Prairie-Hills Elementary School District 144

Young Authors' Contest Guidelines

April 27, 2027



Writing Performance

The Common Core Standards for Writing states that students should be able to write in a grammatical, well-organized, and coherent manner for a variety of purposes and audiences. To ascertain whether students meet the expectations of Common Core Standards for Writing, Prairie-Hills Elementary School District 144 assesses students' abilities to write Argumentative, Explanatory, and Narrative essays on an ongoing basis, culminating with our annual competitive Young Authors' writing contest.

Ms. Akta Naik, Supervisor of Curriculum, Instruction, and Equity

Prairie-Hills Elementary School District 144
2027 Young Authors' Contest

Dear Students, Parents, and Teachers:

The PHSD144 Young Authors' Contest is here! All 2nd—8th grade students are welcome to participate in the 2027 Prairie-Hills Elementary School District 144 Young Authors' Contest. Participation is voluntary, and students should ask for help from parents or teachers as needed to complete their submissions.

The following guidelines will help answer any questions and improve the quality of your student's story. Have your child incorporate some or all of the following elements into story writing. However, their imagination and enthusiasm for writing are most important. The purpose of this contest is to give encouragement and recognition to student achievement in creative writing.

STORY WRITING ELEMENTS

- **Fiction**: This Young Authors' book is to be a creative short story. It may be based on facts but must include imaginative elements.
- **Audience:** The story should be **appropriate for 2nd-8th grade audiences**.
- **Setting:** The time and place in which the story occurs. Is the setting important to the story?
- **Purpose:** The story should be written to entertain, to express your feelings about something, or to describe a personal experience.
- **Characterization:** Who are the main characters? What do they look like? How do they act and talk? Do they have any unique traits or habits? Describe their temperaments (determined, angry, sad, happy, clever, mean, curious, etc.).
- **Climax:** Have the story events build up to a crucial moment in the story where the main conflict is resolved and the tension breaks.
- **Plot:** What are the conflicts in the story? How are the conflicts resolved, and who solves them? Each detail or action must contribute to the outcome of the story.

BOOK WRITING PROCEDURES

1. Parents should read the Entry Rules with their child before starting the book.
2. The story is to be a work of fiction created by **one** student.
    - **You may not use copyrighted characters (Barbie, Star Wars, etc.)**
    - **AI-generated stories or illustrations will not be accepted.**
3. Students should write their story in any style or format they choose.
4. Review the story writing elements above to ensure nothing is missing from your story.
5. Students should include illustrations or graphics on all or some of the pages. These illustrations or graphics must be the student's original work - no clipart or online graphics/photos.
6. Classroom teachers may assist and provide support by proofreading and encouraging students to self-check written material. Classroom teachers **may not** edit student work or make changes on behalf of a student.
7. Final drafts must be formatted according to the following guidelines:
    - **Grade 2: Must be written in the student's best printing using black ink.**
    - **Grades 3-8: Must be typed.**
    - **Margins: Must be 1-inch on all sides.**
    - **Front Cover: Must include story title, author's name, and an illustration/graphic that represents the story - Must be original artwork.**
    - **Back Cover: Must include a picture of the student & a short biography.**
8. Final drafts must be printed/submitted with a completed Official Entry Form paper-clipped to the title page and signed by **BOTH** the author and their parent/guardian.



AWARDS

- Each student who enters the contest will receive a participation certificate.
- **All finalists in each grade level will be invited to and recognized at the Young Authors' Program, held on Tuesday, April 27, 2027, at Prairie-Hills Junior High School.**
- There will be three district awards given for the 2nd-8th grade levels
- The top three district-winning entries in each grade level will be professionally printed for an author signing event. District winners will also receive a complimentary copy of their own book. Original entries will be returned to the students.

JUDGING CRITERIA

- **Official Entry Form**: Must contain the following information- author, title, phone number, school, grade level, short summary of story, and signature of both author and parent or legal guardian.
- **Organization:** Clear sequence of details: good beginning, middle, and ending.
- **Language/usage:** Vocabulary, word choice, descriptive language, and should be grammatically correct.
- **Originality/Creativity:** Fresh, memorable, or unusual storyline.
- **Editing:** Few or no spelling and/or mechanical errors.
- **Overall Impression:** The following will enhance the story quality: handwritten drawings and illustrations, neatness, and an attractive cover.

DISTRICT JUDGING

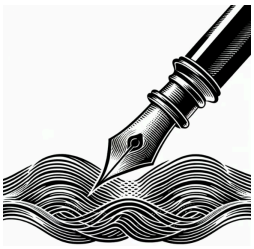
- Teachers, staff, administrators, and community members will judge all entries.
- All decisions by the judges are final.
- If you have any questions, please contact Ms. Naik, Supervisor of Curriculum, Instruction, and Equity at anaik@phsd144.net.

Thank you for encouraging your child to participate in our Young Authors' Contest. We look forward to reading their stories.

Sincerely,

Ms. Akta Naik

Supervisor of Curriculum, Instruction, & Equity





PRAIRIE-HILLS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DISTRICT 144

2027 Young Authors' Contest Official Entry Form

Please print in black ink:

Author's Name:_____ **Home Phone:** _____

School: _____ **Classroom Teacher:** _____

(For grades 6-8, please put the name of your ELA teacher)

Grade: _____**Title of Story:** _____

Short Summary of Your Story:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

*** Student & parent signatures confirm that this is the original work of the above author ***

_____ _____

Student Author's Signature **Parent/Guardian Signature**

Completed Official Entry Form must be paper clipped to the Title Page of the story.

PRAIRIE-HILLS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DISTRICT 144

2027 Young Authors' Contest Scoring Rubric

	Effective- 10 pts	Adequate- 8 pts	Approaching- 4pts	Below Standard- 0pt	Points
Introduction	The first paragraph has a "grabber" and effectively sets up the story.	A catchy beginning was attempted but was not continued throughout the piece.	The first paragraph has a weak "grabber" and/or weakly sets up the story.	No attempt was made to catch the reader's attention or introduce the story.	
Creativity	The story contains an abundance of creative details and/or descriptions that contribute to the reader's enjoyment.	The story contains a few creative details and/or descriptions that adequately contribute to the reader's enjoyment.	The story contains a few creative details and/or descriptions, but they distract from the story.	The story heavily lacks creative detail and/or description.	
Originality	There is an original plot to the story and the writer's voice is clear, noticeable and impressive throughout the piece.	There is an original plot to the story and the writer's voice is fairly clear throughout the piece.	The story lacks an original plot and the writer's voice is hard to distinguish throughout the piece.	The story lacks an original plot and the writer's voice is missing or very unclear throughout the piece.	
Mechanics	Everything is grammatically correct and spelled correctly. All steps of the instructions are correctly followed.	There are mild spelling or grammatical errors that do not necessarily hinder the readability of the piece. Most of the instructions are followed.	There are spelling or grammatical errors that hinder the flow or readability of the piece. The instructions are not followed closely.	There are spelling or grammatical errors that significantly hinder the flow or readability of the piece. The instructions were completely ignored.	
Problem/ Conflict	It is very easy to understand the problem the main characters face and why it is a problem. The conflict is complex and engaging.	It is fairly easy to understand the problem the main characters face and why it's a problem and/or the conflict is adequate and sufficiently engaging.	It is fairly easy to understand the problem that the main characters face but it is not clear why it's a problem and/or the conflict is simple and mildly engaging.	The conflict is missing or unclear.	
Organization & Pacing	The story is organized exceptionally well and the pacing effectively communicates the tone.	The story is adequately organized (few elements are out of place) and/or the pacing adequately communicates the tone.	The story is weakly organized (a couple elements are out of place) and/or the pacing weakly communicates the tone.	The story is not organized (many elements are out of place) and/or the pacing weakly communicates the tone.	
Climax	It is very easy to understand the turning point/climax and it effectively addresses the conflict.	It is fairly easy to understand the turning point/climax and/or it adequately addresses the conflict.	The turning point/climax is recognizable but the purpose of turning point/climax is unclear.	The turning point/climax is missing or unclear.	
Closing/ Resolution	The story effectively winds down to a logical ending and effectively addresses the conflict and climax.	The story adequately winds down to a logical ending and/or adequately addresses the conflict and climax.	The story abruptly ends and/or the resolution weakly addresses the conflict and climax.	The resolution is illogical, missing, or unclear.	
Cover Page/ Biography Page/	Cover page and biography page include all required components.	Cover page and biography page are missing one - two necessary components.	Cover page and biography page are missing three or more components.	Is missing cover page and/or biography page.	
Illustrations	Cover page includes original artwork. Multiple pages in the story have original artwork.	Cover page includes original artwork. Limited original artwork throughout the story.	Lacks original artwork throughout the story including cover page.	Artwork is not present.	

Judge's Signature_____ Total ____/ 100



YOUNG AUTHORS' CONTEST TIMELINE

October 1st	Principals will disseminate the Young Authors' Contest Guidelines
December 4th	Principals should submit the entry forms of the students who will be participating in the contest. ● There should be a minimum of one student per grade level.
January/February	Writing Checkpoint Principals and teachers should review the rough drafts of the stories submitted by the participating students and monitor the timeline for upcoming deadlines.
February 26th	Final drafts must be submitted to District Office by building administrators.
March 12th	Invitation letters will be sent home to the parents of the finalist at each school.
April 27th	Prairie-Hills Elementary School District 144's Annual Authors' Dinner will take place at Prairie-Hills Junior High School.