



The Next Wave Summer Showcase: A Creative Competition

The Next Wave Summer Showcase is an online youth creative competition and digital exhibition celebrating teen artists, writers, innovators, and creators. Through submissions, features, and awards, the showcase aims to highlight the creativity, ideas, and voices of the upcoming wave of creators and thinkers while giving them a platform to be recognized beyond the classroom and their local communities. Selected creators will be featured through the Next Wave website, social media platforms, and a digital magazine highlighting standout work from the competition.

Why We Are Doing It

Next Wave was created to give teen creators a place to be seen. The Summer Showcase expands that mission by creating a larger opportunity for students to share their work, gain recognition, and connect with a growing creative community.

This showcase is designed to:

- Celebrate youth creativity across multiple disciplines
 - Encourage students to share original work and ideas
 - Provide recognition and portfolio-building opportunities
 - Connect creators across schools, cities, and communities
 - Provide young people with the opportunity to no longer hide their work in the darkness, but welcome them in a space where they can feel supported, inspired, and valued for their creativity
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Eligibility

- Open to students in **rising** grades 7–12
 - Middle School Division: Rising grades 7–8
 - High School Division: Rising grades 9–12
 - *Seniors completing high school this summer are eligible to submit

Update: Participants can be located anywhere in the United States!

To help verify eligibility, participants will be asked to provide:

- Name
- Grade
- State
- School or organization affiliation

By submitting, participants confirm that all information provided is accurate. Additional verification may be requested if necessary. All participant information provided will remain confidential and used solely for showcase and eligibility purposes.

Entry Limits

Participants may submit up to two entries, provided they are in two different categories. If you submit one entry in any Writing category, your second entry must be in either Arts or Innovation and Entrepreneurship and vice versa. **No two submissions may be in the same category.**

Cost

The Next Wave Summer Showcase is completely free to enter.

Originality Policy

All submitted work must be entirely original. Plagiarized work, stolen content, or heavily inspired work without proper credit is subject to disqualification.

By submitting, participants confirm that:

- The work is their own
 - They have permission to use any credited materials included
 - The submission does not violate copyright or intellectual property guidelines
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Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy

Next Wave values originality, personal voice, and creative integrity. While we understand that tools of artificial intelligence are becoming more common in creative and academic spaces, submissions should primarily reflect the creator's own ideas, thinking, and work. Because this showcase is intended to celebrate youth creativity and innovation, excessive AI-generated content is strongly prohibited.

Permitted Uses of AI

Limited AI assistance may be used for:

- Logos or designs for business or invention pitching
- Frames in animation or mixed media

All other uses of AI such as fully AI-generated writing, artwork, or projects are not permitted. Next Wave reserves the right to disqualify submissions that appear overwhelmingly AI-generated or inconsistent with the spirit of the competition.

Submission Format

All submissions must be submitted through the [Next Wave Summer Showcase Submission Link](#).

Please ensure your files are properly labeled with your name and category before uploading (ex: JaneDoe_Writing_Poetry).

If you are submitting multiple files of the same type, add a number after the category name to differentiate them (ex: JaneDoe_Art_Photography1, JaneDoe_Art_Photography2).

Accepted file formats by category:

- Writing (Fiction, Nonfiction, Journalism, Script/Playwriting): PDF only
 - Poetry: .pdf, .docx, or .txt
 - Visual Art (Painting, Drawing, Ceramics, Digital Art, Animation: JPEG or PNG
 - All Photography Submissions: JPEG
 - All Videos (including submissions in the Film category): .mp4 or .mov
 - Business and Invention Pitches: Writeups (.pdf) and Slideshows (Google Slides or PowerPoint, .pptx or .pdf)
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Categories

Arts

- Painting
- Drawing
- Ceramics
- Digital Art
- Animation
 - Minimum of 30 sec, maximum 5 minutes.
- Film
 - Minimum of 3 minutes, maximum of 10 minutes.
- Photography

Art Notes

- You may submit up to 5 images per category. For Film and Animation, you may submit a completed short film or animated short in place of images. For Photography and Digital Art, you may submit a cohesive series or collection as a full project.

Writing

➤ Poetry

- Please submit up to two poems of any kind (ode, free verse, ballad, etc)
 - Poems may not exceed two pages each
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➤ Journalism

Article OR essay focused on:

- Real-world issues
- Current events
- Community topics
- Culture
- Social advocacy

Examples may include:

- Investigative pieces
- Feature articles
- Cultural commentary
- Advocacy journalism

Requirements:

1. Must address a real-world topic, issue, event, or ongoing conversation
 2. Articles must be at least 1 full page
 3. Essays cannot exceed 16 pages
 4. Sources must be credited through footnotes or a Works Cited page
 5. Work should reflect the student's original reporting, analysis, perspective, or commentary
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➤ Fiction

Includes:

- Flash Fiction

- Short Stories
- Novel Excerpts

Requirements:

1. Cannot exceed 16 pages
 2. Novel excerpts must include a synopsis of no more than 250 words explaining the context of both the novel and submitted excerpt
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➤ Nonfiction

Includes:

- Memoir
- Personal Narrative
- Creative Nonfiction
- Argumentative Essays

Requirements:

- Cannot exceed 16 pages
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➤ Script/Playwriting

Includes:

- Screenplays
- Short Scripts
- Stage Plays

Requirements:

1. Must contain a title page
 2. Cannot exceed 20 pages
 3. Must include a synopsis of no more than 250 words
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Writing Notes

- 1 side of a paper = 1 page
 - Ex: Front and back counts as 2 pages
 - All writing submissions must be typed and clearly readable
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Innovation and Entrepreneurship

➤ Product/Invention/Engineering Concepts

Includes:

- Product concepts
- Inventions
- Design solutions
- Prototypes
- Engineering ideas

Requirements:

- Participants must submit:
 1. A short video OR slides presentation explaining the project
 2. At least one image, sketch, prototype image, rendering, or short demonstration video

The presentation or video should explain:

1. The purpose of the project
 2. The problem it solves
 3. How it works
 4. The inspiration behind it
 5. Future goals or improvements
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➤ Business Ideas and Pitches

Includes:

- Startup concepts
- Business plans
- Community-focused initiatives
- Creative ventures

Requirements:

- Participants must submit:
 1. A written outline between 500–2,000 words
 2. A short video OR slideshow presentation (with audio) introducing the business or idea

The outline should explain:

1. The business concept
2. Intended audience
3. Goals, mission, and purpose
4. Why the idea matters
5. Future plans for development

*Both Innovation and Entrepreneurship categories are open to concepts, prototypes, or already-existing projects and initiatives.

Awards

- Selected creators will receive:
 - Featured placement on the Next Wave website
 - Social media spotlight features
 - Digital certificates of recognition
 - Publication in the Summer Showcase digital magazine
 - “Next Wave Creator of the Summer” recognition

Additional awards and recognitions may be announced closer to the showcase date.

Judging Criteria

Submissions will be evaluated on the following:

- **Originality:** Does the work feel fresh, personal, and distinctly the creator's own?
- **Creativity and Vision:** Does the work show imagination, a unique perspective, or a compelling creative choice?
- **Craft and Execution:** Is the work well made? Does it demonstrate skill, effort, and attention to detail appropriate for the creator's level?
- **Impact and Voice:** Does the work leave an impression? Is there a clear voice, message, or emotional resonance?
- **Adherence to Guidelines:** Does the submission meet all category requirements and competition rules?

Judging criteria may be weighted differently across categories to reflect the nature of each discipline.

Judges

Our panel of judges will include creative professionals and educators across the arts, writing, and innovation fields. A full list of judges will be announced prior to the judging period.

Restricted Content

To maintain a safe, respectful, and supportive environment for all participants, the Next Wave Summer Showcase will not accept submissions containing the following:

Hate Speech or Discrimination

Submissions may not include harmful, threatening, discriminatory, or hateful content directed toward individuals or groups based on race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, gender, sexual orientation, disability, or other protected identities.

Explicit or Harmful Content

Submissions containing graphic violence, explicit sexual content, excessive gore, or material deemed inappropriate for a teen and general audience will not be accepted.

Plagiarism or Stolen Work

All submissions must be original creations by the participant. Plagiarized work, copied content, stolen artwork, or heavily imitated work without proper credit is subject to immediate disqualification.

Dangerous or Illegal Activities

Submissions promoting illegal activity, substance abuse, self-harm, violence, or unsafe behavior are prohibited.

Spam or Irrelevant Content

Entries unrelated to the showcase categories, incomplete submissions, joke submissions, or spam content will be removed from consideration.

Important Dates

- Submissions Open: June 3
 - Submission Deadline: July 24
 - Judging Period: July 27-August 7
 - Finalists Announced: August 11
 - Winners Announced: August 14
 - Awards Week: August 16–22
 - Digital Magazine Release: September 1
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Important Notes

By submitting to the Next Wave Summer Showcase:

- You agree that Next Wave may feature your work (with credit) on our website, digital magazine, and social media platforms
- You retain full ownership and rights to your work
- You understand that submissions not following the guidelines may be disqualified

Next Wave reserves the right to decline any submission that does not align with our values, guidelines, or community standards.

Contact

Questions? Reach out to us at next.wave.425@gmail.com, and we will answer your questions as soon as possible.