



Creative Writing

2026-2027
Qual • Dist

GRADES: 1 & 2 | ENTRIES: 3 PER SECTION | TIME: 30 MIN

SECTIONS. Grades 1 and 2 compete separately.

ENTRIES. As many as THREE students from EACH GRADE LEVEL (grades 1 and 2) may be entered in the Creative Writing District Contest from each school. Each grade level is judged separately in contest, but **only one student from each grade level advances to State.**

LEVELS OF COMPETITION. Contestants have two levels of competition—Qualifier and District—with top performers earning medals and recognition at the District level. **This contest concludes at District and does not advance to the State Tournament.**

NATURE OF THE CONTEST. Contestants are given a writing prompt page with five captioned images. Students select from the captioned images and create an original story based on their selections. The stories must use at least one of the captions, but it is not required that all captions on the prompt page be included. The images are provided merely to help the contestant recognize the caption words. **Contestants should make up titles for their stories, but not writing a title is not a cause for disqualification.**

WHAT HAPPENS IN THE CONTEST. The Contest Director will announce the time and place that contestants and one adult should report for viewing of the stories and evaluations before awards are presented. Contestants are then given five or **six** sheets of lined contest writing paper. Two Assistant Directors assist with paper distribution and contest organization where needed. (The paper master sheet is included in the District Director materials, to be reproduced as needed.) Contestants **MUST** provide their own pencils. The contest director will distribute prompt pages on which Contestant ID Labels have been placed. Contestants will write their ID numbers in the space provided on each page and number each page of their writing in the upper right hand corner. The director will read aloud the titles of each of the prompts and the instructions on the prompt page to contestants. No other discussion about the prompts will be permitted. Contestants have 30 minutes to write their stories. The director **may** give a

10-minute warning and a 5-minute warning before time is expired and all papers are collected.

PREPARATION FOR CONTEST. Read and follow all instructions provided in the “Information Pertaining to All Contests” section of the *PSIA Academic Handbook*. Observe and practice with students all rules and procedures delineated in the “Instructions to the Contestant” and in the “Checklist for Contest Directors” and the “Checklist for Graders.” Preparation for the Creative Writing Contest may include review of the material in the current edition of the *Ready Writing and Creative Writing Handbook*, in which sample prompts and state winning stories are published. In addition, this resource provides information about appropriate, constructive comments to write to students on their evaluation forms.

Some of these include:

Very creative. Excellent use of dialogue.

Makes me smile. You might make your story longer by adding more detail about...

Any writing program that is used in the classroom will help prepare students for Creative Writing. Training students to effectively use the writing time will be helpful. For example, they may want to plan a beginning, middle, and end for their stories before they begin to write. The contest has no minimum word length, and the emphasis in evaluation will be on creativity and interest. A sample of the creative writing individual evaluation sheet is included in this handbook.

RATING THE COMPOSITIONS. Judges will receive unlabeled prompt pages and judge each story on the basis of Interest and Creativity (60%); Organization (30%); and Correctness of Style (10%). Without marking on the papers, a panel of three (3) judges should attach the evaluation sheet to the front of the contestant’s story and each make comments while taking turns reading it. It is recommended that a skimming and elimination process be used first if more than 16 stories are to be evaluated. ALL stories must receive an evaluation. The top 10 stories should be ranked and rankings indicated on the Contest Roster. Judges are to reach a consensus on the

papers ranked first through tenth. **There can be NO ties in this contest.** Additionally, this is a subjective contest, not an objective contest. Please do not assign a “score” to the works and then rank them based on the score.

Shall and Must List

Contestants **shall** write their Contestant ID on the composition and not their name or their school name.

Result: Contest director should remedy the composition by erasing or covering up the identifying information.

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Contestants **must** not include their name or their school name in their composition (see above for identifying information not in the story).

Result: Disqualification.

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Contestants **must** use at least one of the captions in their composition.

Result: Disqualification.

Note: Contestants must use the captioned word(s) in their writing; the accompanying images are provided only as visual guides and do not substitute for the captioned word(s). Related or more general words do not satisfy this requirement. For example, if an image of a dog is captioned “beagle,” the contestant must use beagle in the writing; referring only to a dog does not constitute use of the captioned word.