

## Guidelines For the Lakewood Literary Competition

This competition is open to all Lakewood High School students. Each student may participate in up to two of the following categories: poetry, personal narrative, and short fiction.

**Deadline:** All entries must be submitted by Friday April 14<sup>th</sup> (end of school day). Submissions should be given to Mr. Kadwell in room 28.

**Format:** Students must submit **three** copies of each entry. Manuscripts must be typed in 12 point Times New Roman (or similar style) and saved as a Microsoft Word document. Do **NOT** put your name or identifying marks on any entries. Failure to comply with the above rules will result in a disqualification. If turnitin.com is available, entries will need to be submitted to the database. All entries that are not properly formatted may be disqualified.

Format basics- 12 point font print size; one-inch margins on all sides; double-spaced; font should be Courier New or Times New Roman

Language and content of all entries must be appropriate and abide by LHS standards and policies. At the discretion of the judges, entries deemed inappropriate will be removed from consideration.

### **Reception and Awards:**

An awards reception will be held at the conclusion of the competition. Students who participated will be invited to attend.

## **Judging**

There will be three judges for each category. At least one judge will be an LHS English teacher. The second and third judge in each category may be another teacher, sponsor representative, or community member. The judges will not know the authors of the entries. The titles and authors will be recorded and numbered when the entries are submitted in order to identify the winning manuscripts.

### **Prizes:**

First, second, and third place prizes will be awarded in each category. Honorable mentions will be awarded as entries warrant. **Monetary awards will be given in each category.**

### **Recognition:**

Winning entries will be revealed and prizes awarded at the end of the year school-wide assembly recognizing student achievement.

"I wish our clever young poets would remember my homely definitions of prose and poetry; that is prose; words in their best order; poetry; the best words in the best order" - S.T. Coleridge from *Specimens of the Table Talk of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*

## Poetry Category

**Length:** A maximum three pages of poetry will be accepted for submission. Rhymed poetry, blank verse, and free verse may be submitted. Poetry prizes may be awarded according to single poems or a collection of poems according to judges' discretion. All poetry entries must be typed, but may be single-spaced.

### Evaluation Criteria:

#### Quality of Thought:

Does the poem display originality of thought?

Does the poem present a significant and interesting idea?

Do the ideas within a poem (or collection of poems) have coherence and focus?

#### Quality of Language:

Is the language condensed, precise, and evocative?

Are there original, effective choices of detail?

Does the language help to give validity to the poem?

Are figurative language and stylistic devices (symbolism, metaphor, imagery, irony, tone) employed effectively?

#### Overall Effectiveness:

Do the form and meaning complement each other?

Does the poem create an interesting image or communicate a lasting idea/feeling?

Does the poem have impact on the reader? Is it a satisfying whole?

Is the poem free from surface errors (spelling, grammatical, punctuation, etc.)?

*Suggestion: If you have not already done so, read some established poets. Consider Elizabeth Bishop, Marilyn Hacker, Mona Van Duyn, Ted Kooser, Dylan Thomas, Billy Collins, Robert Frost, Philip Larkin, Seamus Heaney.*

## Personal Narrative Essay Category

The personal narrative is an essay category that is focused on short form autobiographical or memoir style writing. Personal narratives are typically informal in tone and subject. This popular narrative style of essay writing seeks to capture a moment from experience and expand upon the universal nature of the experience. It blends the art of essay writing with the art of storytelling. The best personal narrative essays are those that manage to discuss a personal incident in a manner that is accessible to many people.

**Length:** Maximum 5 pages, properly formatted. Refer to page one for format guidelines.

### Evaluation Criteria:

#### Quality of Thought

Is there a clear and interesting idea behind the narrative?

Does the essay demonstrate some originality of thought?

Are the ideas clearly and coherently presented?

Does the essay move you in some way – with the cogency of its argument, its humor, its forcefulness of detail or its poignancy?

#### Organization and Development

Is there an effective introduction?

Does the essay progress logically and contain effective transitions?

Is the narrative accessible, or does it only appeal to a limited group (those closest to you or the event)?

Is there a strong and logical conclusion?

#### Quality of Language

Are the word choices appropriate and precise?

Is the tone effective and representative of the nature of the narrative?

Is the writer's language succinct and economic?

Is the writer's voice natural, consistent, interesting?

Are grammar and usage correct?

Are spelling, punctuation, and other surface features correct?



### Overall Effectiveness

Does the essay hold your interest throughout?

Does the essay deal with a significant topic in a competent and thoughtful way?

Is the essay fully developed?

Is the essay believable and convincing?

## **Short Story Category**

### **General Short Story Guidelines:**

Stories should be no longer than 7 pages in length. Longer manuscripts will not be accepted for consideration.

Stories may have either adults or children as their intended audience.

Stories should demonstrate effective use and development of the traditional short story elements: plot, setting, characters, theme, tone, and atmosphere.

See page 1 for other format guidelines.

### Evaluation Criteria

#### Originality

Is the story fresh and interesting?

#### Character and Plot Development

Is there a satisfying combination of characters and plot, which gives validity to the story and sustains the reader's interest?

Are the characters believable? Does the reader respond to them?

Is the plot well developed with an effective conflict, which is resolved?

#### Language

Is the writer's voice consistent and interesting?

Does the writer effectively employ conventional literary techniques?

Is the language appropriate to the story?

Is the language mechanically correct (or appropriately incorrect)?

### Overall Effectiveness

Is the story free from surface errors (spelling, grammar, punctuation, etc.)?

Does the story hold the reader's interest throughout?

Does the writer combine all of the short story elements consistently and effectively?

*Suggestion: Think carefully about your choice of narrator. Remember that the narrator is our window into the story.*

**A Word of Caution:** While fan fiction can be rewarding to write and read, if the judges are not familiar with the work you are referencing, it may be passed over in favor of a piece that is more accessible.