

# MUSICAL COMPOSITION RULES

Theme: **"Wow!"**

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

## 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.

Use of composition software is permitted. Students are strongly discouraged from submitting highly edited MIDI sequences or audio files. Submitted recording must capture performers in real-time. 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 their 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 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.

## Entry Form

All participants are required to fill out in its entirety and sign the Official Entry Form. Students who have not completely filled out the 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 their child's name.

Students have the option of placing the titles of their works on the Official 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.

## Presentation

- Students must submit musical notation as required by their grade divisions.
  - 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.

- 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" x 14"
  - Band and orchestra compositions may be 11" x 16".
  - Do not mount or bind the scores.
- Recording requirements
  - All grade divisions must submit an CD recording of the composition.
  - Submit the CD in a plastic or cardboard container; identify the CD and container with the student's name, grade division, state, and year.
  - Pack the CD and score in a large envelope.
  - Secure Official 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 (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 Official Entry Form, please answer the following:

1. Who performed your composition?
2. Did you use traditional instrumentation or a synthesizer?
3. If you used MIDI, what software and hardware was used to compose your work?
4. If you included lyrics, how do they work with your composition?

## Required Artist Statement

A statement from the artist is now required on the Official Entry Form, describe what inspired you to create this work.