



NCTE Achievement Awards in Writing

For High School Juniors

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

The National Association of Secondary School Principals has placed this program on its NASSP National Advisory List of Student Contests and Activities.

Purpose:

Recognition of outstanding student writing.

Who's Eligible:

Juniors from public, private, parochial schools in the US and Canada and American schools abroad and in the Virgin Islands.

Benefits:

- Winners receive postcards recommending them for admission and financial aid in their selected colleges for possible scholarships.
- Winners' names posted on NCTE website with school name, city, and state.
- Winners and teachers receive a certificate of commendation.

Nature of the Awards

Up to 876 awards are given. NCTE is a not-for-profit educational association, and it has no funds to award scholarships to winners. Instead, recipients receive a letter and certificate of commendation from NCTE, and postcards recognizing their outstanding performance in writing to include with their college applications. The certificates are sent to the high school principal of the winners. Additionally, winners' names are posted on NCTE's website along with the school name, city, and state.

Eligibility

Only students who are JUNIORS in the present academic year may be nominated. This stipulation is made so that the information may reach colleges in time for students to be considered for admission and scholarships. High school juniors from public, private, and parochial schools in the United States and Canada, as well as from American schools abroad and the Virgin Islands, are eligible. Home-schooled students may submit through a cooperating school.

Entries:

Two Written Compositions

1. A sample of writing (prose **and/or** verse) that the student considers his or her best work, regardless of the number of revisions. The "best writing" must not exceed ten typed, double-spaced pages. Research papers, term papers, or novels **will not** be accepted. Unlike the impromptu theme, the sample of best writing does not depend on a prompt from NCTE. As soon as a student is nominated, therefore, she or he may begin work on the sample of best writing.
2. An impromptu theme written under teacher supervision in no more than 2 hours. The topic is designated by NCTE. Students may use computers, typewriters, or black ink to write the impromptu topic. Please send only hard copy. Do not send disks.

Nominees must submit both entries to the state coordinator in one package, postmarked no later than April 20. Names and addresses of state coordinators are included in the instructions sent to teachers in March.

Number of Nominees

The number of nominees allowed from each school is determined by the current total enrollment in grades 10, 11, and 12:

- 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

The enrollment figure used must be an official one from administrative reports of the current year and must not include ninth-grade students.

Each state is allowed at least two winners; the specific number is proportionate to the state's population. In addition to the fifty states, the District of Columbia is allowed four winners. Canadian schools, American schools abroad, and the Virgin Islands make up a separate category entitled to two winners.

Nomination Procedures

Each high school selects its own nominee or nominees: one or more juniors agreed upon by the English department, not chosen by an individual teacher. One method of selection might be for a committee of high school students and teachers to act as judges in a local preliminary contest selecting the best representative writer(s) of the school in the NCTE Achievement Awards.

In selecting these young writers, teachers want to consider whether or not the writer exhibits power to inform and move an audience through control of a wide range of the English language. This may, but does not necessarily, imply excellence in what is usually called "creative" writing, but the judging committees may be as favorably impressed by an expository article as by a poem. A prospective nominee need not express a desire to major in English.

Future Use of Student Papers

No entries are returned. Teachers or students should make copies of the compositions before submitting the originals.

In some cases, NCTE or its Affiliates may wish to use student papers for research purposes, to publish them in print or electronic publications, or to otherwise display them. Students who desire to have their papers considered for such use or publication must have a parent (or legal guardian) sign the nomination form. If permission is granted, use of a student's paper is at NCTE's and its Affiliates' discretion.

Lack of parental signature will not prevent a student from participating in the Achievement Awards in Writing or from being designated a winner.

Schedule and Deadlines

Fall

Teachers select nominees and students may begin work on their best writing.

January—send email to aa@ncte.org for deadline

Mail deadline for schools to return nomination forms to NCTE, one form for each nominee. **Only nomination forms are to be submitted at this time, no compositions.** No substitutions will be accepted after the deadline. All nomination forms from a school should be mailed to NCTE in the same envelope, and only one teacher should be designated to receive the follow-up instructions.

March

NCTE mails the impromptu theme topic and further instructions to the teachers specified on the nomination forms.

April 1

Teachers should contact NCTE Achievement Awards if topic has not been received.

April

Deadline for teachers to mail nominees' impromptu themes and samples of best writing to their state coordinators. Both compositions are to be sent in one package. These materials are not to be sent to NCTE. Names and addresses of state coordinators are included with the instructions sent to teachers in March.

Summer

Judging of entries at the state level.

August 1

State coordinators report results to NCTE.

October

NCTE announces the award recipients. Winners, their high school English departments, and their principals are notified by mail. Nominees who are not award winners are sent letters acknowledging their participation in the program. Winners names are posted on NCTE's website along with the school name, city, and state.

Additional forms may be obtained from NCTE (see www.ncte.org/about/awards/student/aa), or photocopies may be used.



National Council of Teachers of English
 1111 W. Kenyon Road, Urbana, Illinois 61801-1096
 www.ncte.org

DEADLINE: January–

send email to aa@ncte.org for deadline

Nomination Form

NCTE Achievement Awards in Writing

Please read and follow these directions carefully:

- Nominees must be JUNIORS in the present school year.
- Complete one Nomination Form for each nominee: one student per form, one nominating teacher per school. This form may be photocopied.** If your school submits more than one nomination, staple all forms together, return **in the same envelope**, and designate **only one teacher** to receive the impromptu theme topic and other instructions, using that teacher's name on each form.
- The number of nominees allowed from each school is determined by the current total enrollment in grades 10, 11, and 12. See the chart on page 2.
- Impromptu theme topic and further instructions are mailed in March. **If your school has not received the materials by April 1, contact the NCTE office promptly.**
- Full program details are given in the brochure. Strict adherence to program procedures is necessary. Failure to comply may result in the disqualification of a nominee.
- Teachers are advised to keep copies of student papers, including date mailed and a completed copy of this form, including date mailed.**
- No student papers are returned.**
- Nominations postmarked after deadline are subject to disqualification. No substitutions will be accepted after the deadline.** If you wish acknowledgment from NCTE of the receipt of your nominations, please include a stamped, self-addressed postcard or use certified mail.
- Mail completed forms to:
 Achievement Awards in Writing
 NCTE
 1111 W. Kenyon Road
 Urbana, IL 61801-1096

Please TYPE or PRINT the information requested below.

Form(s) cannot be processed unless each line is completed. Parental consent line optional. One student per form.

High school _____ School telephone (_____) _____
 (area code)

Address _____
 (street) (city) (state) (zip)

Principal _____

Nominating teacher (person to whom instructions are to be mailed) _____

E-mail _____

Total number of nominees _____ Number entitled _____ Total enrollment (grades 10, 11, 12) _____

Student nominee _____
 (last name) (first)

Student's home address _____
 (street) (city) (state) (zip)

Signature of student (certifies writing as student's own) _____

Signature of parent or legal guardian (grants NCTE and its affiliates permission to use paper) _____

By my signature, I agree to give NCTE and its affiliates permission to use the student's work for research and/or to publish or otherwise display the work in all print and electronic media along with the student's name, school, and location.

Signature of nominating teacher _____

Signature of principal _____

Clip sheet along dotted line and return to NCTE.