



National PTA Reflections Photography



PHOTOGRAPHY is the process of creating an image. The **photographer** (student submitting entry) is a person who captures their own thoughts and ideas with a camera. By focusing on objects using various lenses, filters and light sources, photographers may demonstrate the use of photographic techniques conventionally or digitally. The **photographer** (student submitting entry) should be the one to set the scene, lighting and take the picture. If the **photographer** wishes to be in the photograph, a timer or remote must be used.

2026-2027 theme – What My Culture Means to Me

Accepted forms of photography: A single photo, panoramic, photomontage (one seamless print of multiple original photos), a multiple exposure, negative sandwich or photogram. Original black-and-white and color images are accepted.

Non-accepted forms of photography: Entries with added graphics over the image, including lettering. Collages and collections of photos are not accepted. Original film (negatives or transparencies) and multidimensional pieces.

Originality: Only new pieces of artwork inspired by the theme may be submitted. Each entry must be the work of one student only. Digital technology and/or software can be used to develop, enhance and/or present an entry but may not provide the primary design and/or concept. Entrants must provide a brief description of the tools, software and method used in the creation process, including any generative elements.. Use of algorithmic techniques or artificial intelligence is prohibited.

Consider use of objects, lighting and the location to show a clear relation of the photo to the theme.

Copyright: Plagiarized entries will be disqualified. Use of copyrighted material, including copyrighted cartoon characters, scenes created in computer programs (i.e. Minecraft) or other such material, is not acceptable in any photography submission, with the following exception: Photographs may include public places, well-known products, trademarks or certain other copyrighted material as long as that copyrighted material is incidental to the subject matter of the piece and/or is a smaller element of a whole. The resulting work cannot try to establish an association between the student and the trademark/business/material, or influence the purchase/non-purchase of the trademarked good.

Presentation: Frames with glass are not accepted. Matting is accepted.

- Printed entries must not be smaller than 3"X5" and no larger than 8"X10". Digital images: at least 640x960 pixels and 300 dpi resolution. Accepted file formats: JPEG, JPG, PNG.
- Print should be mounted on sturdy material such as cardboard or poster board not to exceed 11"x14" inches, including matting. Include any student information on back of entry.

Packaging:

- Print Format: Label back of print with your Arts Category, Last & First Name
- Protecting the work with butcher paper is highly recommended. Tape the paper to the back of the artwork on one side and overlay the front of the artwork to protect it during travel.
- Lamination is discouraged because it can permanently damage the surface of the photo.
- Place a copy of your Student Entry Form in a sheet protector & secure with masking tape to the back of the photograph so form is still accessible for photocopying. Do not tape over the opening of sheet protector.
- If submitting digitally, label image file and PDF of Student Entry Form with Arts Category & First & Last Name.
- Include the required title and artist statement on the Student Entry Form.

Judging: Entries will be judged on mastery of the medium (worth 8 points), artistic merit (worth 12 points), and interpretation of the theme (worth 20 points). Mastery of the medium in the context of the national Reflections Program pertains to the level of skill the student demonstrates in the basic principles/ techniques of the arts area, whether an entry displays use of technologies or a simple approach. However, a well-developed concept is more important than technique. Entries will be judged primarily on how well the student uses his or her artistic vision to portray the theme. Many times, the artist statement will make a huge difference during judging because this is where the artist can explain in their own words, their thoughts and feelings for their piece. An explanation of the photography process/form might be a useful addition to the statement.

Submission Requirements:

- The student or at least one person from their primary household must be a current member of the Local PTA/PTSA where the student is participating. Each Local PTA/PTSA may determine a date by which the member must join.

Return of Artwork:

Entries that win at local levels will be forwarded to the next level of judging. If an entry is forwarded to the state level, it will not be returned until the end of the school year. Seniors should preserve a copy of their photograph to include in their portfolio. Final judging of winning entries occurs at the national level where all entries are received in an electronic format.

All participants must also follow Official Rules for Participation.