

SECTION 1

FAQ FOR STUDENTS

1. What is the PTA Reflections Program?

Reflections is a National PTA arts recognition program for students in grades pre-K through 12. Students submit their completed works of art in one or all of the available arts categories: Dance Choreography, Film Production, Literature, Music Composition, Photography, Visual Arts. Students participate in the appropriate division for their grade: Primary (Pre-K - Grade 2), Intermediate (Grades 3-5), Middle School (Grades 6-8), High School (Grades 9-12), Special Artist (All grades welcome). Submitted works of art could result in state and national level awards and recognition opportunities.

2. What is the Reflections Theme Search?

Each year, National PTA challenges students from across the country to submit theme ideas for the Reflections program. The student who submits the winning entry receives a cash award and their theme is used as the foundation for the Reflections program in a following year.

This year, any student can enter the contest by entering their information directly into the NYS PTA Theme Search Online Submission Form.

Click [here](#) for NYS PTA Reflections Theme Search Information.

3. Who is eligible to participate in the PTA Reflections Program?

Reflections is a program offered to students who are enrolled in a PTA school. Students may only submit entries through a PTA/PTSA. Parent groups not affiliated with the National PTA are not eligible to sponsor this program.

4. Do I (or does my caregiver) need to be a PTA member to enter?

Not necessarily. If you are a student at a school with a PTA, then you are eligible to enter whether you or your caregiver are members of that PTA or not. If you are homeschooled, however, you need to be a member of either the Empire State PTSA, the New York State Pride PTSA, or a community PTA, to enter. You can find out more information about the Empire State PTSA here: <https://nyspta.org/home/about/empire-state-ptsa/>, and the NYS Pride PTSA here: <https://nyspta.org/2022/03/03/new-york-state-pride-ptsa/>.

5. How does a student participate in Reflections?

Students may enter by submitting an entry form through their school's PTA unit; or 2) if their school does not have a Reflections program, through a willing PTA in the area (contact arts@nyspta.org for assistance). Look up your school's PTA president and contact them for more information about how to participate at the school PTA level.

6. When are entries due at my school?

To find out the due date for your school, ask your PTA President. If you do not know how to contact your PTA president, call the school's front office and they can put you in touch with the right person.

7. My school has a PTA, but isn't hosting Reflections? What should I do?

This may be the perfect opportunity to make a huge difference in the lives of children in the community. If your school isn't participating, your caregiver might offer to help set up a Reflections program. If setting up a program isn't feasible, contact arts@nyspta.org for assistance in finding a PTA unit or Region that will accept your Reflections entry.

8. My school doesn't belong to the PTA or I am homeschooled. Can I still participate in Reflections?

Reflections is a PTA program, and only PTA schools may participate. If your school is not a PTA school, but would like to start a PTA, contact pta.office@nyspta.org for help in joining! Belonging to PTA is inexpensive and comes with enormous benefits, including a powerful voice of advocacy for children at our state legislature.

If you are homeschooled, consider joining (or have your caregiver consider joining) Empire State PTSA or the NYS Pride PTSA and then contact arts@nyspta.org for assistance in finding a PTA unit or Region that will accept your Reflections entry. You can find out more information about the Empire State PTSA here: <https://nyspta.org/home/about/empire-state-ptsa/>, and the NYS Pride PTSA here: <https://nyspta.org/2022/03/03/new-york-state-pride-ptsa/>. Some communities have 'home' school or community PTAs that offer member benefits, like Reflections participation.

9. What is the Special Artist grade division?

Students who identify as having a disability and/or who may receive services under IDEA or ADA Section 504 may enter *either* the Special Artist Grade Division *or* the Grade Division most closely aligned to their functional abilities. Special Artist entries are judged as a group per Art Category and are not further divided up or judged by grade level. For example, a 1st grade Special Artist Visual Arts entry will be judged alongside a 7th grade Special Artist Visual Arts entry.

10. Can two or more students create a piece together?

No. All Reflections entries must be the original work of one student only. However, other people may appear in the artwork of a student, such as performing in a Dance Choreography entry or acting in a Film Production entry or singing in a Music Composition entry or being in the picture of a Photography entry.

11. Can a student appear in their own Photography or Film Production or Dance Choreography entry?

Yes, but the student is required to be the photographer for their Photography category, the camera operator for the Film Production category, and/or the choreographer of the Dance Choreography entry. Students are not required to appear in their entries.

12. Can someone help a student write the notation for a Music Composition entry?

Middle and High School Grade Divisions must include music score/notation (either traditional or tablature) *or* a written reflective statement that provides a musically technical explanation of how the music was created (100 words or less, note this is separate and in addition to the Artist Statement required on the Entry Form). While notation software may be used to create a score/notation, use of the software must be done by the student.

13. Can students use Legos in their 3D Visual Arts or Film Production entries?

Yes. Legos may be used as a building material for a 3D Visual Arts entry. The entry needs to be an original creation rather than a kit. For a Film Production entry, Legos may be used, but use of copyrighted characters needs to be incidental rather than the focus of the film. A film about Batman using a Lego Batman would violate copyright laws.

14. How do I tell if my Visual Arts entry is 2D or 3D?

2D and 3D art are combined as Visual Arts. In NYS PTA, we loosely interpret 2D art as a picture/painting that you would hang on a wall and 3D as a kind of sculpture.

15. Does a 3D Visual Arts entry require digital images?

Yes. All advancing 3D Visual Arts entries must have *three* digital images from a combination of angles in JPEG, JPG or PNG format.

16. Do you have any tips on how to make my Reflections entry a strong one?

Yes! Here is a list:

- Read the rules for your Arts Category carefully and follow them.
- Ensure your work of art is original and not copied from somebody else.
- Complete the Student Entry Form in its entirety. Every section must be filled out, including parent contact information, Artist Statement, Title of Work, and signatures.
- Only one student may create each entry.

- **VERY IMPORTANT:** make sure your art file is in **the correct file format!**
 - Dance and Film: mp4, mov, or avi file formats ONLY
 - Literature: pdf file format ONLY (No image files, screen shots, or camera uploads!)
 - Music Composition: mp3 or wav file formats ONLY (no videos!) for the audio piece; pdf ONLY for the notation/statement
 - Photography and Visual Arts: jpeg, jpg or png file formats ONLY (no pdf!)

17. What are the different NYS PTA awards given in Reflections?

There are two Reflections awards given by NYS PTA - the Award of Excellence and the Award of Merit. Award of Excellence is awarded to the entries that are judged to be the best in their Arts Category and Grade Division. These entries move on to the National level of judging. Award of Merit recipients are the runners-up. National and NYS PTA encourage units to similarly recognize winners and/or hold an event of some sort that recognizes not only the students who receive awards, but all students who participate. If this is done and how it is handled is up to the Local Unit PTAs and Regions.

18. What are the different National PTA awards given in Reflections?

Of the national-level submissions, over 200 student Reflections participants will receive the following awards from National PTA:

- Merit Award: Bronze Medal; Certificate of Merit; Work featured in the traveling exhibition
- Award of Excellence: \$200 Young Artist Scholarship; Silver Medal; Certificate of Excellence; Work featured in the traveling exhibition
- Outstanding Interpretation Award: \$800 Young Artist Scholarship; Gold Medal; Certificate of Outstanding Interpretation; Work featured in the traveling exhibition; \$200 Prize for Local PTA Unit

National PTA celebrates the national Reflections winners and their artwork starting May 1 through the following calendar year. Outstanding Interpretation winners are featured during National PTA's Convention in June and select artists are featured at the Reflections Student Arts Showcase in January.

19. Who should I contact with questions about Reflections?

You should reach out to your school's PTA leadership first, especially to find out the due date for entries and how entries are being collected. For all other inquires, contact arts@nyspta.org. You can find more information here: <https://nyspta.org/home/programs/reflections/>.