REFLECTIONS PROGRAM 2025-2026

Arts Category Guidelines | Music Composition

MUSIC COMPOSITION is the process of creating a new piece of music. The composer (student submitting entry) is a person who expresses their own thoughts and ideas through the use of sound. *A recording of the composition must be included.*

To portray your original composition, consider the following musical styles and instruments: A cappella, blues, choral, country, electronic, hip hop, jazz, Latin, musical, orchestral, pop, R&B, religious, rock, symphonic/concert band and traditional. All instruments, sounds, styles and combinations are accepted.

Whether an entry displays formal composition technique or a simple approach, it will be judged primarily on how well the student uses their artistic vision to portray the theme, originality and creativity. **Consider structure, melody, rhythm, instruments, lyrics, emotion, etc. to show a clear relation to the theme.**

Digital technology and/or software can be used to develop, enhance and/or present an entry but may not provide the primary design and/or concept. Entrants must use the "Additional Details" field to *provide a brief description of the tools and methods used* in the creation process, including any generative elements.

Audio recording (required for all entries):

- Student composers are not required to perform their composition and may submit an entry performed by an individual, group and/or make use of a sound library generated performance of a composed score.
- Software may be used to produce an audio recording. *Entries containing algorithmic composition techniques are not accepted.*

Music score/notation (required for middle and high school grade divisions only):

- Middle and high school grade divisions must include music score/notation, either traditional or tablature, or a written reflective statement (100 words or less).
- If submitting a reflective statement, *it does not replace the required entry artist statement.* The reflective statement must be distinct from the artist statement and must provide a technical musical explanation of how the music was created. Whereas the artist statement emphasizes the Reflections theme, *a reflective statement emphasizes the musical elements in the creative process.*
- Notation software may be used to create a score. Whether the score is hand-written or software-generated, appropriate instrumentation and voicing are required for the performance.

Copyright: Use of copyrighted material is prohibited. Plagiarized entries will be disqualified.

Submission Requirements

- Only new pieces of artwork inspired by the theme may be submitted.
- Each entry must be the original work of one student only.
- Notation is required for the middle and high school divisions. Accepted file formats: PDF.
- Audio recording must not exceed 5 minutes in length and 1,000 MB (1,000 megabytes).
- Accepted file formats: MP3, WAV.
- Submit artwork and student entry form according to your PTA's instructions.

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All participants must also follow the official rules for participation.

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