

Washington State Scholastic Journalism
Spring Write-Off Competition

2023 Contest Rules and Guidelines

Celebrating

NEW VOICES

AT FIVE YEARS

*Washington's student press freedom law,
signed by Gov. Jay Inslee in Spring, 2018*



**Mountlake Terrace High School
March 4, 2023**



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GENERAL RULES FOR ALL

The on-site contest and critique sessions begin at 9 a.m. Note that advance submission categories (9-17) are due by Feb. 22 for advance judging, and contestants should plan to attend the critique session during the conference.

No remote/Zoom participation will be offered this year.

NEW THIS YEAR

Layout contests (9&10) no longer require students to use materials supplied by WJEA; instead, similar to photo contests, students should submit published or to-be-published layouts from their own publications for advance judging and a critique session during the conference. See details in the rules below. Students participating in layout, photo, broadcast, podcast and online contests (#s 9-17) must submit entries IN ADVANCE by midnight, Wednesday, Feb. 22, one week after the contest registration deadline.

Students participating in on-site writing contests may bring their own device or will be provided with a computer on-site for typing entries. If bringing your own device, ensure that it is able to connect to an outside WiFi network (some school-issued laptops will block this). While writing, students may use any online resources as well as their phones as recorders as long as they use earbuds on-site. Electronic device usage should not disturb other contestants.

LABELING. Do NOT type your name or school name anywhere on contest materials. Contestants must write the entry number clearly on each page. NO NAMES OF STUDENTS OR NAMES OF SCHOOLS SHOULD BE MENTIONED OR IMPLIED IN ANY WAY, or disqualification will result.

TIME LIMITS. The time limit for the conference-day categories, unless otherwise stated, is two hours. This time includes explanations and introductions, with at least 70 minutes of writing time for writing contests. No contestants will be granted extra time.

ATTENDANCE. Contestants must stay in the contest room until materials are submitted.

FOOD AND DRINK. Please keep all food and drink out of the contest rooms.

MATERIALS. Some materials are not provided. Please consult individual categories in this rulebook for material lists.

ELIGIBILITY. Advisers must be WJEA members for a student to be eligible to register for a contest. Only one student per school per category may be entered in a competition; entering the same student in more than one contest is prohibited. All categories are open for students (grades 6-12) of current WJEA member schools.

FEES. Contest fees are in addition to the registration fees and are non-refundable. No new contest registrations will be accepted on site.

SUBSTITUTIONS. Names may be substituted in categories for which your school has already registered. Late registrants may not enter advanced entry contests.



CATEGORY 01: NEWS WRITING

HOW IT WORKS

You will listen to a presentation of no more than 30 minutes. After a 15-minute question-and-answer period, you are to write a news story according to the instructions given by the moderator. You will write the story as if it were being posted to a school newspaper website to sum up the event the same day. You will have 70 minutes to type the final entry. The final copy should not exceed 350 words.

WHAT THE JUDGES WANT TO SEE

News writing style; the inverted pyramid structure; a strong lead that engages readers and summarizes key news; pinpointing the news in the presentation and highlighting it in that lead; use of facts instead of generalizations; avoidance of subjective commentary from the reporter; use of direct quotes; accuracy; completeness; elimination of extraneous material; elimination of libelous or privacy-invasive statements; use of AP style; skills in areas of grammar, spelling, punctuation, capitalization, etc.

MATERIALS WJEA WILL PROVIDE

Laptop or desktop (if needed), fact sheet, assignment sheet, rule sheet, final copy cover sheet.

MATERIALS YOU, THE CONTESTANT, MIGHT BRING

OPTIONAL: Laptop that allows connection to outside WiFi; writing utensils and paper for taking notes; print dictionary/thesaurus, print AP Stylebook. **NOTE: You will be typing your entry and may use any online resources as well as the recorder on your phone as long as you bring earbuds.**

REMEMBER: Stay in the room during the contest until your work is submitted. No contestant will be given additional time, regardless of the state the work is in at that time.

DO...

- type your contestant number on each page of your entry;
- use AP journalistic style for copy editing, grammar, capitalization, etc.;
- prepare entries according to fact sheet and instructions given by the moderator;
- ask the moderator any questions;

DO NOT...

- type your name or your school's name on your entry;
- leave the room until you have submitted your entry;
- consume food or drink;
- talk to other contestants.



CATEGORY 02: EDITORIAL WRITING

HOW IT WORKS

You may listen to a presentation of no more than 30 minutes followed by a 15-minute question-and-answer period, or you may be given information to read on a controversial topic. You are to write an editorial according to the instructions given by the moderator. Write as if the editorial were being published in a school newspaper or website. You will have 70 minutes to type and complete the final entry. The final copy should not exceed 350 words.

WHAT THE JUDGES WANT TO SEE

Leads that come quickly to an assertion; focus on a single, manageable proposition; editorial format for lead, body and conclusion; opposing arguments weighed carefully and refuted; facts to support assertion in the lead; arguments fully developed; strong conclusion; accuracy; completeness; elimination of extraneous material; elimination of libelous or privacy-invading statements; use of AP style; skills in areas of grammar, spelling, punctuation, capitalization, etc.

Remember that this should be written in the style of a staff editorial -- not as a personal column.

MATERIALS WJEA WILL PROVIDE

Laptop or desktop (if needed), fact sheet, assignment sheet, rule sheet, final copy cover sheet.

MATERIALS YOU, THE CONTESTANT, MIGHT BRING

OPTIONAL: Laptop that allows connection to outside WiFi; writing utensils and paper for taking notes; print dictionary/thesaurus, print AP Stylebook. **NOTE: You will be typing your entry and may use any online resources as well as the recorder on your phone as long as you bring earbuds.**

REMEMBER: Stay in the room during the contest until your work is submitted. No contestant will be given additional time, regardless of the state the work is in at that time.

DO...

- type your contestant number on each page of your entry;
- use AP journalistic style for copy editing, grammar, capitalization, etc.;
- prepare entries according to fact sheet and instructions given by the moderator;
- ask the moderator any questions;

DO NOT...

- type your name or your school's name on your entry;
- leave the room until you have submitted your entry;
- consume food or drink;
- talk to other contestants.



CATEGORY 03: NEWSPAPER FEATURE WRITING

CATEGORY 04: YEARBOOK FEATURE WRITING

HOW IT WORKS

You will listen to or watch a presentation of no more than 30 minutes. After a 15-minute question-and-answer period, you are to write a feature story according to the instructions given by the moderator. You will write the story as if it were being published in a school newspaper, website, or yearbook. You will have 70 minutes to type and complete the final entry. The final copy should not exceed 350 words.

WHAT THE JUDGES WANT TO SEE

Attention-grabbing lead; feature style as opposed to breaking-news style; colorful details; use of direct quotes and anecdotes with substance; copy that appeals to the readers' interest; emotional impact of copy; avoidance of subjective commentary from the reporter; accuracy; completeness; elimination of extraneous material; elimination of libelous or privacy-invading statements; use of AP style; skills in areas of grammar, spelling, punctuation, capitalization, etc.

MATERIALS WJEA WILL PROVIDE

Laptop or desktop (if needed), fact sheet, assignment sheet, rule sheet, final copy cover sheet.

MATERIALS YOU, THE CONTESTANT, MIGHT BRING

OPTIONAL: Laptop that allows connection to outside WiFi; writing utensils and paper for taking notes; print dictionary/thesaurus, print AP Stylebook. **NOTE: You will be typing your entry and may use any online resources as well as the recorder on your phone as long as you bring earbuds.**

REMEMBER: Stay in the room during the contest until your work is submitted. No contestant will be given additional time, regardless of the state the work is in at that time.

DO...

- type your contestant number on each page of your entry;
- use AP journalistic style for copy editing, grammar, capitalization, etc.;
- prepare entries according to fact sheet and instructions given by the moderator;
- ask the moderator any questions;

DO NOT...

- type your name or your school's name on your entry;
- leave the room until you have submitted your entry;
- consume food or drink;
- talk to other contestants.



CATEGORY 05: SPORTS FEATURE WRITING

HOW IT WORKS

You will listen to a presentation on a sports-related topic of no more than 30 minutes. After a 15-minute question-and-answer period, you are to write a feature-style sports story according to the instructions given by the moderator. You will write the story as if it were being published in a school newspaper, website or yearbook. You will have 70 minutes to type and complete the final entry. The final copy should not exceed 350 words.

WHAT THE JUDGES WANT TO SEE

Attention-grabbing lead; feature style as opposed to breaking-news style; colorful details; use of direct quotes and anecdotes with substance; copy that is relevant to the readers' interest; avoidance of subjective commentary from the reporter; accuracy; completeness; elimination of extraneous material; elimination of libelous or privacy-invading statements; use of AP style; skills in areas of grammar, spelling, punctuation, capitalization, etc.

MATERIALS WJEA WILL PROVIDE

Laptop or desktop (if needed), fact sheet, assignment sheet, rule sheet, final copy cover sheet.

MATERIALS YOU, THE CONTESTANT, MIGHT BRING

OPTIONAL: Laptop that allows connection to outside WiFi; writing utensils and paper for taking notes; print dictionary/thesaurus, print AP Stylebook. **NOTE: You will be typing your entry and may use any online resources as well as the recorder on your phone as long as you bring earbuds.**

REMEMBER: Stay in the room during the contest until your work is submitted. No contestant will be given additional time, regardless of the state the work is in at that time.

DO...

- type your contestant number on each page of your entry;
- use AP journalistic style for copy editing, grammar, capitalization, etc.;
- prepare entries according to fact sheet and instructions given by the moderator;
- ask the moderator any questions;

DO NOT...

- type your name or your school's name on your entry;
- leave the room until you have submitted your entry;
- consume food or drink;
- talk to other contestants.



CATEGORY 06: REVIEW WRITING

HOW IT WORKS

You will listen to or watch a presentation (one-act play, music performance, video, etc.) of no more than 30 minutes. After a 15-minute question-and-answer period, you are to write a review according to the instructions given by the moderator. You will write the story as if it were being published in a school newspaper or website. You will have 70 minutes to type and complete the final entry. The final copy should not exceed 350 words.

WHAT THE JUDGES WANT TO SEE

Clear expression of opinion supported with examples (author shows instead of tells), use of colorful details; well-organized flow with smooth transitions and a strong lead; proper citing and spelling of names as well as formatting of composition titles; accuracy; completeness; use of AP style; skills in areas of grammar, spelling, punctuation, capitalization, etc.

MATERIALS WJEA WILL PROVIDE

Laptop or desktop (if needed), fact sheet, assignment sheet, rule sheet, final copy cover sheet.

MATERIALS YOU, THE CONTESTANT, MIGHT BRING

OPTIONAL: Laptop that allows connection to outside WiFi; writing utensils and paper for taking notes; print dictionary/thesaurus, print AP Stylebook. **NOTE: You will be typing your entry and may use any online resources as well as the recorder on your phone as long as you bring earbuds.**

REMEMBER: Stay in the room during the contest until your work is submitted. No contestant will be given additional time, regardless of the state the work is in at that time.

DO...

- type your contestant number on each page of your entry;
- use AP journalistic style for copy editing, grammar, capitalization, etc.;
- prepare entries according to fact sheet and instructions given by the moderator;
- ask the moderator any questions;

DO NOT...

- type your name or your school's name on your entry;
- leave the room until you have submitted your entry;
- consume food or drink;
- talk to other contestants.



CATEGORY 07: EDITORIAL CARTOONING

HOW IT WORKS

You may listen to a presentation of no more than 30 minutes followed by a 15-minute question-and-answer period, or you may be given several pieces of information to read on a controversial topic. You are to draw an editorial cartoon according to the instructions given by the moderator. You will have 70 minutes of designing and drawing time to complete the final entry.

WHAT THE JUDGES WANT TO SEE

A simple and clear editorial statement; evidence of artistic ability; a novel approach; absence of trite and melodramatic imagery; wit; effective conveyance of a message to a student audience; quality of drawing; simplicity of line.

MATERIALS WJEA WILL PROVIDE

Fact sheet, assignment sheet, rule sheet, final copy cover sheet, blank paper for drawing, paper clips or stapler.

MATERIALS YOU, THE CONTESTANT, MIGHT BRING

Drawing tools such as pencil and eraser, black pen and white-out, rulers, scratch paper, print dictionary/thesaurus, etc. **You may use your phone for reference or as a recorder as long as you bring earbuds.**

REMEMBER: Stay in the room during the contest until entry is submitted. No contestant will be given additional time, regardless of the state the work is in at that time.

DO...

- write your contestant number on each page of your entry;
- write legibly and correct errors VERY neatly and clearly;
- prepare entries according to fact sheet and instructions given by the moderator;
- ask the moderator any questions;

DO NOT...

- write your name or your school's name on your entry;
- leave the room until you have turned in your entry;
- consume food or drink;
- talk to other contestants.



CATEGORY 08: HEADLINE WRITING & COPY EDITING

HOW IT WORKS

You will be given a multiple-choice test of AP Stylebook rules, stories to edit (including flagging potential libel or invasion of privacy), and stories that require headlines. You may use electronic reference materials or bring and use a print dictionary, thesaurus, or AP Stylebook. Maximum time for the contest, including the distribution of materials and instructions, is two hours.

WHAT THE JUDGES WANT TO SEE

Knowledge of AP Style rules, or an ability to find those rules in the materials you bring with you; an ability to identify inconsistent spelling, poor grammar and incorrect punctuation; an ability to identify and flag material that could be libelous or invade someone's privacy; headlines that follow standard headline-writing rules, such as avoiding "to be" verbs, using appropriate tense and active voice, eliminating articles, etc.; headlines that engage readers and reflect the overall content of the story.

NOTE: Prepared contestants will have a basic understanding of libel and invasion of privacy. The Student Press Law Center is your one-stop shop for all publication-related legal issues. Here's a review from their website: <http://www.splc.org/page/knowledge-base>

MATERIALS WJEA WILL PROVIDE

Test with assignment details and rules.

MATERIALS YOU, THE CONTESTANT, SHOULD BRING

Optional: print dictionary/thesaurus and print AP Stylebook

REMEMBER: Stay in the room during the contest until materials are submitted. No contestant will be given additional time, regardless of the state the work is in at that time.

DO...

- write your contestant number on each page of your entry;
- use AP journalistic style for copy editing, grammar, capitalization, etc.;
- ask the moderator any questions;

DO NOT...

- write your name or your school's name on your entry;
- leave the room until you have turned in your entry;
- consume food or drink;
- talk to other contestants.



CATEGORY 09: NEWSPAPER / NEWSMAGAZINE LAYOUT

NEW FORMAT THIS YEAR! ENTRIES OF PUBLISHED OR TO-BE-PUBLISHED LAYOUT MUST BE SUBMITTED BY FEB. 22, WITH CONTESTANT(S) ATTENDING ON-SITE CRITIQUE.

HOW IT WORKS

This is a contest for layouts and page designs that are completed on any topic in the normal course of newspaper production since the previous WJEA conference. **Work must be submitted in advance.** Contestant(s) will submit PDF in advance and attend the 70-minute-or-less small-group critique with a judge. Page design may be double- or single page. If double, should be saved as a single PDF. Publication of layout is recommended but not required for entry. Submitted layout will not be checked against published versions, so students are welcome to edit previously published design before submitting. 1-2 students may be associated with the submitted layout.

WHAT THE JUDGES WANT TO SEE

Impact of photos; using a dominant element; positioning of headlines, copy blocks and captions; using current design trends; adhering to design rules; using appropriate point sizes for copy, headlines and captions; effectively balancing photos and copy blocks; using creative graphics; effective cropping.

SUBMISSION FILENAMES

Most important is to give your PDF entry a numeric filename according to this formula: CONTEST#-SCHOOL#

WJEA will assign your school a number to use for the contests after your registration is submitted. If your adviser doesn't receive this number in the email from WJEA, please email caseycombshenry@gmail.com. For example, Mount Si's number might be 36. If so, a newspaper page design PDF from the Mount Si contestant would be named 09-36.

HOW TO SUBMIT

Submit your entry or entries by midnight on Feb. 22, 2023, to this Dropbox File Request link designed for layout entries: <https://www.dropbox.com/request/4Xz12MitS1BmXr4C0Ags>. Please remember that the contestant should attend the critique session during the conference.

To create the best possible PDF of your design, it would be best practice to follow the instructions provided by JEA.org, Preparing Your Layouts for Submission, at <http://jea.org/wp/home/awards-honors/write-off-contests/preparing-layout-entries/>



CATEGORY 10: YEARBOOK LAYOUT

NEW FORMAT THIS YEAR! ENTRIES OF PUBLISHED OR TO-BE-PUBLISHED LAYOUT MUST BE SUBMITTED BY FEB. 22, WITH CONTESTANT(S) ATTENDING ON-SITE CRITIQUE.

HOW IT WORKS

This is a contest for layouts and page designs that are completed on any topic in the normal course of yearbook production since the previous WJEA conference. **Work must be submitted in advance.** Contestant(s) will submit PDF in advance and attend the 70-minute-or-less small-group critique with a judge. Page design may be double- or single page. If double, should be saved as a single PDF. Publication of layout is recommended but not required for entry. Submitted layout will not be checked against published versions, so students are welcome to edit previously published design before submitting. 1-2 students may be associated with the submitted layout.

WHAT THE JUDGES WANT TO SEE

Impact of photos; using a dominant element; positioning of headlines, copy blocks and captions; using current design trends; adhering to design rules; using appropriate point sizes for copy, headlines and captions; effectively balancing photos and copy blocks; using creative graphics; effective cropping.

SUBMISSION FILENAMES

Most important is to give your PDF entry a numeric filename according to this formula: CONTEST#-SCHOOL#

WJEA will assign your school a number to use for the contests after your registration is submitted. If your adviser doesn't receive this number in the email from WJEA, please email caseycombshenry@gmail.com. For example, Mount Si's number might be 36. If so, a yearbook page design PDF from the Mount Si contestant would be named 10-36.

HOW TO SUBMIT

Submit your entry or entries by midnight on Feb. 22, 2023, to this Dropbox File Request link designed for layout entries: <https://www.dropbox.com/request/4Xz12MitS1BmXr4C0Ags>. Please remember that the contestant should attend the critique session during the conference.

To create the best possible PDF of your design, it would be best practice to follow the instructions provided by JEA.org, Preparing Your Layouts for Submission, at <http://jea.org/wp/home/awards-honors/write-off-contests/preparing-layout-entries/>



NEWS/FEATURE PHOTOGRAPHY

CATEGORY 11: NEWSPAPER/NEWSMAGAZINE

CATEGORY 12: YEARBOOK

HOW IT WORKS

This is a contest for photography that is completed in the normal course of newspaper and yearbook production. **Work must be submitted in advance.** The contestant from each school will provide THREE examples of their best work. Any non-sports subjects relevant to student journalism are acceptable. It is suggested the three photos display a variety of content. Photos may be color or black-and-white or a combination. Contestants will submit digital copies in advance and attend the 70-minute-or-less small-group critique with a professional photographer. Publication of photographs is recommended but not required for entry.

WHAT THE JUDGES WANT TO SEE

Variety and imagination in subject matter; appropriateness; imaginative points of view and angles; effective lighting; focus and contrast; a focal point; good composition; visual impact; evidence of overall photographic excellence.

PREPARING PHOTOGRAPHS FOR SUBMISSION

Best practice would be to follow national JEA guidelines, submit images as JPEGs in either RGB color or Grayscale for black-and-white. JEA offers excellent instructions for formatting images for contests, including the addition of metadata, which allows for a caption. Please see this page: <http://jea.org/wp/home/awards-honors/write-off-contests/write-contests-instructions-online-submission-photos/>

SUBMISSION FILENAMES

Most important is to give each JPEG entry a numeric filename according to this formula: CONTEST#-SCHOOL#-ENTRYLETTER (a,b or c for each of up to 3 entries)]

WJEA will assign your school a number to use for the contests after your registration is submitted. If your adviser doesn't receive this number in the email from WJEA, please email caseycombshenry@gmail.com. Add the letter of the entry (we allow up to 3 entries per contestant for each photo contest, so you'll add a, b or c to the end of each filename). For example, Mount Si's number might be 36. If so, the second news/feature photo (yearbook) submission from the Mount Si contestant would be named 12-36-b.

HOW TO SUBMIT

Submit your entry or entries by midnight on Feb. 22, 2023, to this Dropbox File Request link designed for news/feature photo entries: <https://www.dropbox.com/request/d7EMJg5QqjtsLEZUARbe>. Please remember that the contestant should attend the critique session during the conference.



SPORTS PHOTOGRAPHY

CATEGORY 13: NEWSPAPER/NEWSMAGAZINE

CATEGORY 14: YEARBOOK

HOW IT WORKS

This is a contest for sports photography that is completed in the normal course of newspaper and yearbook production. **Work must be submitted in advance.** Contestants will provide THREE examples of their best work. Any sports-related subjects relevant to student journalism are acceptable. It is suggested the three photos display a variety of content. Photos may be color or black-and-white or a combination. Contestants will submit digital copies in advance and attend the 70-minute-or-less small-group critique with professional photographers. Publication of photographs is recommended but not required for entry.

WHAT THE JUDGES WANT TO SEE

Variety and imagination in subject matter; appropriateness; imaginative points of view and angles; effective lighting; focus and contrast; a focal point; good composition; visual impact; evidence of overall photographic excellence; variety of sports-related images, including action and reaction.

PREPARING PHOTOGRAPHS FOR SUBMISSION

Best practice would be to follow national JEA guidelines, submit images as JPEGs in either RGB color or Grayscale for black-and-white. JEA offers excellent instructions for formatting images for contests, including the addition of metadata, which allows for a caption. Please see this page: <http://jea.org/wp/home/awards-honors/write-off-contests/write-contests-instructions-online-submission-photos/>

SUBMISSION FILENAMES

Most important is to give each JPEG entry a numeric filename according to this formula: CONTEST#-SCHOOL#-ENTRYLETTER (a,b or c for each of up to 3 entries)]

WJEA will assign your school a number to use for the contests after your registration is submitted. If your adviser doesn't receive this number in the email from WJEA, please email caseycombshenry@gmail.com. Add the letter of the entry (we allow up to 3 entries per contestant for each photo contest, so you'll add a, b or c to the end of each filename). For example, Mount Si's number might be 36. If so, the second sports photo (yearbook) submission from the Mount Si contestant would be named 14-36-b.

HOW TO SUBMIT

Submit your entry or entries by midnight on Feb. 22, 2023, to this Dropbox File Request link designed for sports photo entries: <https://www.dropbox.com/request/07UzfzSkFW4VfMXp9hU6>. Please remember that the contestant should attend the critique session during the conference.



CATEGORY 15: VIDEO (NEWS, FEATURE, SPORTS) & CATEGORY 16: AUDIO (PODCAST)

Links are **due Feb. 22** in the Contest Registration Form (which is editable after submission): bit.ly/wjeacontests23.

All entries should have been broadcast at school or in the community from April 2022 until February 2023. All entries must have been produced by students and originally broadcast or disseminated through a campus student medium. Submit only the entry for each contest. Schools may enter once for each of the three categories (\$15 each category) in Contest 15, and once for Contest 16.

15-A: VIDEO NEWS: Submit a URL linking to one pre-recorded news story containing (usually) a reporter's voiceover, videotaped shots and sound bites, with a total running time of 1:30 to 2:00 minutes.

15-B VIDEO FEATURE: Submit a URL linking to one prerecorded feature package containing a reporter's voiceover, videotaped shots and sound bites. Subject matter may focus on campus or non-campus topics of interest to a campus audience, and may include sports presentations. Total running time should be 1:30 to 2:00 minutes.

15-C VIDEO SPORTS: Submit a URL linking to one prerecorded sports news story on a timely topic that addresses serious topics related to athletics. For example, these may include investigative reports about facilities, drug use, injuries, budgets, scholarships, rules and regulations, etc. Total running time should be 1:30 to 2:00 minutes.

16 AUDIO / PODCAST: Submit a URL linking to one prerecorded podcast story on a timely topic that is appropriate for your audience. For example, this may be a profile, information to raise awareness on an issue, or commentary. Must include at least one outside source and voice other than the moderator. Total running time should be 5:00 to 15:00 minutes.

CATEGORY 17: JOURNALISM ONLINE / NEWS WEBSITE

Submitted URL is **due Feb. 22** in the Contest Registration Form (which is editable after submission): bit.ly/wjeacontests23. Entry must have been produced by students and originally broadcast or disseminated through a campus student site. Entry should represent work from this (2022-23) school year. Entries should use digital technology to provide newsworthy, local and timely information. Judges will evaluate entries on newsworthiness, audience awareness, quality, consistency and creativity. Entries must provide a description of no more than 250 words explaining how the website differs in content from the printed publication. Up to four student names may be submitted with the entry (\$15 per entry, not per student).