

# 2012 Promising Young Writers Program

## Eighth-Grade Students

Deadline to complete entry form and upload papers: February 15, 2012

This year's theme, "Flash Back, Forge Ahead," is especially appropriate for young writers. For many eighth graders, both the past and the future matter a great deal—not only in connection with their personal lives, but also in relation to the larger world.

Teachers, we invite you to incorporate the Promising Young Writers' theme and writing prompt into your curriculum. In fact, we hope that "Flash Back, Forge Ahead" is an idea that you may want *all* of your students to explore through their writing and reading. If so, you may be interested in making connections to the literature and teaching ideas presented at the ALAN (Assembly on Literature for Adolescents of the National Council of Teachers of English) workshop on "Flash Back, Forge Ahead" held at the 2011 NCTE Convention in Chicago. Also, if your state has adopted the Common Core State Standards, it may be helpful to note that nominees for the Promising Young Writers Program may choose to write their thematic piece in any genre—including the narratives, arguments, and informative/explanatory texts that the Common Core requires for eighth-grade writers.

### Eligibility

Eighth-grade students in the current academic school year are eligible to be nominated by their schools in the fifty states, the District of Columbia, Canada, Virgin Islands, and American Schools Abroad.

### Selection of Nominees

All nominees must demonstrate evidence of effective writing. Each school selects its own nominee or nominees: one or more eighth graders agreed upon by a school committee or department. It is recommended that nominees be selected by several teachers. Home-schooled students may submit through a cooperating school.

Students each submit two pieces of writing; one is theme-based and the other, an example of the student's best writing.

### Number of Nominees

The number of nominees allowed from each school is determined by the school's average eighth-grade daily enrollment. Use the following guide:

#### Average Daily Enrollment

Under 100	1 nominee
100–199	2 nominees
200–299	3 nominees
300–399	4 nominees
400–499	5 nominees
500 or more	6 nominees

NOTE: Teachers may nominate an equal (additional) number of entrants who are English Language Learners (ELL). Teachers should briefly describe each entrant's current level of language acquisition.

### Procedures for Entering

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. **See online instructions at [http://center.uoregon.edu/conferences/NCTE/FORMS/CFP/cfp\\_login.php?formid=466754](http://center.uoregon.edu/conferences/NCTE/FORMS/CFP/cfp_login.php?formid=466754). Entries will be accepted online from November 30, 2011 – February 15, 2012, Noon CST.**

### Entries:

Each student must submit two written compositions (one example of the student's best work and a themed essay). Both writings should go through a recursive process of drafting and revision, and each composition should be in a different genre (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 Promising Young Writers Advisory Committee, is a common topic on which all students must write.

### Directions for Both Best and Themed Writing

- a. Use legible type (no smaller than 11 or 12 point).
- b. Double-space (except for poetry).
- c. Margins are to be 1" on all sides (except for poetry).
- d. Page number should be in the upper right-hand corner.
- e. The student's name and "Best" or "Theme" must appear in the upper left-hand corner of each page.
- f. School name can *not* appear on the paper or within the body of writing.
- g. 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.

### 2012 Theme: "Flash Back, Forge Ahead"

As writers, we have the freedom to play with time—flashing back in history or in our own memories, or forging ahead into a future that we imagine, hope for, or perhaps even fear. Write an original piece in which the past and/or future play an important role.

You may write in your preferred genre (such as drama, poetry, short story, narrative, an op ed piece, science fiction, memoir, news article, etc.). If you find it helpful to state the audience for your writing at the top of your piece, you are welcome to do so. Remember that your writing for this themed piece should be no longer than four pages and that it should be in a different genre than your Best Writing entry.

### 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.

The Promising Young Writers Program represents NCTE's commitment to early and continuing work in the development of writing. The school-based writing program was established in 1985 to stimulate and recognize students' writing talents and to emphasize the importance of writing skills among eighth-grade students.

### Electronic publication in the National Gallery of Writing

Students participating in the 2012 Promising Young Writers Program are invited to submit their writing to the National Gallery of Writing <http://www.galleryof-writing.org>. NCTE has a special gallery for Promising Young Writers participants.

### Awards

Results will be announced in early May 2012. Students selected for superior performance in writing will receive a letter and certificate of commendation from NCTE. Certificates of Participation will be awarded to other nominees who write. Letters and Certificates are sent to the nominating teacher at the student's school. Additionally, winners' names are posted on NCTE's website along with the school name, teacher name, city, and state.

The National Association of Secondary School Principals has placed this program on the [NASSP National Advisory List of Student Contests and Activities](#) for 2011–2012.



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

Contact NCTE by phone: 1-800-369-6283, ext. 3608

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

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