

The Key to a Great Ceremony & Celebration

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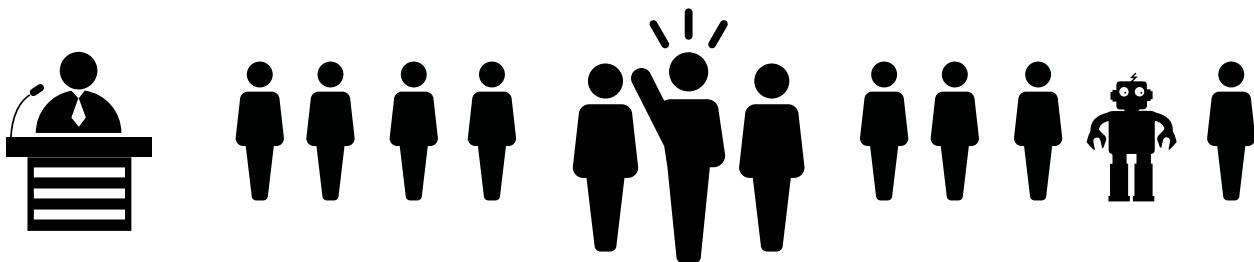
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Illustrations in this publication are from The Noun Project (thenounproject.com). Artists include: Geovani Almeida, Anandh, Miguel C. Balandrano, Dmitry Baranovskiy, Jean-Philippe Cabaroc, Sergey Furtsev, Icon Jungle, Wilson Joseph, Mary Kosyakova, Vlad Likh, b mijnlieff, Kristin Poncek, Luis Prado Nicolas Vicent, Darren Wilson



Introduction

Regional ceremonies are an essential part of the Scholastic Art & Writing Awards, offering creative teenagers the opportunity to come together with family, educators, and the broader community to celebrate creative excellence. This guide offers tips on planning and hosting a regional ceremony, along with templates for invitations, speeches, and thank you letters. Affiliates are welcome to use as much of the information as they find helpful. We encourage all of our affiliate coordinators to continue innovating and adding their own creative ideas to regional celebrations.

Student Voice

Shine a spotlight on your awardees! The easiest way to do this is to invite students to be recognized on stage one at a time. This gives each student a moment to be individually celebrated.

We suggest that you have students introduce themselves. This minimizes the amount of preparation time required by ceremony coordinators as well as pronunciation difficulties with student names.

Seating and Procession

- Check-In: Give out Gold and Silver Key Pins as students arrive at the venue. Ask the students to wear the pin(s) during the ceremony.
- Seating: Reserve a section of seating nearest to the stage entrance for award recipients. Students should be instructed to sit in this area when arriving to the venue. Consider making an announcement 5 minutes prior to the start of the ceremony letting students know that they should sit in the reserved section.

- Have a staff member prep students:

Talk through the logistics: i.e. how to get on stage, what will happen when they are on stage, and what to do once they've finished.

Instruct students to clearly announce their name, their award(s), the category (or categories), and the name of their school or OEP.

For exa “Hi, my name is Courtney Buckland, and I won a Gold Key for a short story. I attend Holt High School.”

Make sure to select a student who is comfortable being the first on stage to start the procession.

During the Ceremony

- Two staff members will be needed (A and B). Staff A should be in charge of helping the students on stage. There should be a cue in the script (i.e. after a sponsor delivers his remarks). At the cue, Staff A can line up students at the base of the stage.
- Place the microphone in the front center of the stage, and make sure that that area is well lit.
- Have students proceed, one-by-one to the center of the stage, and announce their name, award(s), and school or OEP.
- Students will tend to be shy and try to hang back. The staff member in charge of students should make sure that the next person is onstage, and ready to move forward when the student at the microphone is done.

- Consider asking sponsors onstage to congratulate students.
- Staff B should wait at the other side of the stage to direct students back to their seats.

Other Opportunities to Celebrate Students

- Invite 2–3 students to read their award-winning work, or display images of their artwork on the screen behind the podium.
- Present Special Awards and Scholarships to students on stage.

A Note about Multiple Ceremonies

The Alliance recommends that Affiliates invite all students who earned a Gold or Silver Key to the ceremony. Educators should also be invited. Please consider inviting Honorable Mention recipients and their educators if the venue is large enough.

If the number of students exceeds the capacity of the venue, consider hosting 2 (or more) sessions as follows:

- By Grade Level (One for grades 7–8 and one for grades 9–12)
- By Work Type (One for art and one for writing)
- By Category (Art affiliates may consider a photography ceremony, for example)

We have found that conducting ceremonies by Award level suppresses student turnout and dampens the excitement students feel about attending the ceremony. We urge you to consider the multiple ceremony suggestions above.

Spread the Word

Your ceremony is a great opportunity to develop relationships with potential donors and program partners. Think broadly about people and organizations in your community who share the Awards' mission of recognizing and encouraging creative teens. In addition to recognizing student achievement, this event can also raise awareness and support in your community.

Here are some ideas for guests to invite:

- Scholastic Awards jurors
- School administrators
- Local college representatives from Admissions, Art, and English Departments
- Museum administrators
- Members of a local arts council
- Visual and literary arts organizations
- Better Business Bureau members
- Chamber of Commerce representatives
- Elected officials
- Local companies
- Local press

SAMPLE VIP INVITATION EMAIL (Customize as needed)

Date, 2016

Name
Address
City, State Zip

Dear _____,

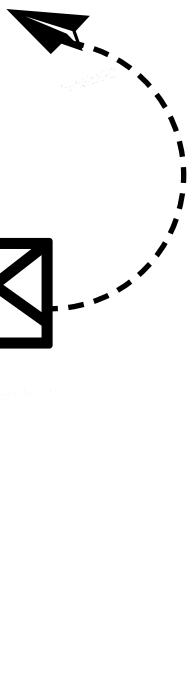
My name is (Full Name) and I serve as the (Job Title) for the (school or organization). Our organization presents the Scholastic Art & Writing Awards in (your region).

I would like to invite you to join us at our annual ceremony on (date and time), as we recognize and celebrate the 2016 Scholastic Art & Writing Awards recipients and their educators. Since 1923, the Scholastic Art & Writing Awards has celebrated the accomplishments of creative students, extending opportunities for recognition, exhibition, publication, and scholarships to teenagers demonstrating exceptional aptitude in art and writing. Earning a Scholastic Award is often the first moment of validation for a young artist or writer, and can function as a catalyst that leads to a lifelong commitment to develop and apply their creative gift—no matter what career or path they may choose.

(Add here a paragraph about your organization and its mission, and specifics about the ceremony including keynote speaker and any other pertinent information.)

The Scholastic Awards are singular in their efforts to honor the achievements of creative teens. We feel that now, more than ever, it is important to recognize creative accomplishments and provide students with the support and resources they need to make creativity a lifelong pursuit. We hope you'll join us at the ceremony and help honor these remarkable young thinkers.

With warm regards,
(Your Name)
(Title)



Planning Timeline

This timeline assumes a ceremony date in early March. Adjust the timeline to fit your schedule.

August

- Update your ceremony supply order in ORS.
- Research venues and email potential sites about availability. *Note:* Think about a venue that can host a reception for students, parents, and educators before or after the ceremony.

September

- Finalize a venue including date and time.
- Determine who will be invited to the ceremony, how many ceremonies you will host, and how you will delineate the ceremonies if you plan on hosting multiple events.
- Post the general details of the ceremony on your affiliate microsite.
- Confirm the proofs of student certificates.

October–November

- Create a list of potential Keynote speakers.
- Create a list of potential volunteers to help on the day of the ceremony.

December

- Create a list of potential VIP invites.
- Double check that your supply of ceremony materials (certificates, key pins, educator pins, etc.) is sufficient based on your number of submissions.

January

- Send Award notifications, including specific details about the ceremony. Make sure to include:
 - Date and time;
 - Directions to the venue;
 - Information about the reception;
 - Information about how to RSVP (if applicable);
 - Parking instructions;
 - Number of guests students may bring; and additional information specific to your region.
- Send invitations for keynote speaker(s).
- Send call for volunteers.

February

- Print and collate certificates.
- Finalize keynote speaker.
- Finalize volunteer roster.
- Send “Save the Dates” to VIPs.
- Send reminder email to recipients, their parents, and their educators.
- Confirm your AV and facility needs for the ceremony with your venue.
- Draft Run of Show.
- Draft ceremony script.
- Invite local businesses, universities, etc. to set up tables to pass out promotional materials.

March

- Order catering for the reception (if applicable).
- Finalize Run of Show.
- Finalize ceremony script.
- Confirm with keynote speaker and make sure they have details about the ceremony.
- Confirm with volunteers.
- Design and print ceremony programs.
- Create staff responsibility chart for the ceremony day.

Day Before Ceremony

- Send final reminder with ceremony details to all students and educators who have RSVP'd.
- Perform a test run of the ceremony in the venue.
- Have as many staff and volunteers on hand as possible so that they can get a sense of the space.
- Make sure that travel arrangements are made for keynote speaker and any special guests.
- Confirm catering order and delivery time.

Day of Ceremony

- Set up registration tables. *Note:* It is highly recommended that you pass out certificates and pins at the ceremony to save on mailing costs.
- Test all AV and computer equipment to ensure that it's functioning properly.
- Have fun!

SAMPLE PROGRAM

Click here to see a sample of a Regional Ceremony program.

Sample Program Content

Below is an outline, and suggested content for your program. Tailor the content to your needs.

FRONT COVER

(REGION NAME)

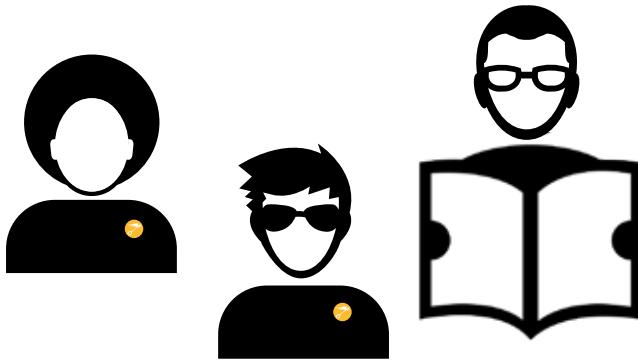
Regional Ceremony of the
2017 Scholastic Art & Writing Awards

(DATE, TIME)

(LOCATION)

Presented by:

Insert your logo and any sponsor logos



PAGE 1

PROGRAM / RUN OF SHOW

Welcome

Name of speaker, title, and organization

About the Scholastic Awards

Name of speaker, title, and organization

Keynote Address

Name of speaker, title, and organization

Presentation of Student Award Recipients

Closing Remarks

Name of speaker, title, and organization

Invite guests to the after-ceremony reception, if applicable

PAGE 2

Congratulations to the (REGION NAME)'s 2017 Gold Key, Silver Key, and Honorable Mention Recipients!

List the names of Award recipients—Note: this can take as many pages as necessary

PAGE 3

Include information about your regional exhibition—if applicable

About the Scholastic Art & Writing Awards:

The Scholastic Art & Writing Awards are the nation's largest, longest-running, and most prestigious scholarship and recognition program for teenage artists and writers. Since 1923, the Awards have recognized teenagers from across the country. By receiving a Scholastic Art & Writing Award, our students join a legacy of celebrated authors and artists such as Andy Warhol, Sylvia Plath, Truman Capote, Richard Avedon, Zac Posen, Stephen King, Robert Redford, Ken Burns, and Joyce Carol Oates. artandwriting.org

About (REGION NAME)

Include a short summary about your region

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Add bios for keynote speaker and any other notable speakers

THANK YOU!

Use this space to thank your sponsors, volunteers, jurors, staff, special guests, and partners

BACK COVER

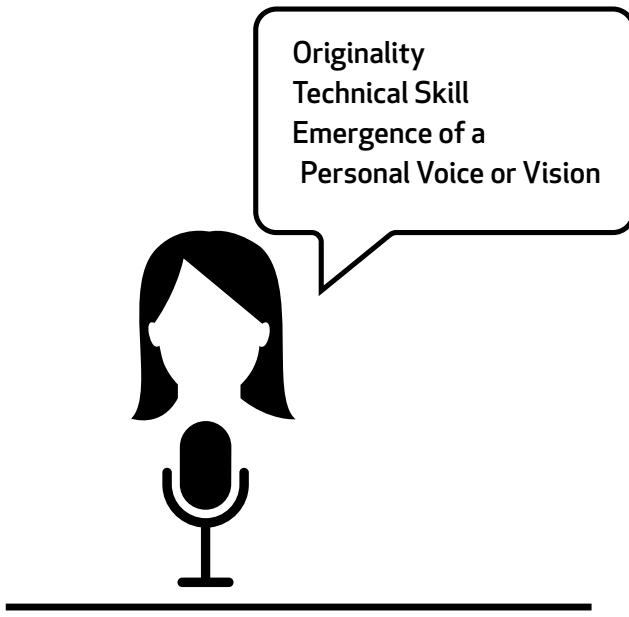
Image Credits

Add credits for any images used in the Program

The Ceremony

Sample Run of Show

	Minutes
Welcome	3:00
Organization Introduction	3:03
Scholastic Awards Introduction	3:08
Introduction of 1st Group of Students	3:14
1st Group of Students	3:15
Introduction of Keynote Speaker	3:25
Keynote Speech	3:26
Introduction of 2nd Group of Students	3:41
2nd Group of Students	3:42
Educator Thank You	3:52
Introductions of Special Awards	3:53
Closing Remarks	3:55



Sample “About the Awards” Speech

The Scholastic Art & Writing Awards have an impressive legacy dating back to 1923, when Scholastic Founder, Robbie Robinson, started the program as a way to honor the creative achievement of high school students.

Some things have changed with the Awards over the years—new categories like Comic Art and Video Game design—but a few things have not. First is **freedom of expression**. The Scholastic Awards places no limitations on content; students are free to pursue any idea or topic in their art and writing. **Blind adjudication** has also been a core tenet of the awards since day one. Work is evaluated on its own merits, with jurors having no information on the identity of the young artist or writer, and lastly, the **three criteria** used to select work: **Originality; Technical Skill; and the Emergence of a Personal Voice or Vision**.

The Scholastic Awards place a high priority on work that challenges boundaries and can communicate new and interesting ideas.

A noteworthy roster of artists and writers earned Scholastic Awards as teenagers including: Andy Warhol, Sylvia Plath, Truman Capote, Lena Dunham, Robert Redford, Joyce Carol Oates, and (**insert names of local alums**).

In 2017, the Scholastic Awards received more than XXX,XXX submissions in 29 categories from students in the United States and U.S. Schools abroad. Here in our region, we are proud to report that more than (**Local program stats**) students submitted work this year!

Sample “Thank You Educators” Speech

“We want to take a moment to thank the individuals who instructed, mentored, encouraged, and perhaps even nudged or required you to submit your wonderful work to this year’s Scholastic Art & Writing Awards: your educators! Educators, if you are here with us today, please know that not only do your students rely on you, but we do, too. Please proudly wear the Teacher pins we gave you—and if you need more for colleagues who couldn’t make it today, please let us know. Let’s give our educators a round of applause!”

Share Your Event

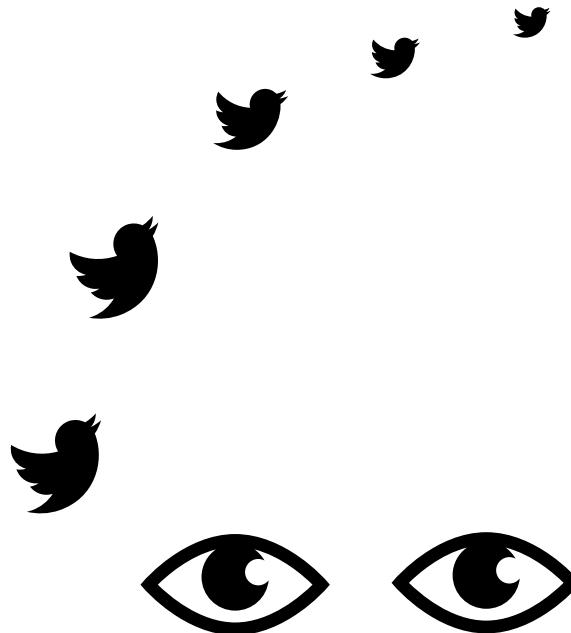
- If you have planned readings or an exhibition that follows your ceremonies, consider sending an e-blast to all regional participants to invite them.
- Update your microsite, webpage, or social media pages to feature winning works, students, schools and educators.
- Document your event and share highlights with the national office for a possible feature on the national blog. Photos and videos can be uploaded to Robbie's Room, or shared through social media platforms for easy and timely sharing.
- Encourage guests to tag your local program social media pages and @artandwriting on Twitter and Instagram. Guests can also use the hashtag #GoldKey across all social media platforms.
- Share press coverage via email with regional participants and the national awards office.

Tips for Documenting Your Event

- Identify a photographer in advance. This does not need to be a professional, but having a volunteer dedicated to catching those key moments will allow you to concentrate on the big picture.
- Provide a shot list and desired method of documentation: photo, video, or both.
- Make sure the camera is steady, in focus, and properly frames the images you want to capture.
- Consider recording short interviews with students, educators, speakers and guests.

Sample Shot List

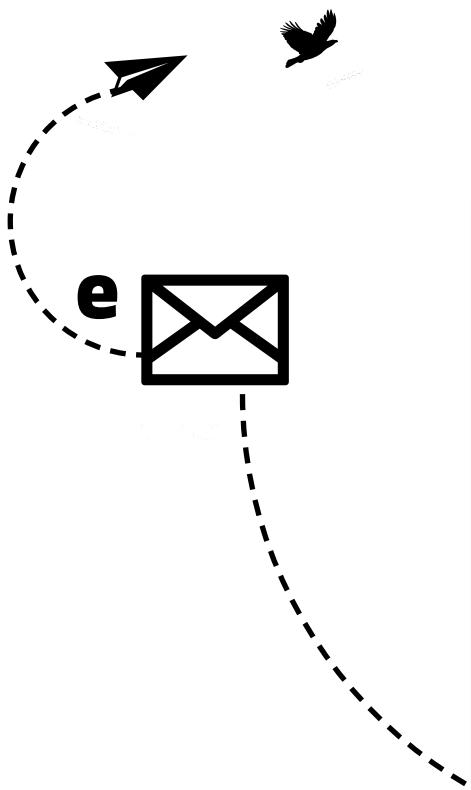
- Full audience as seen from the stage
- Stage as seen from audience
- Students on stage
- Keynote speakers on stage
- Educator recognition, on stage or from audience
- Group shot of students
- Group shot of Affiliate Partners and volunteers
- Photos of guests at reception, if applicable



After Your Event

- Send an email to your Gold Key recipients reminding them that their work will move on to the national office in New York City to be considered for National Medals. National Medalists will be announced on March 14.
- Also, remind your Gold Key recipients that the Scholastic Awards Summer Program Scholarships initiative offers funding to attend creative summer programs for students with financial need. Tell your students to log back into their Scholastic Awards accounts and apply today!
- Don't forget to send thank you letters to your guests, speakers, and volunteers who helped you pull the whole event together!





SAMPLE THANK YOU LETTER (Customize as needed)

Date, 2017

Name
Address
City, State Zip

Dear _____,

On behalf of the (Name of your organization), I would like to thank you for attending the 2017 Scholastic Art & Writing Awards regional celebration.

It is our goal to make sure that every youth in our community is aware of the Awards, that we encourage their participation, and bring them expanded opportunities for recognition, exhibition, publication, and scholarships. We ask that you inform the youth in your life of this prestigious opportunity to be acknowledged for their creative talents.

Receiving a Scholastic Award has often been described as a seminal moment in a teen's life, regardless of whether or not they go on to pursue professional careers in art and writing, because it imparts a sense of validation, achievement, and encouragement. Thank you for being a part of this very special event; staff and students are still talking about it. It was an honor for the (Name of your organization) to have you join us. We look forward to collaborating with you again in the future.

Sincerely,
(Your Name)
(Title)