

The Henry Pestka Art & Poetry Contest

2025-2026: Interwoven Histories For Grades 6-12



Contest Rubric

Scores will be based on each student's grade level.

Artist/Author Statement (5 points)

All participants must submit an author/artist statement that explains to the judging committee more about their piece. This is an important opportunity for participants to share their passion and choices.

Prompt: In the context of what you have learned about the Holocaust, how does your art or writing project reflect the power of words?

- Written in first person. Appropriate spelling and grammar. (1 point)
- A description that helps the audience better experience the project. (2 points)
 - What is the project about; what is the reason for the project; what is the creator's intention/hope for what it will mean to others?
- How the project showcases the theme, **Interwoven Histories**. (2 points)

Project	1 (lacking)	2 (sufficient)	3 (well-done)	4 (exceptional)
Form & Guidelines How the various elements in the project work together to communicate an idea within the creator's chosen format.	Project lacks unity or order. Missing details and/or what is included is not fitting or appropriate.	Project is partially developed and shows limited unity and order. Details are somewhat fitting or appropriate.	Project is developed with unity and order. Most details are fitting and appropriate.	Project is well-developed with strong unity and order. All details are fitting and appropriate.
Creativity & Originality Generating ideas and approaches based on previous experiences, but presenting them in a way not seen before; innovative.	A unique perspective is not evident, and approach seems cliched and/or uninteresting. Project feels like someone else's perspective, lacking creative enhancements to engage.	A unique perspective is somewhat evident. The project shows some imagination but lacks originality and has few creative enhancements.	Individual voice and unique perspective are evident; a creative and innovative approach grabs the audience. Project includes some creative enhancements.	Distinct voice and unique perspective are very evident; a highly creative and innovative approach grabs the audience. Project is expressive, including creative enhancements and engaging elements.
Chosen Details & Technique The way in which the creator leverages known techniques in art/writing to intentionally communicate a message or story to evoke a desired response from the audience.	Overall project lacks coherence and is difficult to understand. Lack of structure and details create an overgeneralized or vague message. Audience is unmoved by work.	Structure and details present a somewhat clear meaning. Use of appropriate tools lead to a minimally clear tone and meaning. Evokes a limited response from the audience.	Elements flow together to enhance the meaning of the message. Uses appropriate tools and details to create tone and meaning. Evokes a moderate response from the audience.	Elements flow seamlessly together to enhance the meaning of the message. Effectively and skillfully uses unique choices and details to create tone and meaning. Evokes a strong response from the audience.
Interpretation of Theme Interwoven Histories Insightful connections that meaningfully bridge a foundational understanding of the subject matter with a cohesively developed, relevant idea for the audience to consider.	Message does not capture nor maintain the reader's attention and does not maintain a focus. Does not show an understanding of the theme – misses points and has quite a few misinterpretations.	Message is somewhat engaging but lacks focus. Displays a somewhat clear understanding of the content and theme but may have a few misinterpretations.	Message is engaging and clear. Shows an understanding of the major themes. Demonstrates clear understanding of content and applies the theme throughout.	Message is compelling, engaging, and very clear. Shows a sophisticated understanding of the themes in the work and applies theme in complex ways.
Overall Meaningful connections between the theme and subject. Captures audiences' attention or evokes an emotional response. Project causes reader to think on a higher level. Wow factor.	Accomplished the purpose of the project partially or indirectly, and little craftsmanship was attempted or demonstrated in covering the topic	Accomplished the project in an adequate manner. The topic is covered reasonably well, and some craftsmanship is demonstrated.	Accomplished the project in a capable manner. The topic is well-covered and successful attempts toward craftsmanship are demonstrated.	Accomplished the project in an exceptional manner. Overall project craftsmanship is impeccable.

TOTAL POSSIBLE POINTS: 25