



A+ Ready Writing

for Elementary, Middle School, and Junior High

Instructions for the Judges

Instructions

At some convenient time before the contest begins, the director shall discuss with the judges the criteria for evaluating the stories, making sure that they all have the same conception of those criteria and understand the relative importance to be accorded each. Each judge shall be given a copy of the evaluation sheet provided by the UIL. Judges should also read the Ready Writing topic sheets the contestants were given.

Criteria

The essays are to be evaluated as to relative excellence in interest (50%), organization (35%), and correctness of style (15%). Please make comments constructive and supportive. While judges are to consider all three elements in selecting the most effective stories, more weight should be given to interest than to organization, and to organization more than to correctness of style.

- (A) Interest depends primarily on perceptive ideas. It depends next upon originality and including specific examples, which individualize the story as an outgrowth of the writer's voice. The effectiveness of the title is also considered.
- (B) A well-organized paper or story will present a clear response to the prompt with well-developed, focused paragraphs. For expository prompts, the student could incorporate a thesis statement. For narrative prompts, the student could incorporate plot points and/or character development. The use of transitions will also be examined as well as the effectiveness of support for the student's response to the prompt. As a whole, the composition should be considered for clarity.
- (C) Grammatical correctness of style includes an examination of punctuation, sentence structure, grammar, word usage, and spelling.

Completing Evaluation Sheets

Before the results are announced, the judges shall prepare a written evaluation of each essay stating its good points and areas that could be improved. Comments need not be long, but they should be specific rather than general.

There are points assigned to each of the subcategories within the three main criteria, which will all add up to 200. An essay that scores the highest might not necessarily mean it will be 1st place. Rather, the tool can help inform a judge of the essay strengths, and then a discussion with other judges, and/or with a reevaluation of the essay, the determination of actual places can be made.

It can be confusing for a student to score higher than others and then not be the top rank, so you might consider aligning the scores to the ranks when possible to avoid that confusion.

Rating the compositions

Judges should read the essays submitted and without marking on the essays, rank the essays in order of excellence: 1, 2, 3, 4, etc. Comments should be made on the evaluation sheets provided. The judges shall discuss the essays contending for a place, being permitted to alter their rankings as a result of the discussion. Judges are to reach a consensus on the rankings. There can be no ties in this contest.