

# Contest E :: Feature Writing

2017 KSPA State Contest



## DIRECTIONS

Failure to follow these directions may result in disqualification from the contest without refund. **Please read, listen and follow carefully.**

1. Please complete the first page of the packet, including your school code and your name using the bubble chart provided.
2. Please take time to write your student code in the top right corner of each page you will use for your writing in this contest.
3. Please do not include your name or the name of your high school on the entry at all. If you do, your entry will be disqualified.
4. You are to write a story of approximately 350 words.
  - a. Please use the information provided below. The writer should determine which information is relevant and important to the story. Students may write in pencil or pen. Students may use dictionary, thesaurus and/or the Associated Press style manual. The use of personal listening devices, recording devices, cell phones, computers or other electronics is prohibited.
5. When you are finished with the writing, please bring this entire packet to the proctors at the front of the room **and remain at the table until they have checked your entry.**
6. Please leave the room quietly. Congratulations on writing well done!

## DESCRIPTION

You are a member of Sunflower High School's journalism staff. Your editor has asked you to write a feature story with the information provided.

## SCHOOL INFO

**Name:** Sunflower High School

**Location:** Clinton, Kansas

**Mascot:** Mighty Buffalo

**Enrollment:** 800 (grades 9-12)

**School colors:** yellow and brown

**Yearbook:** The Sunflower

**Newspaper:** Sunflower News

## Contest Info

This is an on-site contest.

Do not put your name on the entry.

If you do, your entry will be disqualified.

Students may not request help or advice from any person other than the KSPA Executive Director Eric Thomas at

[staff@kspaonline.org](mailto:staff@kspaonline.org), and that advice must be requested before the start of the contest.

All work must be solely that of the contestant.

**While talking to a friend, you hear about the hidden life of Sally Carter, a physics teacher at your school:**

**Interview with Sally Carter, physics teacher at Sunflower High School**

- “I have worked at the school for 9 years now. This is the only school I have ever worked at. And I was a student here before I graduated in 2004. It feels like home here. Such a welcoming place each day. Everyone knows my name. I know everyone’s name and know most people’s moms, dads, sisters, brothers, aunts and uncles.”
- “Teaching physics is a blast because of all of the hands-on experimentation. You get to drop things, shoot things, hit things . . . any thing with forces and vectors gets me way to pumped up. I know most people think it’s dorky, but I love it.”
- “One time when we were doing this velocity experiment, I had students playing with cars. They were rolling them down a ramp toward this foam block. The whole thing, that entire experiment, reminds me of sky diving in such a specific way that I have trouble explaining.”
- “The first time that I parachuted out of a plane it was to celebrate during a bachelorette party with my friends and sisters. And no, they don’t let you skydive if you have been drinking. We were celebrating my wedding in 2008. It just seemed like a crazy thing to do – way more fun than Vegas.”
- “When I am falling through the air, I can’t help but to think about physics. It’s like, I am seeing all of the vectors and angles and forces and wind speed. I am diagramming it in my mind, almost like I am sketching and making notes. All of this while I am falling from an airplane. I just can’t let go of physics. I’m always seeing it. And yes, I know it is bananas that I can’t turn that part of my brain off. But for me, that is what is fun about it.”
- “The first thing that gets me truly amp-ed up to jump is when the plane’s engine starts when we are on the runway. As soon as that happens, I don’t know, I think my heart skips a few beats, or maybe it speeds up. Or maybe it’s just something.”
- “When the door to the plane opens and we are thousands of feet up in the air, my stomach drops. And I love it. All of those uncontrollable physical experiences, they are human and super intense. I love living on that line where you can control some things about what you are doing, but other stimuli are just so intense that you can’t control it.”
- “The wind whipping through the open door of the plane almost feels like it could suck you out. I like to stand in the doorway for as long as the instructors will allow me. I love feeling all of the forces acting on me. It’s really like nothing else.”
- “And then I land on the ground and immediately look up in the sky, because I want to do it all over again. Like, right away!”

**Facts from interview with Carter**

- Has completed 27 jumps and likes to celebrate the start of each school year and the end of each school year with a jump
- Is beginning to work toward certification to become an instructor of skydiving
- Usually jumps outside of North Clinton in planes that take off from North Clinton Municipal Airport. The company that does skydiving there is Watch Out Below, Inc.
- Carter is also the freshman girls soccer coach, the moderator of the Photography Club and the science department head

**Interview with Nancy Coleman, Owner of Watch Out Below, Inc.**

- “We have been in business for 18 years, helping people get over their fear of heights and giving them the biggest rush of their lives. We have a fleet of three planes, some of them are used for private travel, but two of them can be used for skydiving when we have requests. Our most common drop area is East of North Clinton where we have an arrangement with a soybean farmer that we can drop onto his land. We try to hit places where we won’t damage too many crops.”
- “I have known Sally for years now and she is one of our greatest customers, but I really should call her a booster. She is always pushing business our way and telling people how much fun this is. I don’t think that it’s an exaggeration to say that she sends us 20 percent of our new business. One of these days we are going to need to start paying her. Seriously. I mean, we already give her free jumps for referrals. But we might need to pay her . . . Oops, I hope she doesn’t hear me say that. [laughing]”
- “The cost for a tandem skydive is \$249 but if you want to have video, then it is \$348. And who doesn’t want to see themselves falling from 14,000 feet? If you want to be trained and jump solo, it is a bit more, but so incredible and worth it. That costs \$349, or \$448 with video. Of course, Sally has been a Level 1 solo skydiver for years.”

**Interview with Chemistry teacher Helen Martin**

- “No way. No way. No way. You simply could not get me out there on a plane and convince me to jump out almost three miles above the earth. Sorry . . . it ain’t happening.”

**Interview with principal Isaac Whitcomb**

- “Sally would be the first teacher that I would assume is a skydiver. I mean, her intensity and her risk-taking (even in the classroom) is legendary. She is such a bunch of energy all of the time.”

