

2023-2024 Reflections FAQs

What is Reflections?

The National PTA Reflections Arts program gives students in grades PK-12 an opportunity to be recognized for bringing a theme to life in their artwork through one of six art expression areas: dance choreography, musical composition, film, photography, literature, and visual arts.

What is this year's theme?

The 2023--2024 theme is ***"I AM HOPEFUL BECAUSE..."***

What does it mean to submit entries "virtually."

Most of the contest rules and format will be the same as in previous years, but like last year, entries will be submitted and judged virtually.

- There is an easy-to-use online entry form and students will submit their creations electronically via that form.
- Visual arts students will take a photo of their work (for 3D entries, three photos and an optional video) to submit. No entries will be physically collected, but please hold on to them. County winners will be displayed at the awards ceremony in the spring.
- Judging will be done remotely using the digital files that students submit.

Where do I find the rules?

You can find a copy of the general program rules and the rules for each category at <http://www.carmelpta.org/reflections>

What's the due date and where do I find the entry form?

Entries are due **Friday, October 27**. You will submit your entry and the [entry form](#) electronically. There is also a link on the [Carmel PTSA website](#).

¿Están disponibles en español las reglas y los formularios de entrada?

¡Sí! Aquí se encuentra [el formulario en español](#). Las reglas para cada categoría están disponibles en español en nuestro sitio web. <http://www.carmelpta.org/reflections.html>

Spanish Resources Note:

Please note there are several North Carolina specific requirements that are not required by the National PTA and therefore may not be on the Spanish forms/rules. Please be sure to view both the

Spanish and English Rules translations to prevent disqualifications. The student entry form must be submitted in English. There are several questions on the second part of the form that all students must answer.

Please email reflections@carmelptsa.org and we can help you.

Where do I put my name on my entry?

Do NOT put your name on the front or your entry or on the title slide/frame of your video. Judging is anonymous so include your name on the back of the entry if submitting a hard copy or in the file name of the digital entry following these directions for how to name your file: [NCPTA Required Naming Convention For Reflections](#)

What if I cannot submit my entry electronically?

It is preferred to submit electronically, but if you cannot, you can bring your entry and a completed entry form to school and submit in the designated area in the lobby or office the morning of the deadline. Contact Deborah Goldberg (Carmel MS Reflections Chair) at reflections@carmelptsa.org for assistance. We will make accommodations. We can also provide a hard copy entry form if needed.

How do I win?

Entries are judged based on artistic merit, creativity, mastery of the medium and *most importantly* the interpretation of the theme. It is very important to give some thought to the Title and Artistic Statement. A well-developed concept is just as important as technique. Entries will be judged on how well the student uses their artistic vision to portray the theme.

What happens if I win?

All entries will be judged at the school level. Winning student entries will receive a certificate and a Target gift card and will progress to county-wide competition. We will announce the winners in December before break at school and in the Cougar News.

What is the Special Artists division?

The Special Artist division welcomes students from all grades and abilities and offers non-artistic accommodations (e.g. adaptive technology; transcribing; holding a camera) for students to participate fully in PTA Reflections. Assistants must refrain from being involved in the artistic process (e.g. developing an artist statement, choreography, music lyrics, storyboards, etc.). Student recognition and awards are announced as part of the Special Artist division. [Learn more.](#)

Can I use a project that I made for another assignment, show, or competition?

No. Reflections projects must be created exclusively for this competition. This is thematic art and therefore requires the student to think about the theme, be inspired, and create art that expresses what comes in their mind when they think of the theme.

Can a friend and I submit an entry together?

No. Entries must be created and submitted by one person. No group work.

What situations can lead to my entry being disqualified?

- Occasionally, entries submitted to the program are ineligible. Make sure that all film production entries are filmed entirely by the student. No one else can touch the video camera. Tripods are great. If we see the camera is panning while the participant is in the frame, we know someone else is filming and it's no longer admissible.
- Copyrighted images are not allowed, so no Mickey Mouse, Black Panther, Pokemon, etc., and no online clipart.
- Visual Art submissions cannot be framed.
- Pre-programmed tracks provided by computer software cannot be used for musical composition. Similarly templates for films, such as the ones provided in iMovie software, can not be used.
- Most importantly, only student-inspired, student-made artwork will progress. Entries must be the idea of the student and no one else can coach the idea or assist in the actual art of the student.
- Other common disqualifying factors include plagiarism, resubmission, entries that do not meet the rules for size for that category, and entries that are submitted in the wrong electronic format.

How many categories can I make an entry for, and is there a limit to the number of entries I submit?

Students can enter more than one time in more than one category. However, we are limiting the total number of entries to 3 for each student to be respectful of the judges' time and to encourage students to focus on submitting their best work..

Do you have any tips for successful entries?

- The "Artist's Statement" is very important to the judging process. It is your chance to tell the judges directly how to interpret your entry.
- Try to think of a title that is specific to your entry instead of simply using the theme as your title.
- For dance entries, make sure that the music in the video can be clearly heard, and remove any distracting items from the background.
- If you are using a smartphone or tablet to record a dance or film entry, shoot it in landscape (horizontal). Also make sure that the room is bright enough.
- For the literature category, entries should reflect grade-appropriate spelling and grammar. Adults should not edit the work; judges will notice. Avoid using fancy, distracting fonts.

- For musical composition pieces, make sure the recording is not distorted. Check the sound volume. It's okay to use computer software, but the music must be composed by the student. Pre-programmed tracks provided by software cannot be used.
- No collages and no added graphics can be used for photography submissions. Try to submit the original digital .jpg for photography entries instead of taking a photo of the photo.
- Include only the art in the submitted pictures of visual art entries. Crop out any background material, like tables and walls. Make sure there is enough light to get a good quality photo.
- If submitting a 3D visual art entry, you may, in addition to the 3 photos, include a short video, 15 seconds or less, of the entry. Email the video to reflections@carmelptsa.org Include your name, school, grade, and title of your entry.
- Many winners have been participating in Reflections for years. If you don't win this year, don't give up! Keep trying.

Can I see previous winning entries?

- Yes! Please go to www.ncpta.org/index.php/programs/reflections-arts-program/ and scroll down to see state winners from the last nine years.