REFLECTIONS PROGRAM 2025-2026

Category Guidelines | Dance Choreography

DANCE CHOREOGRAPHY is the act of creating movement. The student submitting the entry must be the choreographer. The choreographer may be the performer or one of the performers but does not have to perform in the entry.

To portray your original choreography, consider the following styles and ensembles: ballet, contemporary, hip hop, jazz, tap, folk Dance, religious dance, dance ensembles (color guard/indoor guard), ice skating/dancing and gymnastics-floor routine.

Whether an entry displays formal dance technique or a simple approach, it will be judged primarily on how well the student uses their artistic vision to portray the theme, originality and creativity. **Consider use of choreographic style and techniques, background song(s), props and the location to show a clear relation of the dance choreography to the theme.**

Copyright: Plagiarized entries will be disqualified. Use of copyrighted material is not acceptable, except for the following:
- If background music is used, *it must be cited on the entry form.*

Submission Requirements
- Only new pieces of artwork inspired by the theme may be submitted.
- Each entry must be the original work of one student only.
- Entries with added graphics over the video, including lettering, are not accepted.
- Cite background music (if any) on the student entry form.
- Videos must not exceed 5 minutes or 1,000 MB (1,000 megabytes).
- Accepted file formats: MP4, MOV, AVI.
- Submit artwork and student entry form according to your PTA's guidelines.

All participants must also follow the official rules for participation

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REFLECTIONS PROGRAM 2025-2026

Category Guidelines | Film Production

FILM PRODUCTION is the process of making a film. The ***producer*** (student submitting the entry) is not required to appear in the film but if the student chooses to, a camera tripod may be used. All screenwriting, directing and editing must be done by the student producer. All entries must be original student footage. *PowerPoint presentations are prohibited.*

Consider the following styles to portray your original work of fiction or nonfiction:

- **Animation:** Demonstrates motion by sequencing still objects or using computer-generated graphics.
- **Narrative:** Tells a fictional story developed by the student.
- **Documentary:** Presents facts and information.
- **Experimental:** Explores movement, light and montage.
- **Multimedia:** Uses a combination of different contents (text, audio, still images, animation, etc.).

An explanation of the storyline and/or the significance of the film style might be a useful addition to the artist statement. Whether an entry displays use of technologies or a simple approach, it will be judged primarily on how well the student uses his or her artistic vision to portray the theme, originality and creativity. *Software can be used to create an entry but only to enhance and/or present the work, not provide the primary design.*

Copyright: Entry may include public places, well-known products, trademarks or certain other copyrighted material as long as that copyrighted material is nonessential to the subject matter of the piece and/or is a smaller element of a whole. Use of background music must be cited on the student entry form.

Suggestions for Audio/Visual Quality:

- Use a tripod to hold the camera still
- Make sure there is plenty of lighting, especially if shooting indoors
- Turn off all noise-making devices in the room (air conditioners, fans, telephones, etc.)
- Record a short test and listen to it. If needed, change the record volume or microphone location.
- Make sure the background music (if any) is audible on the recording.
- Allow for two seconds of silence at the beginning and end of your recording.

Submission Requirements

- Only new pieces of artwork inspired by the theme may be submitted.
- Each entry must be the original work of one student only.
- Video must not exceed 5 minutes in length and 1,000 MB(1,000 megabyte) in file size.
- Accepted file formats include: .mp4, .mov, .avi.
- Use of background music must be cited on the student entry form.
- If necessary, label CD/DVD/flashdrive with title of artwork, arts category and division.
- Submit film and student entry form according to your PTA's instructions.

All participants must also follow Official Rules for Participation

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REFLECTIONS PROGRAM 2025-2026

Category Guidelines | Literature

LITERATURE is the art of writing. The author (student submitting entry) is a person who expresses their own thoughts and ideas through the use of words. Authors submit a single literary work, handwritten or typed, using grade-appropriate grammar, punctuation and spelling.

To portray your original work of fiction or nonfiction, consider the following literary styles: prose, poetry, drama, reflective essay, narrative, short story. *Collections of literary work are not accepted* (e.g., poems, short stories).

Whether an entry displays formal writing technique or a simple approach, it will be judged primarily on how well the student uses their artistic vision to portray the theme, originality and creativity. **Consider plot and characterization, setting and imagery, style, symbolism, etc. to show a clear relation to the theme.**

The following uses of dictation, transcription, illustration and translation are acceptable:
- Illustrated entries, including books, with pictures drawn by the student author are acceptable; however, *only literary content is judged*.
- Entries may be typed by another person if the original work or a copy of the original work is attached.
- If the student artist is unable, entries may be dictated to another person and printed or typed in exact words as provided by the student.
- Students for whom English is not their first language may submit entries in their own language. *An interpretive translation in English must accompany the entry.*
- Translators/transcribers should make every attempt to retain the same level of language and accuracy that is reflected in the student's original work.

Copyright: Use of copyrighted material is prohibited. Plagiarized entries will be disqualified.

Submission Requirements
- Only new pieces of artwork inspired by the theme may be submitted.
- Each entry must be the original work of one student only.
- Entry must not exceed 2,000 words.
- Handwritten and typed entries are accepted on 8.5x11 paper (one sided only). Number each page.
- Accepted file format: PDF.
- Include any student information *on back of entry*.
- Submit artwork and student entry form according to your PTA's instructions.

All participants must also follow the official rules for participation.

REFLECTIONS PROGRAM 2025-2026

Category Guidelines | Music Composition

MUSIC COMPOSITION is the process of creating a new piece of music. The composer (student submitting entry) is a person who expresses their own thoughts and ideas through the use of sound. *A recording of the composition must be included.*

To portray your original composition, consider the following musical styles and instruments: A cappella, blues, choral, country, electronic, hip hop, jazz, Latin, musical, orchestral, pop, R&B, religious, rock, symphonic/concert band and traditional. All instruments, sounds, styles and combinations are accepted.

Whether an entry displays formal composition technique or a simple approach, it will be judged primarily on how well the student uses their artistic vision to portray the theme, originality and creativity. **Consider structure, melody, rhythm, instruments, lyrics, emotion, etc. to show a clear relation to the theme.** Digital technology and/or software can be used to develop, enhance and/or present an entry but may not provide the primary design and/or concept. Entrants must use the "Additional Details" field to *provide a brief description of the tools and methods used* in the creation process, including any generative elements.

Audio recording (required for all entries):
- Student composers are not required to perform their composition and may submit an entry performed by an individual, group and/or make use of a sound library generated performance of a composed score.
- Software may be used to produce an audio recording. *Entries containing algorithmic composition techniques are not accepted.*

Music score/notation (required for middle and high school grade divisions only):
- Middle and high school grade divisions must include music score/notation, either traditional or tablature, or a written reflective statement (100 words or less).
- If submitting a reflective statement, *it does not replace the required entry artist statement.* The reflective statement must be distinct from the artist statement and must provide a technical musical explanation of how the music was created. Whereas the artist statement emphasizes the Reflections theme, *a reflective statement emphasizes the musical elements in the creative process.*
- Notation software may be used to create a score. Whether the score is hand-written or software-generated, appropriate instrumentation and voicing are required for the performance.

Copyright: Use of copyrighted material is prohibited. Plagiarized entries will be disqualified.

Submission Requirements
- Only new pieces of artwork inspired by the theme may be submitted.
- Each entry must be the original work of one student only.
- Notation is required for the middle and high school divisions. Accepted file formats: PDF.
- Audio recording must not exceed 5 minutes in length and 1,000 MB (1,000 megabytes).
- Accepted file formats: MP3, WAV.
- Submit artwork and student entry form according to your PTA's instructions.

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REFLECTIONS PROGRAM 2025-2026

Category Guidelines | Photography

PHOTOGRAPHY is the process of creating an image. The photographer (student submitting entry) is a person who captures their own thoughts and ideas with a camera. By focusing on objects using various lenses, filters and light sources, photographers may demonstrate the use of photographic techniques conventionally or digitally.

Accepted forms of photography include: A single photo, panoramic, photomontage (one print of multiple original photos), a multiple exposure, negative sandwich or photogram. Original black-and-white and color images.

Non-accepted forms of photography include: Entries with added graphics over the image, including lettering. Collages and collections of photos. Original film (negatives or transparencies) and multidimensional pieces.

Whether an entry displays use of technologies or a simple approach, it will be judged primarily on how well the student uses their artistic vision to portray the theme, originality and creativity. **Consider use of objects, lighting and the location to show a clear relation of the photo to the theme.**

Digital technology and/or software can be used to develop, enhance and/or present an entry but may not provide the primary design and/or concept. Entrants must use the "Additional Details" field to *provide a brief description of the tools and methods used* in the creation process, including any generative elements.

Copyright: Plagiarized entries will be disqualified. Use of copyrighted material, including any copyrighted cartoon characters, material downloaded from the internet, copyrighted photographs or stock images, is not acceptable, except for the following:

- Entries may include public places, well-known products, trademarks or certain other copyrighted material as long as that copyrighted material is incidental to the subject matter of the piece and/or is a smaller element of a whole. The resulting work cannot try to establish an association between the student and the trademark/business/material or influence the purchase/non-purchase of the trademarked good.

Submission Requirements

- Only new pieces of artwork inspired by the theme may be submitted.
- Each entry must be the original work of one student only.
- Print images: between 3x5 to 8x10 inches. Digital images: at least 640x960 pixels and 300 dpi resolution.
- Mounted prints must not exceed 11x14 inches, including matting. Framed photos are not accepted.
- Accepted file formats: JPEG, JPG, PNG.
- Include any student information *on back of entry.*
- Submit artwork and student entry form according to your PTA's instructions.

All participants must also follow the official rules for participation.

REFLECTIONS PROGRAM 2025-2026

Category Guidelines | Visual Arts

VISUAL ARTS include many art forms that are visual in nature. The artist (student submitting entry) is a person who captures their own thoughts and ideas to create a visual piece of art.

Accepted forms of visual art include: Architecture (2D/3D), carpentry, ceramics, collages, photographic collages (multiple photos cut/pasted), digital art and graphics (drawings/paintings/illustration), crafts, design, dioramas, drawing, fiberwork, jewelry, kites, metal etching/punch work, mobiles, painting, printmaking, sculpture and wind chimes. *Reproductions or enlargements of other artwork are not accepted.*

Whether an entry displays use of formal technique or a simple approach, it will be judged primarily on how well the student uses their artistic vision to portray the theme, originality and creativity. **Consider art form, use of color, texture, shape, proportion etc. to show a clear relation to the theme.**

Digital technology and/or software can be used to develop, enhance and/or present an entry but may not provide the primary design and/or concept. Entrants must use the "Additional Details" field to *provide a brief description of the tools and methods used* in the creation process, including any generative elements.

Copyright: Plagiarized entries will be disqualified. Use of copyrighted material, including any copyrighted cartoon characters, material downloaded from the internet, copyrighted photographs or stock images, is not acceptable, except for the following:

- Entries may include public places, well-known products, trademarks or certain other copyrighted material as long as that copyrighted material is incidental to the subject matter of the piece and/or is a smaller element of a whole. The resulting work cannot try to establish an association between the student and the trademark/business/material, or influence the purchase/non-purchase of the trademarked good.
- Entries may include portions of existing copyrighted works, such as photographs, magazine or digital media clippings and/or type cut out of a newspaper, as long as those portions of copyrighted works are used to create a completely new and different work of art.

Submission Requirements

- Only new pieces of artwork inspired by the theme may be submitted.
- Each entry must be the original work of one student only.
- *2D artwork (e.g., painting)* must include at least one digital image of artwork for judging. Dimensions must not exceed 24x30 inches, including matting. Paper entries must be mounted on sturdy material. Framed artwork is not accepted.
- *3D artwork (e.g., sculpture)* must include at least 3 photos of artwork at different angles. Artwork containing loose materials and/or requiring assembly/repair from transporting is not accepted.
- Accepted file formats: JPEG, JPG, PNG.
- Include any student information *on back of entry.*
- Submit artwork and student entry form according to your PTA's instructions.

All participants must also follow the official rules for participation.

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REFLECTIONS PROGRAM 2025-2026

Division Guidelines
Special Artist

SPECIAL ARTIST ELIGIBILITY. The National PTA Special Artist Division is an option for students with disabilities who receive services under IDEA or ADA: Section 504 to have the opportunity and accommodations they may need in order to participate fully in the program. The Special Artist Division offers modified rules and guidelines to ensure that every student has the chance to be part of the National PTA Reflections® program.

Who qualifies as a disabled individual under the law? The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) defines an individual with a disability as a person who: (1) Has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of the major life activities of that person; (2) Has a record of such an impairment; or (3) Is regarded as having such impairment.

HOW TO ENTER. Students who identify as having a disability have two ways to enter the National PTA Reflections® Program. All students may enter in only one division. Student Entry Form requires parent/legal guardian signatures.

Option 1. Enter in Grade-Level Divisions: Regardless of age, students with special needs may enter in the grade division most closely aligned to their functional abilities. Students may not receive assistance other than that which   is allowed for all children. The divisions are as follows: Primary (preschool – grade 2); Intermediate (grades 3-5);   Middle School (grades 6-8); High School (grades 9-12). *Students are recognized and awarded prizes as part of the   general student population without regard to special needs or challenges.*

Option 2. Enter in Special Artist Division: Eligible students entering the Special Artist Division create their own artwork, but may receive non-artistic accommodation and assistance from an adult. *Students are recognized and awarded prizes as part of the Special Artist Division.*

SPECIAL ARTIST GUIDELINES. Special artists should follow the general rules and guidelines outlined in the arts category student rules specific to their submissions, modified only by accommodations for individuals with disabilities. The accommodation, in general, should be both specific and limited to the student's disability.

Allowable Accommodations: Given the diverse range of physical and mental disabilities that exist, it would be impossible to outline specific accommodations for each and every disability, but the following provides a non- exhaustive list of allowable accommodations:

- o The Special Artist Division will not be divided by age or traditional school grade level.
- o Use of adaptive technology is allowed.
- o All submissions must be solely created by the special artist. However, a parent, teacher or other adult may assist the special artist with typing, holding a camera, etc.

Accommodations that are Not Allowed: Individuals providing assistance to special artists may not, in any way, involve themselves in the actual artistic process by:

REFLECTIONS PROGRAM 2025-2026

- o Personally selecting a title for artwork.
- o Writing, editing or interpreting a student's artist statement, story, poetry or script.
- o Choreographing a dance, composing music or writing lyrics.
- o Drawing, painting or personally creating a visual arts submission, choosing a camera angle, etc.

All participants must also follow Official Rules for Participation