



**National Federation of Press Women
2012 High School Communications Competition**

January 2012

2012 NFPW HIGH SCHOOL COMMUNICATIONS CONTEST GUIDELINES

The National Federation of Press Women's High School Communications Contest inspires students to do their best work, which earns them recognition and reflects well on their teachers and advisers. The National Association of Secondary School Principals has placed the contest on its "NASSP National Advisory List of Contests and Activities," which can be found on the website www.nassp.org.

In the contest, students may enter work in one of 18 categories: Editorial, Opinion, News Story, Feature Story, Sports Story, Columns, Feature Photo, Sports Photo, Cartooning, Review, Graphics/Photo Illustration, Single-Page Layout, Double-Truck Layout, Environment, Video News Story, Video Feature Story, Video Sports Story and Yearbook. Each winner will receive a certificate, with first-place winners also receiving \$100.

Inquire about state contests early in the school year, because state deadlines are usually in January or February, which allows time for judging and processing for the national contest by the end of March. The student's work must have been completed **between February 15, 2011, and February 28, 2012.**

National student winners, their parents and advisers are invited to attend the NFPW High School Communications Contest Awards Luncheon, which will be held in September 2012 during the annual NFPW conference in Arizona. Some affiliates provide financial assistance to students who attend the conference to accept their awards.

General Requirements for Entries

- Entries must be the work of students enrolled in grades 9-12 during the current school year or the last semester of the senior year for students' work published after the current deadline.
- Students must enter in the affiliate contest for their state. Students may enter as At-Large entries only if their state does not have an affiliate OR if their state's affiliate does not have a contest.
- Students may submit only one entry per category (except for the Columns category, which requires **three** samples of work per entry); students are welcome to enter as many categories as they wish. Students should decide which category best fits their work, as each piece may only be entered in one category.
- Entries published in a high school or community newspaper, printed and/or electronic (online) are eligible. Entries published in a yearbook are eligible for submission in the Yearbook category.
- For printed publications, submit two tear sheets (**the entire page** on which the article or graphic appears) for each entry (including two copies of each of the three columns submitted in the Columns category); either an original or a photocopy is fine. For online publications, submit two copies of the article including the URL and date of publication. For photos, submit two copies of the photo as published.

- On your entry, indicate which article or photo is to be considered by putting a check mark or an X by it, using a marker or highlighter. Entries submitted in the Single-Page Layout and Double-Truck Layout categories do not need to be marked.
- If an entry is the work of more than one student, all names should be on the entry form.
- Entry forms and student work should be **paper-clipped** together – **NO staples, sleeves or binders, please!**
- Each state contest director should e-mail a “master list” of student entries from her state including student name, hometown/school, category and entry title, along with the state’s entries; entries from state contest directors into the national contest must be postmarked by **April 7, 2012**.
- First-place entries in the state contests should be mailed to:

Karen Rowley
 c/o PAR
 4664 Jamestown Ave.
 Suite 300
 Baton Rouge, La. 70808
kmrowley059@gmail.com
 225-892-0684

- First-place entries in the At-Large Contest must be postmarked by **March 7, 2012**, and should be mailed to:

Bonnie Atwood
 4808 Monumental St.
 Richmond, VA 23226-1204
bonatwood@verizon.net
 804-358-3745

CRITERIA CONSIDERED BY JUDGES

1. Editorial – This entry appears on the editorial page of the paper. It is the voice of the paper. An editorial is *not a bylined personal column*, but may be signed on behalf of an editorial board. The editorial will be judged on the basis of the clarity of its point, the relevance of its subject matter to its audience, and the soundness and persuasiveness of its argument.

2. Opinion – This is the voice of a single writer, not to be confused with an editorial. It can focus on items of a personal nature, social issues or the happenings of the world. It can be insightful and/or critical, but not libelous. Opinion pieces will be evaluated on clearness of style, sound reasoning and the effort to influence reader’s opinion in what the writer believes is the right direction. An opinion article is always bylined.

3. News Story – The writer should show initiative in obtaining a story that presents new information or a different angle on published information or past events. Judging will be based on general organization, clarity of lead, writing style, readability and impact.

4. Feature Story – The story should focus on an in-depth topic of interest to readers. Copy will be judged on unusual aspects of the material or the handling, writing style and richness of detail, and the use of quotes, readability and thoroughness. The material may be a personality profile or a human interest piece.

5. Sports Story – The story should demonstrate imagination and good application of sports-writing style in advance, follow-up, summary or feature coverage of sports events or sports participants. Avoid play-by-play rehash.

6. Columns – Each entry must consist of three (3) columns. Two of the columns should have been published consecutively and the third column can be whichever one the writer selects. The columns can be analytical scrutiny, satire or personal comment on general or special subjects. The columns should entertain and/or educate, and the writer may use in-depth knowledge, research, study or expertise.

7. Feature Photo – The photo must spark an emotional response in the viewer, and have eye-catching subject matter and storytelling qualities. No posed shots. Judging will be based on the photo's quality as published. Original prints are not required. Images must not be digitally enhanced or retouched; cropping, toning, contrast and red-eye removal are the only electronic adjustments that are allowed.

8. Sports Photo – The photo should be easy to “read” and cropped for impact. It should show the peak of the action, or capture an exciting moment or a storytelling facial expression. No posed shots. Judging is based on the quality of the photo as published. Images must not be digitally enhanced or retouched; cropping, toning, contrast and red-eye removal are the only electronic adjustments that are allowed.

9. Cartooning – Copy may be generated by computer graphics or freehand and may be a comic strip or cartoon. Judging will consider the text or caption and the use of concept and artistic style. The subject matter is unrestricted. For example, any political, economic or social issue may be covered, or any human relations issue or other topic.

10. Review – The entry should be of interest to the publication's readers. Subject may be art or dramatic event or music. The article should include some critical analysis and show the writer's knowledge of the subject. The review should be interesting, creatively written and rich in style.

11. Graphics/Photo Illustration – The entry may be created freehand or electronically. Judging will be on creativity, uniqueness, clarity of relationship to an article or publication and how the graphic contributes to the visual enhancement of the subject matter. Unsigned work requires adviser's verification.

12. Single-Page Layout – The entry may be from a desktop publishing project or from the traditional printing production methods. (A double-truck is not a single page.) Judges will consider any number of graphic elements, typography, photos, illustrations and color. Judging will be on creative and effective use of elements in drawing reader interest and supporting the content of the article(s). Unsigned work requires adviser's verification.

13. Double-Truck Layout – The entry is a two-page layout (centerfold) incorporating an odd number of pictures made up as a single unit, with the usual margin between the two facing pages eliminated. Judging will be based on same elements as for single-page layout. Unsigned work requires adviser's verification.

14. Environment – Judging will be based on how the article, layout, graphic or photograph “educates the public about environmental issues or concerns.” This award is given in conjunction with the San Francisco Press Club Environment Award Fund.

15. Video Web News Story – This entry is a video produced for airing on television or via the Web. Judging will be based on how well the student has used video and narration/reporting to obtain a news story and present new information. DVD is the only acceptable format. DVD should play on a consumer DVD player or PC. Entry should indicate the file format and the Mac or PC program in which the file was created.

16. Video Feature Story – This entry is a video produced for airing on television or via the Web. Judging will be based on how well the student has used video and narration/reporting to give an in-depth or unusual look at a topic or person of interest. DVD is the only acceptable format. DVD should play on a consumer DVD player or PC. Entry should indicate the file format and the Mac or PC program in which the file was created.

17. Video Sports Story – This entry is a video produced for airing on television or via the Web. Judging will be based on how well the student has used video and narration/reporting to cover a sports event or participant. DVD is the only acceptable format. DVD should play on a consumer DVD player or PC. Entry should indicate the file format and the Mac or PC program in which the file was created.

18. Yearbook – This is a new category. The entry may be a single photo OR a single-page layout OR a double-truck layout OR copy from a section of the yearbook. Judging will be based on creativity, effectiveness, impact and clarity.