

POETRY WRITING

The contestant writes an original poetry composition with a Christian, patriotic, Biblical, evangelistic, persuasive, or historical theme. The contestant should keep in mind his purpose for the poem - why it is being written and what effect is being achieved.

1. The poem may be narrative or discursive with an assumed or personal point of view. All poems are lyrical, though usually not written to be sung. You may, however, specifically choose to craft your poem as lyrics to be set to music.
2. The poem must have been written after the termination of the previous International Convention and must be the original work of the student.
3. Plagiarism of any kind will automatically disqualify the entry.
4. A significant portion of the poem must be written during school hours to verify authenticity.
5. One entry per contestant.
6. Format - At least eight (8) typewritten lines (double-spaced) and no more than thirty (30) typewritten lines. (Variations from these line limitations must show evidence of very careful attention to word choice and structure, plus strong thematic basis.) On a computer, use 10- to 12-point type with Times New Roman, Helvetica, or Arial font.

All entries are to be uploaded to the RSC program and/or to internet resources.

HINTS FROM THE POETRY WRITING JUDGES

Judges look for poems that are neat in appearance, complete in thought, and effective in message and impact. The true purpose of a poem is to transmit in words a complete thought and, at the same time, to move emotions. A poem must have a reason for existence; the emotional impact and a resultant change in attitude is that reason. If your poem is correct in form, yet is not logically correct or emotionally stimulating, the poem will not score well. A poem must DO something, not merely talk about something. The theme, then, becomes of utmost importance; for, if the poem is to do something, it must do something worthwhile. Second, but still important, is the form of the work. If the form is weak or inconsistent, it will not fall correctly on the ear, causing the message to be lost to the reader. Poems should also have a lyric quality, though they may not be intended for music. Remember, a poem can only do ONE thing, not several. Strive for unity of purpose and skill of execution. Technical errors of any sort, especially those that might be thought of as minor, such as a misplaced comma or misspelled word, often represent major weaknesses in aspects that are less obvious to the trained eye and ear. A scrupulous writer always attends carefully to the smallest and most obvious detail. What is said is always at the mercy of how it is said. When this principle is ignored, the reader will not be guided by the writer's thoughts but by his own. These thoughts may be counterproductive to the writer's subject and intention and become an unconscious use of stock responses, formulaic phrases, hackneyed expressions, irrelevant associations, and sentimentality rather than honesty. A poem that effectively treats a subject moves the reader to a place where he has never been before. Refer to English PACES 1105 and 1106 for ideas.