

“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, 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. 2.**) 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 16***:

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. 16. In fact, if your writing contest has a deadline prior to Nov. 16, you **must** turn in your writing to us with proof of submission no later than the deadline for that contest.

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

Scoring Guide

√+ – Work meets/exceeds 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: Topic is announced Sept. 17

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/>

Top Prize: \$5,000 (and there are other prizes as well)

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, 2018 (though, obviously, you'd need to submit this earlier than that)

Info: <https://www.jfklibrary.org/Education/Profile-in-Courage-Essay-Contest.aspx>
Top prize: \$10,000

Organization: Journalism Education Association

Topic: “Why is it important that we have news media that are independent of the government?” (at least that was last year’s contest topic; it may change this year)

Deadline: February 2018 (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, 2017

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

Organization: PTA (Reflections Contest)

Topic: “Within Reach” (you need to do the literature category)

Deadline: Oct. 5, 2017 (approximate due date)

Info: http://downloads.capta.org/ref/17-18_ReflectionsStudentPacket.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: Considering the contest’s theme, With Literacy and Justice for All, write a short story, essay, or speech about a message that needs to be heard

Deadline: Oct. 26, 2017 (as we need time to judge and find our top six essays)

Info: <http://cateweb.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/WritingContestCATE2017.18.pdf>

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