

2008–2009 PTA Reflections Program  
MUSICAL COMPOSITION

Theme: “Wow!”

Students must adhere to the general participation rules as well as the following Musical Composition Rules.

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**Description**

A musical composition entry may be for voice, instruments, or a combination of voice and instruments. Lyrics may or may not be included in vocal compositions. The composition is not to exceed five minutes. The entry must relate to the current Reflections Program theme.

The use of composition software is permitted. Students are strongly discouraged from submitting highly edited MIDI sequences or audio files. The recording submitted must capture performers in real-time. The entry may not include imported MIDI or other source files, or use algorithmic composition software.

Use of notation software for the purpose of creating scores and printed parts is permitted. Whether the score is handwritten or computer-generated, appropriate instrumentation and voicing are required for the performance.

Whether an entry uses a variety of techniques or a simple approach, it will be judged primarily on how well the student uses his or her artistic vision to portray the theme. A well-developed concept is more important than technique.

**Originality**

Each entry must be the original work of one student only. An adult may not alter the creative integrity of a student's work. Because the program is designed to encourage and recognize each student's individual creativity, help from an adult or collaboration with other students is not allowed. Use of copyrighted material is prohibited. Musical composition entrants are not to borrow from copyrighted material.

*Plagiarism* is defined as taking and using another person's ideas, writings, or inventions as one's own. Plagiarized entries will be disqualified and returned to the students.

**Student Entry Form**

All participants are required to fill out in its entirety and sign the Student Entry Form. Each participant is also required to submit an artist statement to describe how his or her piece relates to the theme. While there is no required length, the artist statement is mandatory for all entries. Students who have not completely filled out the entry form will not be eligible to participate in the program. In situations where the child cannot fill out the entry form or write legibly, a parent may sign his or her child's name.

Students have the option of placing the titles of their works on the Student Entry Form and must answer a few questions about how they created their works (see Required Information).

**Return of Artwork**

The national PTA office does not return musical composition entries.

## **Judging**

All national entries are judged on artistic merit, creativity, and interpretation of the theme. Due to the diversity of musical genres, the interpretation of the theme is weighted very heavily in judging.

## **Presentation**

Whether a student must submit musical notation is determined by his or her grade division:

- Primary and Intermediate: No notation is required. Iconic notation may be submitted. Iconic notation is “made-up” notation.
- Middle/Junior and Senior: Notation, either traditional, tablature, or electronic, is required. The notation should aid the listener and serve as a guide through the piece.
- Adults may not assist. Physically challenged students may dictate to another person who may write the notation. The quality or accuracy of the notation and performance support the musical idea, but they are not considered judging criteria.

## **Format**

- Entries may not exceed five minutes.
- Students are not required to perform their own compositions.
- A student’s composed work may be performed by a group.
- Score size:
  - Entries should be no larger than 11 inches by 14 inches.
  - Band and orchestra compositions may be 11 inches by 16 inches.
  - Do not mount or bind the scores.

## **Recording Requirements**

- All grade divisions must submit a CD recording of the composition.
- Submit the CD in a plastic or cardboard container; identify both the CD and the container with the student’s name, grade division, state, and year.
- Pack the CD with the score (if required) in a large envelope. Write the student’s name on the back of each page of the score in case pages become separated.
- Secure the Student Entry Form to the outside of the envelope with masking tape.

## **Recommendations for Quality Recordings**

- Make the room you record in as quiet as possible. Close windows and turn off all noise-making devices in the room (air conditioners, fans, telephones, etc.). Do not place the recording device on top of an instrument or speakers.
- Don’t record at too loud (in the red zone on the meter) or too soft (meter barely moving) a level.
- Record a short test and listen to it while watching the meter. If needed, improve recording quality by changing the record volume or microphone location.
- Return to the beginning of the CD and record two seconds of silence; then start performing your composition. Finish with another two seconds of silence.

## **Required Information**

On the Student Entry Form, please answer the following:

- Who performed your composition?
- Did you use traditional instrumentation or a synthesizer?
- If you used MIDI, what software and hardware did you use to compose your work?
- If you included lyrics, how do they work with your composition?

## **Required Artist Statement**

On the Student Entry Form, describe what inspired you to create this work and how it relates to the theme. This is required for all grade divisions.