



2018 ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS IN WRITING for High School Juniors

DEADLINE

Complete entry form and upload papers by February 15, 2018.

PURPOSE

To encourage high school students to write and to publicly recognize the best student writers

ELIGIBILITY

Juniors in the current academic school year are eligible to be nominated by their school's English department in the United States, Canada, Virgin Islands, and American Schools Abroad. Nominating schools must be US accredited.

SELECTION OF NOMINEES

Nominations should be based on whether the writer exhibits the power to use elements of written language purposefully to communicate effectively with an audience. Entries are only accepted from teachers. Schools are eligible to nominate students.

NUMBER OF NOMINEES

The number of nominees allowed from each school is determined by the current total enrollment in grades 10, 11, and 12. The enrollment figure used must be from an official administrative report of the current year and must not include ninth-grade students.

UNDER 500 STUDENTS: 1 NOMINEE

500-999 STUDENTS: 2 NOMINEES

1,000-1,499 STUDENTS: 3 NOMINEES

1,500-1,999 STUDENTS: 4 NOMINEES

2,000-2,499 STUDENTS: 5 NOMINEES

2,500-2,999 STUDENTS: 6 NOMINEES

3,000-3,999 STUDENTS: 7 NOMINEES

4,000 OR MORE STUDENTS: 8 NOMINEES

PROCEDURES FOR ENTERING

Entries will be accepted online from December 15, 2017, to February 15, 2018. No late entries will be accepted.

ENTRIES

Nominated students must submit two writings (Best and Themed). All entrants must have a parent or guardian's permission to enter.

GENERAL DIRECTIONS FOR BEST & THEMED WRITING

- Select one teacher to represent your school and enter student submissions.
- The selected teacher completes one entry form per student and uploads the student's papers as only ONE FILE (a maximum of 10 double-spaced pages).
- **Best Writing:** The maximum length is six (6) pages. Best Writing is a sample that the student considers her or his best work. The best writing may be in any genre or combination of genres (poetry, narrative, argument, expository). It may also be an excerpt from a larger piece of writing with a paragraph explaining the piece from which the excerpt was taken.
- **Themed Writing:** The maximum length is four (4) pages. The themed writing must be written based on the topic developed by the Achievement Awards Advisory Committee.
- *The student's name and "Best" or "Themed" must appear in the upper left-hand corner of each page.*
- *The page number must appear in the upper right-hand corner of each page.*
- *The school's name must not appear on the paper or within the body of writing.*
- *Please use legible type—no smaller than 11 or 12 point.*
- *Double space with one-inch margins on all sides. This does not apply to poetry.*
- *Research papers, term papers, and novels will not be accepted.*

To enter, teachers can visit:

ncte.org/awards/achievement-awards-in-writing

JUDGING

Teams of teachers across the nation will judge entries using a secure judging site. Entries with top scores will be selected for the Superior Writing Award.

EDUCATORS & STUDENTS

Note that the evaluation criteria have been revised. We will be revising the rubric that judges will use in light of the new criteria. We suggest you prepare submissions with the revised criteria in mind.

Below are the guidelines by which your writing will be evaluated by the NCTE judges. Keep these guidelines in mind as you draft and revise:

1. EXPRESSION OF IDEAS

- Writing suggests/conveys meanings, reflects strong thinking.
- Thematic meaning(s) are effectively controlled.
- Themed writing responds to the stated prompt.
- Piece is unified, and builds upon itself, even if the structure is untraditional.
- Writing has sense of clarity of purpose, completeness, and closure.

2. LANGUAGE USE

- Writing style is appropriate to content and genre.
- Writing reflects mastery of technical aspects of writing (e.g., control over punctuation and syntax).
- Writer uses language powerfully, via apt/original word choice, unique phrasing.
- Strong flow is produced via syntactical control and variation.
- Writer effectively employs detail, evocative language, and/or imagery to enliven writing and to express ideas.

3. UNIQUE PERSPECTIVE & VOICE

- Uniqueness of writer is evident through stylistic choices.
- Writing conveys unique, authentic, original perspective.
- Style conveys unique, authentic, original voice.

AWARDS

Results will be announced in May 2018. Students judged for superior writing will be awarded a superior writing certificate and a letter, which are provided to the nominating teacher to present to the winning student. In addition, the names of the student and school will appear on the NCTE website.

2018 THEMED WRITING PROMPT

Changing the Narrative

In 1981, Sandra Day O'Connor (*b. 1930*) became the first woman to serve as a Justice on the Supreme Court of the United States. In her lifetime, O'Connor has often been viewed as an agent of change, one who ushered in an era when women could hold top leadership roles and when landmark decisions were made based on her swing vote.

Yet, while many people view O'Connor as an agent of change, she downplayed her singular role. In a famous quote, she spun her own narrative (or story) differently, saying: "We don't accomplish anything in this world alone, . . . and whatever happens is the result of the whole tapestry of one's life and all the weavings of individual threads from one to another that creates something."

The different readings of O'Connor's story reflect this year's contest theme: Changing the Narrative. You will consider how a story changes, has changed, or can change. As different versions of O'Connor's story suggest, individuals might change the narrative by breaking free from the past or others; by uniting with others; or by seeing or helping others see the story through a different lens or from another perspective. You will create a piece of writing in which the narrative relating to a topic or problem important to you is changed. Express yourself in a form of writing that best suits your personal ideas and explorations, including (but not limited to) short story, personal essay, expository essay, poetry, or drama.

Consider the following points

You may narrow the scope of your perspective to a local (or even a personal) level or widen it to a state, national, or global level.

One or more of the following questions might help spark or guide your writing: How do people change the narrative? In what ways does the narrative change? How do people spin narratives to produce new ways of reading the original narrative?

You can interpret "narrative," or story, in many ways: Story is not just the material of books, history, and online binge-watching; story is what we live—the material of our lives. We live our own stories, and we live inside larger narratives: of our friends, families, schools, culture, country, and of the world.



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