

how to win scholastic art and writing awards

How to Win Scholastic Art and Writing Awards

The Scholastic Art and Writing Awards are prestigious national competitions that recognize outstanding talent in young artists and writers. Winning these awards can provide significant opportunities for personal and professional growth, including scholarships and the chance to showcase your work on a national stage. This article will guide you through essential steps and strategies to enhance your chances of winning in both art and writing categories.

Understanding the Scholastic Awards

Before diving into the specifics of how to win the Scholastic Art and Writing Awards, it's crucial to understand the competition's structure and significance.

History and Impact

Founded in 1923, the Scholastic Art and Writing Awards have a rich history of celebrating student creativity. Over the decades, many renowned artists and writers, such as Andy Warhol, Sylvia Plath, and Stephen King, have been recognized early in their careers through these awards. Winning can lead to:

- National recognition and exposure
- Scholarships and financial aid for college
- Opportunities to exhibit your work or publish your writing

Categories of Submission

The awards encompass a variety of categories for both art and writing, including:

Art Categories:

- Painting
- Photography
- Sculpture
- Digital Art
- Mixed Media

Writing Categories:

- Poetry
- Short Stories
- Personal Essays
- Journalism
- Playwriting

Familiarizing yourself with the specific categories will help you decide where to focus your efforts.

Preparing Your Submission

The first step in winning a Scholastic Art and Writing Award is to prepare your submission meticulously.

Choose Your Best Work

Selecting the right piece to submit is crucial. Here are some tips for choosing your best work:

1. Reflect Personal Passion: Choose a piece that you are passionate about, as this will show in your submission.
2. Seek Feedback: Share your work with teachers, peers, or mentors to gain constructive feedback.
3. Consider the Audience: Think about what the judges might be looking for. Originality and emotional depth often resonate well.

Understand the Guidelines

Each category has specific guidelines regarding submission length, formatting, and eligibility. Be sure to:

- Read the official rules thoroughly.
- Follow the formatting requirements (e.g., font style, size, margin).
- Ensure your work meets any word count or size limits for visual art.

Polish Your Work

Once you've selected your piece, it's time to refine it. For writers:

- Edit Ruthlessly: Revise your work for clarity, grammar, and style. Consider multiple drafts.
- Read Aloud: Hearing your work can help identify awkward phrasing or errors.

For artists:

- Final Touches: If it's a physical piece, ensure it's clean and well-presented.
- High-Quality Images: If submitting digital work, use high-resolution images and ensure good lighting in photographs.

Crafting Your Artist Statement or Cover Letter

A compelling artist statement or cover letter can significantly enhance your submission. This document should provide insight into your work, your inspiration, and your artistic journey.

What to Include

- Background Information: Introduce yourself and your artistic or writing background.
- Inspiration: Explain the thought process behind your piece and what inspired you to create it.
- Technique and Medium: Discuss any particular techniques or mediums used, especially if they are unique or innovative.

Tips for Writing the Statement

- Be Authentic: Write in your voice and be genuine about your experiences and intentions.
- Keep It Concise: Aim for clarity and brevity while still being informative.
- Proofread: Ensure there are no typographical or grammatical errors.

Submitting Your Work

The submission process can vary depending on whether you're entering art or writing.

Art Submissions

- Digital Submission: Most categories allow digital submissions. Ensure your images are high-quality and properly formatted.
- Physical Submissions: If submitting a physical piece, follow the guidelines for packaging and shipping.

Writing Submissions

- Online Submission Platforms: Familiarize yourself with the online platform used for submissions. Ensure you complete all required sections.
- Deadlines: Pay attention to submission deadlines and plan to submit well in advance to avoid last-minute issues.

Establishing a Support Network

Having a support network can significantly boost your chances of success.

Find Mentors

- Teachers: Seek out teachers who specialize in art or writing for guidance and feedback.
- Local Artists/Writers: Engage with local artists or writers for mentorship and advice.

Join Creative Communities

- Workshops: Attend workshops or classes to improve your skills and network with peers.
- Online Forums: Participate in online communities where you can share your work and get feedback.

Stay Motivated and Resilient

Winning the Scholastic Art and Writing Awards requires dedication and resilience. Here are some strategies to maintain your motivation:

Set Goals

- Short-term Goals: Aim to create a certain number of pieces or drafts within a specific timeframe.
- Long-term Goals: Set aspirations for your artistic or writing career, such as submitting to other competitions or exhibitions.

Accept Feedback and Rejection

- **Constructive Criticism:** Embrace feedback as a tool for growth. Use it to improve your work rather than as a setback.
- **Learn from Rejection:** If you don't win, analyze what you can do differently for next time and keep pushing forward.

Final Thoughts

Winning the Scholastic Art and Writing Awards is not solely about talent; it involves preparation, perseverance, and a willingness to learn and grow. By understanding the competition, selecting the right work, polishing your submissions, and establishing a supportive network, you can significantly increase your chances of success. Remember, every great artist or writer started somewhere, and every submission is a step towards honing your craft. Good luck!

Frequently Asked Questions

What are the key criteria judges look for in Scholastic Art and Writing Awards submissions?

Judges typically look for originality, technical skill, personal voice, and how well the work communicates its intended message. It's important to showcase creativity and a unique perspective.

How can I find inspiration for my art or writing submissions?

Inspiration can come from various sources such as personal experiences, current events, literature, nature, or even other artists' works. Keeping a journal or sketchbook can help capture ideas as they come.

What are some tips for editing my writing before submitting it?

After writing a draft, take a break before revising to gain perspective. Read your work aloud, check for clarity, coherence, and grammatical errors, and consider seeking feedback from peers or teachers.

How important is the presentation of my artwork in

the Scholastic Awards?

Presentation is crucial as it reflects your professionalism and attention to detail. Ensure that your artwork is well-framed, mounted, or presented according to the submission guidelines provided by the awards.

Are there specific themes or categories I should focus on for the Scholastic Awards?

While there are no strict themes, it can be beneficial to explore categories that resonate with your interests and strengths. Check the current year's guidelines for any suggested themes or special awards that may align with your work.

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