



**Vision & Verse: White Bear Center for the Arts' High School Visual Arts & Writing Contests** honors the creativity of high school students in both the visual and literary arts. Open to students in grades 9-12, the contests offer the opportunity to showcase their work in either or both of the following contests:



**The High School Visual Arts Contest:** Students can submit up to three original pieces of visual artwork in any medium.



**The High School Writing Contest:** Students can submit up to three pieces in poetry and spoken word, and one piece in creative nonfiction, short story, and persuasive essay.

### **Vision & Verse call for entries:**

Wednesday, October 1, 2025–Sunday, March 1, 2026

### **Vision & Verse Exhibition Dates:**

April 13–May 15, 2026

Located at White Bear Center for the Arts' Ford Family Gallery, Exhibition Hall, and Atrium.

### **Vision & Verse Reception & Award Ceremony:**

Thursday, April 16, 2026, 6:00–8:30 PM

Award Ceremony at 7:00 PM

WBCA will host a combined reception and award ceremony for the Vision & Verse High School Visual Arts and Writing Contests.



# VISUAL ARTS CONTEST GUIDELINES

Students in grades 9-12, in the Northeast Metro Region of the Twin Cities, are invited to enter up to three pieces of original art in Vision & Verse: WBCA's High School Visual Arts Contest, hosted by White Bear Center for the Arts. This is an annual, juried art show with cash awards, publication opportunities, and other prizes. Selected works will be displayed professionally in WBCA's Ford Family Gallery, Exhibition Hall, and Atrium alongside works from the Vision & Verse: High School Writing Contest.

**Submission Dates: October 1, 2025-March 1, 2026 at 11:59 PM**

**Entry Form:** [Click HERE to submit your work.](#)

## AWARDS:

- Best of Show: \$200
- Excellence Awards (2): \$125 each
- Merit Awards (3): \$75 each
- Honorable Mentions (3): \$50 each
- Judge's Choice (3): \$25 each

## Notification of selected works by email:

The week of March 16-20, 2026

## Drop off of selected works:

Friday, April 3, 2026, 11:30 AM-3:30 PM

Saturday, April 4, 2026, 10:30 AM-2:30 PM

## Artwork Pick-up:

Saturday, May 16, 2026, 10:30 AM-2:30 PM

Monday, May 18, 2026, 3:00-8:00 PM

## Eligibility:

- Recent 2D and 3D works, including but not limited to drawings, paintings, fiber, pottery, photography, and sculptures.
- All artwork must be original in composition and concept, and executed solely by the artist. Pieces deemed not original to the artist will be disqualified.
- For clarity, using artificial intelligence tools is prohibited at any stage of the creative process.
- Profanity, violent and sexually explicit subject matter, as well as drug use, are not permitted and will result in disqualification. WBCA reserves the right to determine acceptability with the well-being of our broader community in mind, as well as our responsibility to create a safe and appropriate space for all student participants.
- Submission does not guarantee acceptance.

## Conditions for Selected Works:

- If accepted, 2D work must be suitably framed or prepared and ready for hanging by the designated drop-off dates.
- Hanging wire is preferred, but sawtooth or photo hangers are acceptable. Please note that this is an opportunity to display your artwork in a professional setting. Framing your work is an important part of public presentation. Oil and acrylic paintings must be framed unless the painting extends to the sides of the canvas.
- 2D work must not exceed a total perimeter measurement of 240 inches, including the frame.
- 3D work must not exceed 4 feet in any direction or weigh more than 75 pounds. Minimum size at the discretion of the artist.

## Entry Process:

- All submissions must be completed online. Submission does not guarantee acceptance.
- The online form is available on the Vision & Verse High School Contest call for entries webpage. [Click HERE for the form.](#)
- Enter accurate contact information. Please contact WBCA if your contact information changes.
- You may submit up to three works. Please be specific when entering your medium as it makes it easier to judge your artwork (for example, "Watercolor" is more helpful than "Paint").
- Dimensions should be provided in inches. For 2D pieces, provide height x width (e.g.: 24" x 18"). For 3D pieces, provide height x width x depth (e.g.: 10" x 10" x 8").
- For each 2D entry, you may submit one image. For each 3D entry, you may submit two images.
- Images should be of the work itself without mats, frames or other objects, and of sufficient size and quality for accurate judging if possible.
- Images must be .jpg, .jpeg, or .png. Maximum image size is 10 MB, minimum image size is 400 KB. High-quality images are strongly encouraged.

You can find guidance on how to photograph your work on [White Bear Center for the Arts' YouTube Channel](#).

## Selected Works:

This is a juried art exhibition. Notification of selected works will be emailed to the student and parent/guardian the week of March 16-20, 2026. Please provide an email address that you use and add [gallery@whitebeararts.org](mailto:gallery@whitebeararts.org) to your contacts to avoid communications going to your spam folder. Selected pieces cannot be swapped for another piece; there are no substitutions. All artwork must be displayed until the end of the show on May 15, 2026.

## Waiver:

Reasonable care will be taken in handling and displaying artwork, but no responsibility is assumed by WBCA for loss or damage of any kind. By submitting your work, you indicate acceptance of these conditions and agreement that images of work may be used for publicity purposes by WBCA, including on the WBCA website, social media, and printed materials.

Contact WBCA at 651-407-0597 or [gallery@whitebeararts.org](mailto:gallery@whitebeararts.org) with any questions.



# WRITING CONTEST GUIDELINES

Students in grades 9-12, in the Northeast Metro Region of the Twin Cities, are invited to enter up to three pieces of original art in Vision & Verse: WBCA's High School Writing Contest, hosted by White Bear Center for the Arts. This is an annual, juried art show with cash awards, publication opportunities, and other prizes. Selected works will be displayed in WBCA's Ford Family Gallery, Exhibition Hall, and Atrium alongside works from the Vision & Verse: High School Visual Arts Contest.

**Submission Dates: October 1, 2025-March 1, 2026 at 11:59 PM**

**Entry Form:** [Click HERE to submit your work.](#)

## AWARDS:

- Best Overall Submission: \$200
- Best of Each Category (5): \$100 each
- Merit Awards (2): \$50 each
- Honorable Mentions (3): \$25 each

## Submission Guidelines

- Entries will be judged per category.
- Submissions must be your own, original work. Plagiarism will result in disqualification.
- No AI, machine learning, or large language model tools are to be used in the submission, except for checking spelling and grammar.
- Likewise, all research included in your submissions must be properly cited.
- Profanity, violent and sexually explicit subject matter, as well as drug use, are not permitted and will result in disqualification. WBCA reserves the right to determine acceptability.
- All entries must be submitted electronically, in one form. Each entry must include a title, category, and an attachment in Microsoft Word or PDF format.
- Do not include your name or any other identifying information in your entries.
- You may submit writing for multiple contest categories (see guidelines below).
- Submission does not guarantee acceptance.

## Contest Categories:

### Poetry—Express your feelings!

Create a poem to express emotion and feeling with sensory description, imagery, and metaphor.

- Your poem can also explore new ideas or express your ideals.
- Poetry often uses powerful words, short phrases, and broken sentences.
- Both rhyming, metered poetry, and free verse poetry are welcome.
- Types of poetry include haiku, song lyrics, sonnets, limericks, and more!

Examples: [Lucille Clifton](#), [Emily Dickinson](#), [Natasha Trethewey](#), [Rita Dove](#)

**Up to three poems may be submitted per student**  
**No word requirement**

## Short Story—Use your imagination!

Write an original, creative, fictional story that uses setting, plot, and narration.

- Setting appeals to the senses and transports your reader into the scene. Use descriptive, concrete language to create vivid imagery and bring readers into the world of your story.
- Plot is the series of events or character decisions that bring your story from beginning or end. The plot is commonly developed through rising action, conflict, and resolution. Stories usually narrate a change over time to reach a conclusion.
- Narration is how you tell your story. Your story may be told from first-, second-, or third-person perspective and may include inner monologue, dialogue, stream-of-consciousness thoughts, etc.
- Fiction sometimes falls into a genre such as science fiction, fantasy, or mystery, but can also depict more commonplace circumstances. You are welcome to submit a piece in any genre!

Examples: [“The Lottery” by Shirley Jackson](#), [“State Change” by Ken Liu](#).

**One short story may be submitted per student**

**1500-word minimum, 2500-word maximum (note word count at the end)**

## Persuasive Essay—Stand for something!

Make an argument about the topic of your choice. In your essay you can advocate for a cause, attempt to change the reader’s mind or behavior, or assess the value of a policy, idea, or product. Please support your position with factual, research-based information and proper citations.

- Your paper can vary in length, but the 5-paragraph format is a common and useful format for persuasive essays.
- Paragraph 1: Introduce your argument with a thesis statement that supports your position.
- Paragraphs 2 - 4: Introduce opposing points of view and include evidence for these opposing points. Refute the opposing points of view and support these arguments with new evidence.
- Paragraph 5: Summarize your thesis and reiterate your support for your position.

Examples: [“In Praise of the F Word” by Mary Sherry](#), [“The Game That Can Give You 10 Extra Years of Life” by Jane McGonigal \(TED Talk\)](#), [“Rules and Traditions: It Takes a Tribe” by David Berreby](#), [“Why You Procrastinate” by Charlotte Lieberman](#)

**One persuasive essay may be submitted per student**

**500-word minimum, 1500-word maximum (note word count at the end)**

## Creative Nonfiction—Tell a true story!

Tell a thoughtful story about someone or something real. You can also meditate on real events. Creative nonfiction comes in many forms.

- Personal essays describe something that has happened in your life.
- Journalism utilizes interviews, research, and facts to tell the story of current events and happenings in the world.
- Biographies tell someone’s life story, often someone famous or a figure from history.
- Observational essays bring a meaningful place or event to life on the page.
- Profile essays describe a person and their impact. This can be someone from your life or community.

Examples: [“Black in Middle America” by Roxane Gay](#), [“Notes of a Native Son” by James Baldwin](#), [“How to Tame a Wild Tongue” by Gloria Anzaldua](#)

**One creative nonfiction work may be submitted per student**

**500-word minimum, 1500-word maximum (note word count at the end)**

# Spoken Word—Use Your Voice!

Perform an original spoken word piece and record a video of your performance.

- What differentiates spoken word from other forms of poetry? Spoken word is written with the intention of being performed.
- Spoken word artists pay attention to rhythm, body movement, pauses, and facial expressions when performing their pieces.
- Spoken word poetry has no rules in terms of meter, length, or rhyme. But it often uses literary techniques like rhyme, alliteration, repetition, and more.
- The performance style can vary depending on the artist, but it often draws from theater, standup comedy, jazz, hip-hop, and oral storytelling.
- Spoken word can be about any topic! But it often comments on social issues, or shares the speaker's story or perspective.
- For more about the history and definition of spoken word, watch this [artist talk from Kyle "Guante" Tran Myhre](#).

Examples: ["When They Look Right Through You" by Kyle "Guante" Tran Myhre](#), ["The Type" by Sarah Kay](#), and [MORE](#).

**Up to three poems may be submitted per student.**

**Each poem should be recorded separately and should be no more than 4 minutes in length.**

## Prompts (Optional):

If you need inspiration, we have included some optional prompts for you to work with, in any genre!

- Write about a piece of art that speaks to you. What does the artwork make you think or feel? What does it remind you of? The artwork could depict a scene in your short story, or perhaps it will inspire poetry.
- Delve deeper into a topic you're interested in at school. This could be a persuasive essay about a new scientific discovery, or a fiction story based on a historical time period you've learned about.
- Write about an artist. You could include an artist as a character in your short story. Perhaps create a poem about, or from the perspective of, an artist. You could also write a creative nonfiction piece about the life of an artist or a persuasive essay about the value of an artist or artwork you love. Perform a piece about an artist who has meant something to you.
- Write about a change in perspective. This can be a nonfiction piece about how you have changed your mind or beliefs, or it can be a story in which a character's perspective is shifted. You can perform a poem or story or narrate your shift in perspective as part of a persuasive essay and build ethos, pathos, and logos in the process.

## Questions?

Contact WBCA at 651-407-0597 or [kjackson@whitebeararts.org](mailto:kjackson@whitebeararts.org) with any questions.