“Real-World” Writing

We write for different reasons and for different audiences. Sometimes we write just for ourselves; sometimes we write for our friends or family. Much of what you write in this class is for a very small audience: your teachers. While we are an important audience to write for, we also want you to write for a larger audience.

Each year there are thousands upon thousands of opportunities to win large amounts of cash, exciting Hawaii vacations, even lunch with an astronaut—just by writing something. Yes, good writing can pay. As with most things in life, though, we often don’t win such high-stakes prizes. So why even bother? Mostly, it’s just plain fun to try. And that’s what we’d like you to do this semester. (Note that honors students must complete two submissions. See "requirements" below for details.) This is a ten-point English project.

Requirements
Choose a writing contest from one that we have suggested (PTSA Reflections, Gulen Institute, for example) or one that you have found yourself. (Note: If you find a contest other than the ones listed here, you MUST print out the contest info and show it to us no later than Nov. 3.) The writing contest must require you to write at least 300 words (no poems). (More than 300 words is a good idea. . . .)

Read all of the directions carefully. Fill out the submission/application form that the contest requires. Be sure to fill this out correctly. Follow the directions for the writing contest. As you work on this writing, you should show your drafts to others in class to get feedback. Submissions that are error-free have a better chance of winning than those that are filled with errors.

Turn in to us by Thursday, November 17*:  
1. two copies of your actual writing (one for us to read/keep/return to you and one for us to send [if you are using "snail mail"]; if you are e-mailing the writing you must give us a printed copy of the "sent" e-mail
2. any required submission/application form with required parent signature(s)  
3. an envelope with correct postage for us to send the writing (if it is not one of the contests we posted in class) or printed evidence that you e-mailed the writing
4. submit to turnitin.com the writing you did (honors submit one writing in the folder marked “real world writing” and the other in the folder marked “honors real world writing” (failure to submit your writing will lower your grade by two points)
5. a copy of the essay contest guidelines (unless the essay is one that is listed below); note that essay contests we don’t post on our Twitter feed or in class must be pre-approved by us
*You can turn in work earlier than Nov. 17. In fact, if your writing contest has a deadline prior to Nov. 19, you must turn in your writing prior to the due date for the contest.

[Honors Students: You must submit two contest writings. For both writings, you must do the four things listed above.]

**Scoring Guide**

√+ – Work meets all assignment requirements; writing shows insight, strong voice, care, passion about topic; follows all directions; topic and submission are timely; work is of a substantial length and shows a good deal of time and effort

√ – Work meets all or nearly all requirements; writing shows some insight, but may lack in care and/or passion; follows most directions; may not be timely

√- – Work may not meet requirements; writing shows lack of care and commitment; follows some directions

**Approved Essay Contests**

**Organization:** Bill of Rights Institute / We the Students Essay Contest  
**Topic:** Civil disobedience is the act of opposing a law one considers unjust and peacefully disobeying it while accepting the consequences. Does peaceful resistance to laws positively or negatively impact a free society? In your answer, incorporate the principles and specific examples (including current events) that support your conclusion. (Length: 500-800 words)  
**Deadline:** the contest deadline is in February, but you need to have this completed in time to meet our November deadline.  
**Info:** [http://www.billofrightsinstitute.org/engage/students-programs-events/scholarship/](http://www.billofrightsinstitute.org/engage/students-programs-events/scholarship/)  
**Top Prize:** $5,000 (and there are other prizes as well)

**Organization:** AFS USA  
**Topic:** Write about your idea for a volunteer project that could have a meaningful impact abroad.
Deadline: the contest deadline is in December, but you need to have this completed in time to meet our November deadline.

Info: http://www.afsusa.org/project-change

Top Prize: full scholarship to go abroad

Organization: John F. Kennedy Library Foundation

Topic: Write an original and creative essay of 1,000 words or less that demonstrates an understanding of political courage as described by John F. Kennedy in Profiles in Courage. Students should use at least five varied sources such as newspaper articles, books, and/or personal interviews, including one non-internet source, to address the following topic: Describe and analyze an act of political courage by a United States elected official that took place during or after 1956. Include an analysis of the obstacles, risks, and consequences associated with the act. The essay may concern an issue at the local, state, national, or international level.

Deadline: Jan. 4, 2017 (though, obviously, you’d need to submit this earlier than that)


Top prize: $10,000

Organization: Journalism Education Association

Topic: Why is it important for a democratic society to have women involved in professional media and legal roles? What can be done to reverse the dearth of females in these professions?

Deadline: February 2017 (though you will need to turn this in by the November deadline); writing can be submitted starting in early November

Info: http://jea.org/home/awards-honors/high-school-essay-contest/

Top prize: $1000 (though there is a $5 entry fee for this contest)

Organization: Bennington Young Writers Contest

Topic: Your choice (see website for more info/details). Be sure to provide proof of your on-line submission, and be sure it is indicated that you did that by the deadline of Nov. 1

Deadline: Nov. 1, 2016

Info: http://www.bennington.edu/events/young-writers-awards

Organization: PTA (Reflections Contest)

Topic: “What Is Your Story?” (you need to do the literature category)


Info: http://www.clarkmagnet.net/cms/lib7/CA01001150/Centricity/Domain/1/Reflections%202016-17%20National%20Rules%20Packet.pdf (or pick up entry forms and rules in main office – you need parent signatures for this contest)

Top prize: ?
Organization: California Association of Teachers of English

Topic: Innovation is about trying something new while tradition is about honoring the past. Usually innovation and tradition are seen as pulling in opposing directions. Write about a time when innovation and tradition came together. You can write a personal essay, an expository piece, or a work of fiction that explores this blend of the old and the new.

Deadline: Oct. 27, 2016 (as we need time to judge and find our top six essays)


Top prize: Statewide winners in each category will be published in California English.