

# 2016 NCTE Achievement Awards in Writing For High School Juniors

Deadline to complete entry form and upload papers: February 12, 2016

Achievement Awards in Writing is a school-based writing program established in 1957 to encourage high school students in their writing and to publicly recognize some of the best student writers in the nation. The National Council of Teachers of English will recognize students who are cited as excellent writers by judges.

## Eligibility

Juniors in the current academic school year are eligible to be nominated by their schools in the United States, District of Columbia, Canada, Virgin Islands, and American Schools Abroad. Home schooled students may submit through a cooperating school.

## Selection of Nominees

All nominees must demonstrate evidence of effective writing. Each high school selects its own nominee or nominees: one or more juniors (see below) agreed upon by the English department, not chosen by an individual teacher. In selecting writers, teachers should consider whether the writer exhibits power to inform and move an audience through control of a wide range of the English language.

## Number of Nominees

The number of students allowed from each school is determined by the current total enrollment in grades 10, 11, and 12. The enrollment figure used must be an official one from administrative reports 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 November 20, 2015 – February 12, 2016, Noon CST. No late entries will be accepted.**

Select one teacher to represent your school and enter student submissions. This teacher should complete one entry form per student and upload that student's papers as **ONE FILE** that is a maximum of 10 double-spaced pages. Please note that entrants must have a parent or guardian's permission to enter.

**Teachers go to [www.ncte.org/awards/student/aa](http://www.ncte.org/awards/student/aa) to enter.**

## Entries:

Two written submissions (best and themed) by each student is required. Both writings should go through a process of drafting and revision. **The themed writing must be in prose;** the best writing may be in any genre or combination of genres (poetry, narrative, argument, expository).

1. **Best writing** — one sample that the student considers his or her best work, regardless of the number of revisions. The best writing must not exceed six (6) typed, double-spaced pages. Research papers, term papers, and novels will not be accepted.
2. **Themed writing** — Theme must not exceed four (4) typed, double-spaced pages. The topic, developed by the Achievement Awards Advisory Committee, is a common topic on which all students must write.

## Guidelines/Requirements

- a. Maximum length for the theme is four (4) pages. Maximum length for the best writing is six (6) pages. An excerpt from a larger piece is acceptable with a paragraph explaining the piece from which the excerpt was taken.
- b. Use legible type (no smaller than 11 or 12 point).
- c. Double-space (except for poetry).
- d. Margins are to be 1" on all sides (except for poetry).
- e. Page number should be in the upper right-hand corner.
- f. The student's name and "Best" or "Theme" must appear in the upper left-hand corner of each page.
- g. School name must *not* appear on the paper or within the body of writing.

## 2016 Achievement Awards in Writing Theme

We often experience conflicts between nurturing our passions and meeting our obligations—between what we want to do and what we must do. A passion brings deep personal satisfaction: we can help others, learn a topic deeply, make choices based on our interests, even find fulfillment and enjoyment. Our obligations are often more practical: we must meet deadlines, honor commitments, even sacrifice our passions for these responsibilities.

In a prose piece, using a personal or imaginative perspective, examine this conflict. You may wish to consider these questions as you begin: Can passions and obligations be held in balance? Are we always forced to make a choice? Can our passions and our obligations mesh?

## Judging

Teams of teachers at the national level will judge the writing and select the top entries. Best and themed writings are judged holistically on content, purpose, audience, tone, word choice, organization, development, and style.

## Awards

Results are announced in May. All students receive a letter and certificate from NCTE which is provided to the nominating teacher to present to the student. Additionally, student names are posted on NCTE's website along with their school name, city, and state.

Program information may be found at [www.ncte.org/awards/student/aa](http://www.ncte.org/awards/student/aa).

Email questions to: [aa@ncte.org](mailto:aa@ncte.org)

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