

SCSPA Online Individual Competition

Category Descriptions

Please read carefully before selecting your entries. You can enter any category.

Computer graphics: (cg)

- Only original, student work may be submitted.
- Judge will look at the graphic's ability to deliver its message in a clean, stimulating manner using an appropriate computer graphics program.
- All art must be generated on a computer.

Digital Storytelling: (DS)

- Digital storytelling uses computer-based tools to tell stories. As with traditional storytelling, digital stories should focus on a specific topic and be told from a particular point of view. *Digital stories mix images, music, narrative and voice together to provide depth characters, situations, experiences, and insights.* Topics in digital storytelling range from personal tales to the recounting of historical events, from exploring life in one's own community to the search for life in other corners of the universe, and literally, everything in between.

- **Content:** Do the pictures, text, audio, etc. tell a story fully and help the reader understand the theme and subject of the story? Are action verbs used? Are the words chosen carefully and are they concise?

- **Pictures:** Are the pictures/graphics original, or are they used with permission, or do they come from morguefile.com (or a similar royalty-free photo site)? Is a works cited list complete? Are the pictures/graphics of high quality and bring about an emotional response in the viewer? Do the pictures of people focus on emotion? Are the graphics clear and help the viewer understand the theme of the photo story?

- **Audio:** Is music used royalty free? Is the audio clear and consistent (not high in one place and low in another)?

- **Story Idea/Theme:** Is the purpose of the story clear? Is there is a clear theme for the story? Is the theme a full sentence and not just a one-word subject? Is the theme creative and interesting?

- **Maximum length:** NO MORE THAN three (3) MINUTES.

Features: (f)

- Online features should include multi-media components.
- Longer stories are broken up with bullet-point lists of specific data and section headlines.

- Story provides hyperlinks to other content that are relevant and add to the story.
- Headline, captions, and teasers are accurate and engaging, drawing readers into the material.

- Although a feature is not a news story, many features are inspired by news.
- Features can entertain or inform, or both.
- Features are full of human interest and bring an issue or a person to life for the reader.

- Features, often in-depth, are filled with quotes from multiple sources.
- Feature leads are engaging, informative and to the point.
- Features may not be as timely as news stories, but they have relevance to the readers.

- Among the numerous types of features are
 - (1) profiles or personality,
 - (2) historical – commemorating dates of important events, like the anniversary of a memorable event at your school, in the community, state, nation or world,
 - (3) adventure (telling about unusual or exciting experiences),
 - (4) seasonal (but find a new angle!),

- about
- (5) explanatory or interpretive – providing more details and explanations
 - activities, trends or ideas in the news,
 - (6) how-to-do-it (how to accomplish a psychological or physical task),
 - (7) occupation or hobby,
 - (8) behind-the-scenes,
 - (9) participatory (reporter experiences an event or situation)

News (nf)

- A news story must have news worthiness to your readers – be about events or issues affecting their lives.
- Stories will have news elements of: timeliness, proximity, prominence, significance, conflict and human interest.
- Because online stories should be updated regularly, news should be written in inverted pyramid with a **summary lead** – one sentence of 25-30 words answering who, what, when and where – and the remaining information should be arranged in descending order of importance so readers get the most important information first.
- Direct and indirect quotes should demonstrate interviewing skills.
- Information should be accurate and balanced.
- Breaking news reports are updated as information comes in. A variety of media – which may include photos, graphics, text, audio, video and interactive elements – are used to report breaking news events.

Opinion pieces: (OP)

May include *staff editorials and personal columns* – unbylined because they are the voice of the staff – that adhere to the following journalistic standards:

- utilizes facts and figures thus showing research, not just personal thought,
- shows the writer's voice,
- uses clear, concrete details that show the reader what the writer has experienced or knows through research,
- has a universal idea/appeal,
- uses appropriate word choice for the tone of the piece,
- makes a point,
- makes the reader think.

Also may include photos, graphics, text, audio, video and interactive elements.

Review: (R)

Adhere to the following journalistic standards:

- utilizes facts and figures thus showing research, not just personal thought,
- shows the writer's voice,
- uses clear, concrete details that show the reader what the writer has experienced or knows through research,
- has a universal idea/appeal,
- uses appropriate word choice for the tone of the piece,
- makes a point,
- makes the reader think.

Also may include photos, graphics, text, audio, video and interactive elements.

Photography: (p)

- Any student-produced photographs published online may be submitted for this category.
- Photographers should remember photo compositional elements such as rule of thirds, contrast, dominance, texture and overall impact of each print.
- Photos will be judged on technical quality as well as aesthetic value.

NOTE: Submit only ONE photograph – no photo essays.

Sports (S)

- A sports story must be relevant to your readers – be about events or issues affecting their lives.
- Stories will have elements of timeliness, proximity, prominence, significance, conflict and human interest.
- Direct and indirect quotes should demonstrate interviewing skills.
- Information should be accurate and balanced.
- Breaking sports reports are updated as information comes in. A variety of media – which may include photos, graphics, text, audio, video and interactive elements – are used to report breaking news events.

Video: (V)

These entries should be videos that support the telling of a news, sports or feature story, not a stand-alone story itself.

- Submit only one video.
- Must be original, shot by students, and should explain or tell a news or feature story.
- Judges will look at video's originality, creativity and relevance to the subject at hand.

NOTE: Send related article(s) if applicable to the video submitted.