



Writing Contest



Tips for Working with Your Students

REMEMBER . . .

Primary communication with Coaches and Sponsors is done through e-mail provided with the School/Group Registration done online. If a coach or sponsor is not receiving e-mail information about the contest, he or she should check Spam/Junk folders on the computer and contact Academic Rodeo for assistance with getting the current information.

Deadlines exist for a reason. Please be aware of them and follow them. The **Academic Rodeo Calendar** in a true calendar format is on the Getting Started and General Info pages. **The Writing Contest Timeline** is on the Writing page and gives more detailed information. If you have a problem with a date or deadline, please contact Academic Rodeo, realizing that usually it is not possible to make a change or give “grace” for deadlines. Often judging or other timings are scheduled close to the due date. To be sure your students get to participate, follow the deadlines.

Please read the Information and Responsibilities for All Coaches and Sponsors.

The following tips and suggestions may be helpful to you in working with your students.

- You should receive the Writing Prompt by e-mail no later than the date indicated on the Writing Contest Timeline **IF** your school/group has registered with Academic Rodeo. Check your Junk Mail folder and/or contact Academic Rodeo immediately if you do not receive the prompt.
- Provide the student with the scoring rubric when you announce the topic to help them understand how the essay will be judged. Discuss the general guidelines below for scoring. Each essay will be evaluated using the following criteria. (See score sheet provided with the writing prompt for specific criteria.)
 - Adherence to topic
 - Use of vivid detail and descriptive words, etc.
 - Use of supportive details, etc.
 - Language appropriate to audience – The audience is made up of teachers and other adults.
 - Effective paper organization
 - Clarity of expression – appropriate sentence structure and vocabulary
 - Creativity – originality of idea and expression
 - Mechanics – overall usage, spelling, punctuation, etc.
- Please remember to submit 2 **complete copies** of each essay – **Cover page and all pages** of the essay. One copy goes to the judges. The other copy remains with Academic Rodeo as a back-up if needed and to be displayed in the Academic Rodeo display. In the top right corner of each page, write Grade, Student Initials, and page number. Example: 4th – BR, page 2
- Do **NOT** submit rough drafts, illustrations, etc.
- Do **NOT** submit a scoresheet with the essay.
- Remind students that appearance is important in the evaluation of the essay. Essays with marked out words do not leave a good impression.
- Also, remind students that font size has been given. Efforts to make an essay appear longer by using a large font do not enhance the judging of the essay.
- When an essay appears to be approaching the 300 grace limit, word count **IS** done and essays exceeding 300 words are NOT sent for judging.