

MUSIC COMPOSITION is the process of creating a new piece of music. The composer (e.g., student submitting entry) is a person who expresses their own thoughts and ideas through the use of sound. *Entries in the middle and high school grade divisions must include music score/notation.*



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.
- **To show a clear relation to the theme**, use structure, melody, rhythm, instruments, lyrics, emotion, etc. to show a clear relation to the theme.
- **Explore new methods** and make use of instruments, sounds, styles and combinations. *All are accepted.*
- **Do NOT say or include artist full name on any part of the recording!**

Audio Quality Tips

- **Find a good room:** Choose a room that doesn't have too many hard surfaces or tight spaces. An uncluttered room works best.
- **Use a good microphone:** If you can, use an external microphone or a portable recorder for better sound quality.
- **Turn off noise reduction:** If you're using your computer's microphone, turn off noise reduction. It can make your instrument sound weird.
- **Remove background noise:** Make the room quiet by turning off things like air conditioners, fans and phones. Also, watch out for squeaky floors and noisy electronics.
- **Do a test recording:** Record a short test and listen to it. Make sure the record volume is not too high or too low.
- **Test microphone placement:** Don't put the microphone on top of instruments or speakers. Try different positions and distances to find the best sound.
- **Start and end with silence:** Leave two seconds of silence at the beginning and end of your recording.

DIGITAL TOOLS AND TECHNOLOGY

Digital technology and/or software may not provide the primary design and/or concept, but can be used to develop, enhance and/or present an entry. Entries

may not be exclusively created with generative tools (e.g., AI) and/or composed exclusively of elements generated or provided by the technology platform.

Accepted:

- A sound library generated performance of student's original composed score.
- Use of audio editing platforms to mix, enhance or completely transform original audio.

Not Accepted:

- Algorithmic composition techniques in music submissions.
- Use of templates, formulas, etc. provided by a platform/technology.

Guidelines

- **Describe Use of Technology:** If digital technology is used, *entrants must use the "Additional Details" field to provide a brief description* of the tools and method used in the creation process, including any generative elements (10 to 50 words).
- **Verify Prohibited Technology:** Check if your state PTA prohibits the use of any digital platforms and/or methods (i.e., artificial intelligence).

Overall Entry Guidelines



These are basic guidelines that all Reflections entries must meet to be eligible on the national level. *Additional state and/or local program requirements may apply.*

Each entry must be new artwork inspired by the current year's theme are accepted.

- **Theme-Inspired:** Engage with the theme and create inspired artwork. This is critical to success in Reflections.
- **New Artwork:** Do not “recycle” artwork by submitting a piece created for other purposes (e.g., homework not related to Reflections; art used in another competition).

Each entry must be the original work of one student only.

- **Individual Originality:** Reflections is designed to encourage and recognize individual creativity, artistic assistance from friends, family and/or teachers is not allowed.
- **No Group Submissions:** Only one student will be awarded for each entry.
- **Artwork Details:** Titles or artist statements must be the student's own words and interpretations of the theme.
- **Creative Choices:** Decisions in the creative process must be made and/or directed by the student. If support is required, it should be limited and appropriate to the student's grade and needs.

Each entry must contain a title and an artist statement.

- **Word Count:** Artist's statement must include at least 10 words and not exceed 100 words.
- **Be Creative and Unique:** Each entry submitted in Reflections must have a unique title and artist statement specific to that submission. Learn more about crafting a title and artist statement in the section below.

Each entry using digital technology/software in creation process must consider the following:

- **Enhance:** Technology/software *may be used to* develop, enhance and/or present an entry.
- **Original Use:** Technology/software *may not be use to* provide the primary design and/or concept.
- **Use Description:** Entrants must use the “Additional Details” field on their entry form to briefly describe the tools and method used in the creation process, including any generative elements (10 to 50 words).