

Introductory comments to the 2019 Kipling Awards

by

Vincent Panella, Kipling Awards Judge

Thanks to all those who encourage young people to read and write.

Without being preachy or pontificating, here are some quick remarks before the awards are announced.

Reading and writing expand the mind and validate other realities. This is a call for parents, teachers and young writers to keep neural paths open that are sorely threatened by the digital world.

Writing is an expression of both logic and the imagination. You can write just for yourself, which is a great way to clarify what you're thinking; but you can also write for a reader, and if you do that – as in this Kipling exercise - then in a way the writing isn't yours, and the trick is to bring the reader along on your journey.

This is why clear writing is clear thinking.

So for all of you here, especially teachers and parents, congratulate each other for this good work, encourage reading, encourage word games, encourage keeping a journal, read together, recite together, have fun with words. Bury yourselves in books. The English language has more words than any other on the planet – and our ethnic diversity ensures that American English will stay alive, and by alive I mean that our language changes constantly as new words are added and old ones take a breather. So we can all help in this process – as all these wonderful students have done - by using the touchstone of Kipling – such a fertile and prolific writer - to give our language a workout.

So for all, keep up the good work.