of designing, translating and producing a resource,
* Workshop materials or equipment,
* Digital or paper/printed resources,
* Exhibition/display or sharing event costs,
* Other translation/interpretation and access costs,
* Documentation of the activity,
* Overhead costs incurred by the venue to undertake the activity.

**How to Apply**

The application is via an online form, which can be accessed [here.](https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=-weY-NyJak6EfUUe6UzQygEgw84zOLpDtR9tBXVsabhUQUkyRUVLSVBHUFkxSU9USktXWjVIRE9YSy4u)

Deadline:**10am, 15 September 2025.**

If you have questions about the programme or your application, please contact maxliteracy@engage.org

Awardees will be notified of the outcome of their application week commencing 29 September 2025.

***Appendix 1***

Each MaxLiteracy Award will be made to the gallery, art museum or visual arts organisation.

In order for the project to be successfully delivered by each cultural organisation working with a learning setting and a creative writer this appendix includes an outline of the expected responsibilities of each partner.

Please note that activities will be expected to be delivered online/virtually and/or in-person according to Government advice at the time.

**Role of the cultural organisation (arts venue, gallery, art museum or visual arts organisation)**

The cultural organisation will act as the lead applicant and Awardee. They will:

* Nominate a lead contact, ideally with responsibility for learning, engagement or education within their role, who will take overall responsibility for coordinating their Max Literacy Award and participating in programme activity as a representative of the organisation..
* Lead the planning of the creative writer’s activity with the learning setting and the venue, including drawing up a timetable, outputs, outcomes and budget for the activity, considering how to address the aims of the award.
* Liaise with the MaxLiteracy Coordinator on the planning, delivery, documentation and evaluation of activity.
* Ensure a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check is carried out for the creative writer (if appropriate)
* Ensure other safeguarding policies and procedures are in place for the programme and all personnel involved.
* Ensure that adequate insurance, including public liability insurance, is in place for all activities carried out as part of the award, both at the venue and/or the learning setting.
* Ensure that adequate insurance, including public liability insurance, is in place for all activity delivered by the creative writer
* Ensure permission has been obtained for all documentation of the award activity, including permission for photographs and/or video footage of participants, staff, artwork and buildings.
* Coordinate the activity with the learning setting, creative writer, and the venue.
* Support the learning setting and creative writer to arrange visits to the venue including access and transport.
* Provide space at the venue for the creative writer to carry out research and planning associated with the award activity
* Create a resource resulting from the award activity, with support from the learning setting and creative writer. Resources should be produced digitally and be in English.
* Coordinate a final outcome sharing (e.g. exhibition, booklet, performance, film) that showcases the creative activities to a public audience.
* Document the activity e.g. with photography
* Collate evaluation data from all partners, including the learning setting and creative writer, to provide to the evaluator in English.
* Take part in the planning and induction day and sharing day (as detailed above)
* Contribute material in English for case studies, video and photographs to be shared on the MaxLiteracy website.
* Contribute to events in Autumn 2026 to share learning from the project, with support from Engage.
* If hosting a project placement for an early career writer/educator, the venue’s Lead Contact will take overall responsibility for recruiting and supporting this role.

**Role of the Learning Setting**

The learning setting will:

* Nominate a named member of staff to take a lead on the Award and represent the learning setting at programme events.
* Plan activity with the venue and creative writer to take place at the learning setting, at the venue, and/or online, considering how to address the aims of the award.
* Ensure that the activity links with the learning programmes and priorities of your learning setting. The Award may also link with Arts Council England’s Artsmark and with Arts Award.
* Support the creative writer as a visitor to your learning setting, supporting them to work with students and ensuring that they are always accompanied by a member of staff when they are working with students, in person or online.
* Provide adequate time and space for the creative writer to undertake any activity taking place at the learning setting.
* Where applicable, plan and support student visits to the venue, including setting up access and transport to the venue
* Document the activity, ensure permission has been obtained for all documentation of the award activity, including permission for photographs and/or video footage of participants, staff, artwork and buildings.
* Gain permission to use students’ work for final sharing, and for use in publications, online and hard copy
* Contribute towards the creation of a resource resulting from the award activity, working with the venue and creative writer.
* Provide data for the evaluator in English.
* Attend the planning and induction day and sharing days (as detailed above)
* Contribute material for case studies in English, video footage and photographs to be shared on the MaxLiteracy website.

**Role of the Creative Writer**

The creative writer will:

* Plan and devise activity with the learning setting and venue
* Deliver activity with participants at the venue, at the learning setting and/or online
* Plan and prepare any materials required to support delivery of activity with participants
* Attend the planning and induction day and sharing days (as detailed above)
* Contribute towards the creation of a resource in English or with a translation in English, resulting from the award activity, working with the cultural organisation and learning setting.
* Provide data for the evaluator in English.
* Contribute material in English or with a translation in English for case studies, videos and photographs to be shared on the MaxLiteracy website
* If the Awardee is hosting a project placement, the creative writer will work with the cultural organisation to ensure that the placement participant is supported.

***Appendix 2***

When completing the application form cultural organisations will be asked to provide an outline budget to suit their planned activity and the circumstances of the organisation and learning setting concerned. Once venues have been selected for an Award and paired with a creative writer (if needed) the budget will be reviewed with the MaxLiteracy Coordinator.

*Please note this is an example only.*

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| **Example Breakdown of the Award budget** |  |
| Fee to the creative writer, 10 days @ £300 a day | 3000 |
| Creative writer’s travel costs (if appropriate) | 300 |
| Cover for teacher (e.g. training & sharing days). | 400 |
| Transport and Access costs for venue visits (if appropriate) | 750 |
| Materials and equipment for activity | 300 |
| Production of resources and outcome sharing | 300 |
| Venue costs  | 500 |
| Documentation | 200 |
| Project Placement support costs (fee and overheads) (if appropriate)  | £1000 |
| Contingency  | £250 |
| **Total** | **£7,000** |

***Appendix 3***

**Background**

MaxLiteracy was initiated and is funded by the Max Reinhardt Charitable Trust. It is delivered by Engage (National Association for Gallery Education), in partnership with NAWE (National Association for Writers in Education). This is the sixth time this Award has been held. The Max Reinhardt Charitable Trust are the funders of the Alexandra Reinhardt Memorial Award (ARMA), the artist commission organised since 2012 by Engage: [www.engage.org/arma](http://www.engage.org/arma).

The Awards first ran in 2014-15, hosted by Manchester Art Gallery, Falmouth Museum and Art Gallery, and Kettle’s Yard, University of Cambridge.

In 2016-17 the Awards were received by York Art Gallery, Leeds Art Gallery and the BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art.

In 2018-19, the Awards were received by Attenborough Arts Centre, Bristol Museum and Art Gallery, Kirkleatham Museum and The Whitworth.

In 2020-21, the Awards were received by Newark Museum and Art Gallery, Open Eye Gallery and The Turnpike CIC.

In 2023-2024, Meadow Arts, Take A Part and Nottingham Contemporary were Awardees.

**National Association of Writers in Education (NAWE)**
NAWE's mission is to further knowledge, understanding and enjoyment of Creative Writing and to support good practice in its teaching and learning at all levels. As a Subject Association, NAWE promotes Creative Writing as both a distinct discipline and an essential element in education generally. NAWE’s 1,500 members include those working in higher education, the many freelance writers working in schools and community contexts, and the teachers and other professionals who work with them: [www.nawe.co.uk](http://www.nawe.co.uk).

**Engage**

Engage is the lead advocacy and training network for visual arts engagement and participation. We support arts educators, organisations and artists to work together with communities in dynamic, open exchanges that give everyone the opportunity to learn and benefit from the arts. Engage has approximately 800 members in the UK and abroad.

Engage is an Arts Council England Investment Principle Support Organisation and receives funding for its programmes in Scotland from Creative Scotland. Funding has also been received from trusts and foundations, individuals and the corporate sector.

You can find more information about Engage at [www.engage.org](http://www.engage.org/).

