

2009-2010 National PTA Reflections Program

MUSICAL COMPOSITION RULES

Theme: "Beauty is..."

Students must adhere to the General Student Rules as well as the following Musical Composition Rules.

Description

A musical composition entry may be for voice, instruments, or a combination of voice and instruments. Lyrics may or may not be included in vocal compositions. The composition is not to exceed five minutes. The entry must relate to the current Reflections Program theme.

The use of composition software is permitted. Students are strongly discouraged from submitting highly edited MIDI sequences or audio files. The recording submitted must capture performers in real-time. The entry may not include imported MIDI or other source files, or use algorithmic composition software.

Use of notation software for the purpose of creating scores and printed parts is permitted. Whether the score is handwritten or computer-generated, appropriate instrumentation and voicing are required for the performance.

Musical composition entrants are not to borrow from copyrighted material.

Whether an entry uses a variety of techniques or a simple approach, it will be judged primarily on how well the student uses his or her artistic vision to portray the theme. A well-developed concept is more important than technique.

Musical Notation

Whether a student must submit musical notation is determined by their grade division:

- **Primary and Intermediate:** No notation is required. Iconic notation may be submitted. Iconic notation is "made-up" notation.
- **Middle/Junior and Senior:** Notation, either traditional, tablature, or electronic, is required. The notation should aid the listener and serve as a guide through the piece.

Adults may not assist. Physically challenged students may dictate to another person who may write the notation. The quality or accuracy of the notation and performance support the musical idea, but they are not considered judging criteria.

Presentation

- Entries may not exceed five minutes.
- Submit a CD recording of a performance of the composition.
- Students are not required to perform their own compositions.
- A student's composed work may be performed by a group.
- Score size
 - Entries should be no larger than 11 inches by 14 inches.
 - Band and orchestra compositions may be 11 inches by 16 inches.
 - Do not mount or bind the scores.

Format

- Submit the CD in a plastic or cardboard container; identify both the CD and container with the student's name, grade division, state, and year.
- Pack the CD with the score (if required) in a large envelope. Write the Students name on the back of each page of the score in case pages become separated.
- Place the Student Entry Form in a clear sheet protector; the secure the Student Entry Form to the outside of the envelope with masking tape.
- Include the title and required artist statement on the Student Entry Form. If the entry has no title, please write "Untitled".

Recommendations for quality recordings

- Make the room you record in as quiet as possible. Close windows and turn off all noise-making devices in the room (air conditioners, fans, telephones, etc.). Do not place the recording device on top of an instrument or speakers.
- Don't record at too loud (in the red zone on the meter) or too soft (meter barely moving) a level.
- Record a short test and listen to it while watching the meter. If needed, improve recording quality by changing the record volume or microphone location.
- Return to the beginning of the CD and record two seconds of silence; then begin performing your composition. Finish with another two seconds of silence.

Required Information

On the Student Entry Form, please answer the following:

- Who performed your composition?
- Did you use traditional instrumentation or a synthesizer?
- If you used MIDI, what software and hardware did you use to compose your work?
- If you included lyrics, how do they work with your composition?