



LOW HANGING FRUIT

EXTRA! EXTRA!

25 Years of Idaho Public Television & PBS Kids Writers Contest!

By Jeannie Standal & Cindy Lunte

Idaho Public Television has been providing quality, commercial-free programming to Idaho kids for 53 years. For 25 of those years, they have offered the PBS KIDS Writers Contest to Idaho's Kindergarten through third grade students and teachers. Students win prizes, accolades, and bragging rights, but what are some other benefits of student writing contests?

PBS Kids Writers Contest



Structure:

The direction to “write about anything” or “make this anything you want” can be overwhelming to kids and adults alike. Having contest parameters to narrow the possibilities can help students do their best writing and avoid being lost in a sea of possibilities. Prompts like “think about something funny or scary that happened to you and write a story about it” can help writers get started.

An audience beyond the teacher:

According to Kim Kautzer at WriteShop.com, writing with different audiences in mind helps students create clear and concise writing. Entering a variety of contests with differing audiences can help kids hone those skills.¹ They also provide an excellent opportunity to discuss ideas like real vs. intended audience.

Assignments with Real-World Applications:

It can sometimes feel like writing assignments are busy work for students, resulting in something like “why do I have to do this?” with accompanying eye roll, rather than an investment in writing. A contest provides a more tangible goal with a real deadline, which can motivate students to do their best work.

Builds Confidence and Tenacity:

Virtually no one wins writing contests or is published on the first try— not winning is an opportunity to learn and try again. Remind students that J.K. Rowling received loads of rejections before finding a publisher for Harry Potter.

Postmark deadline for contest entries is **March 23, 2019**. Good luck!

¹Kautzer, K. (2009, February 16). Participating in Writing Contests Can Benefit Your Kids. Retrieved February 15, 2019, from <https://writeshop.com/kids-writing-contests-benefits/>

LINKS TO MORE LEARNING



PBS Kids Writers Contest Entry:

Learn about all the rules, eligibility requirements, and entry procedures on the Idaho Public Television website.

<http://idahoptv.org/kids/writers.cfm>

Know about NaNoWriMo for kids?

If you have kids that love writing and entering contests, introduce them to NaNoWriMo Young Writers Program. The program provides writing tips, resources, pep talks and more. The big event happens every November, and they also hold smaller challenges throughout the year!

<https://ywp.nanowrimo.org/>

Contests for Older Students

What about the older kids? Check out this list!

<https://www.weareteachers.com/student-writing-contests/>

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS



Win Prizes!

For the library: Each school that submits entries will receive a book for the library's collection. Home school submissions will have a book donated in the student's name to their local public library.

For the student: The 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place winners of each region and grade level can win books, toys, and a \$100 contribution to an IDEAL college savings account. All students receive a personalized certificate and letter.

DIGITAL TOOLS



Novelist Plus K-8

The foundation of good writing is reading. Find the titles that interest students at Novelist.

Lili.org

Parent Educational Resource Center

Provides free resources to parents looking to help students build skills.

<https://perc.sde.idaho.gov/>



