



FALL 2014

**MIDDLE SCHOOL
WRITING
CONFERENCE**

AT TOWNSEND HARRIS HIGH SCHOOL

Saturday, November 15, 2014



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Conference Overview

Townsend Harris's Fall 2014 Writing Conference is an event planned for middle school writers.

The conference will take place on a Saturday morning in November and will offer participants a chance to hone their writing skills and learn more about writing at the high school level. Our staff of editors and writers will present seminars on both creative writing and journalism, which will be followed by feedback and information sessions. The conclusion of the conference will feature a keynote speech on writing and an awards ceremony, where participants who enter our writing contests will learn the winners.

The purpose of this conference is to allow middle school writers to interact with their high school counterparts in both an academic and an informal setting. Participants will learn from the editors and return to their middle schools with ideas for their own personal writing and for their own student publications. In addition, attendees will have the opportunity to see what writing looks like--and what it's like to be a student writer--at one of New York City's most prestigious high schools.

Events and Activities

Seminars

Each student will participate in two seminars taught by Townsend Harris editors and writers. During the registration process, students will indicate their preferences for seminar topics. Each student will take part in one seminar with a focus on scholastic journalism and one seminar with a focus on creative writing. **Students who have attended our last conference are welcome to return, but we encourage them to select different seminar choices.**

Upon arriving to the conference, students will receive a packet with their seminar schedules. After a brief welcoming event in the student auditorium, seminar instructors will escort their classes to the room of the first seminar session.

Creative Writing Seminar Topics

- Constructing Reality: Writing Authentic Real-World Stories
- Between the Stanzas: Expressing Yourself Through Poetry
- From Hogwarts to Mordor: The Rules of Fantasy Writing
- The Lightbulb Effect: Essential Writing Tips and Inspiration
- Behind the Canvas and Lens: The Elements of Art and Photography

Journalism Seminar Topics

- This Just In: Writing News Stories that Matter
- Creative Nonfiction: Writing Powerful Stories for News Magazines
- The Great Debate: How to Craft an Award-Winning Opinion Piece
- Goal!: Scoring the Perfect Sports Scoop
- A Picture for a Thousand Words (Option A): Art and Design for Journalism
- A Picture for a Thousand Words (Option B): Photojournalism

Feedback Sessions, Information Sessions & Tours

Following the seminars, students will have some free time to interact with other student writers, receive individualized feedback on their writing from Townsend Harris students, learn more about being a part of Townsend Harris's writing program from faculty members, or attend a tour of the school building.

Feedback: students who enter our writing contests will meet with the judge who initially read their work. They will receive their submission back with written comments and the judge will provide them with feedback on how to improve and hone their writing skills.

Information: students can meet with faculty members to learn more about the creative writing and journalism programs at Townsend Harris High School. Students with a passion for writing who are interested in attending Townsend Harris can learn more about what the school offers.

Tours: students who are interested in attending Townsend Harris can join tours led by upperclassmen at Townsend Harris. These tours will focus on the writing facilities of *The Classic* and *The Phoenix*, but will also enable students to learn more about the school in general, the school building, and the school's relationship with Queens College.

Keynote & Awards Ceremony

The conference will end with a keynote speaker giving a speech to all attendees on the importance of writing and a humanities education.

Directly after the keynote address, Townsend Harris writers will announce the winners of our awards contest and provide all winners with a certificate.

Contests

Details & Rules

For an additional fee, participants can enter their writing in a contest, the results of which will be announced at the end of the conference. Students can enter multiple categories, and submit their work either electronically or by regular mail. **Winners will receive a certificate, and might have their work published in our publications.** All submissions must be received by November 3, 2014.

Awards Categories and Requirements

Best Short Story: *write an original piece of fiction (any genre). Limit: 1200 words.*

Best Poem: *write an original poem on a topic of your choosing. No limit, but aim to keep it on the shorter side.*

Best News Article: *cover a news story that is relevant to your school, your community, or New York City public schools overall. Limit: 700 words.*

Best Opinion Piece: *write an opinion article on a specific issue relevant to students in New York City. Limit: 700 words.*

Schedule

8:30—9:00 a.m. *Registration*

9:00—9:15 a.m. *Welcome*

9:15—9:45 a.m. *Seminar I*

9:50—10:30 a.m. *Seminar II*

10:30—11:30 a.m. *Feedback & Information Sessions*

11:45—12:30 p.m. *Keynote & Awards Ceremony*

Refreshments will be provided.

Registration

To guarantee your spot, please visit <http://www.thhsclassic.com/conference> to register. The registration deadline is October 31.

Students may be added after the deadline (until Friday, November 14), for an additional fee; space, however, cannot be guaranteed, and students will be added on a first come, first served basis.

Fees

There are two options:

Option 1: Conference Package: This is the basic signup charge. This price earns you regular admission to the conference's main activities (the seminars, keynote presentation, & information session). **Cost: \$25.**

Option 2: Conference + Contest Package: This earns you regular admission to the conference and entitles you to submit your writing to one of the contest categories. **Cost: \$35.**

If you purchase option two and would like to enter more than one contest, **each additional entry** after the first costs \$7.

After registering online, you will receive a confirmation (the confirmation may take a few days to process). Once you receive confirmation of your spot at the conference, please send checks to:

The Townsend Harris Writing Conference
149-11 Melbourne Avenue
Flushing, NY 11367

Fees must be paid in full before November 3, 2014.

Eligibility

Middle school students of all ages are welcome to attend. Though we are expecting that mainly seventh and eighth graders will register, many sixth graders have participated in the past.

Behavioral Expectations

All students of Townsend Harris High School are expected to behave in a professional manner at all times. We will expect the same of all students who participate in this conference. If any student's behavior is unacceptable, the student may be removed from the conference, and his or her parents will be called to pick their child up early. In such circumstances, refunds will not be granted.

Contact Information

For general questions, contact Assistant Principal of the Humanities Department Rafal Olechowski at (718) 575-1366 ext. 4030 or Newspaper Advisor Brian Sweeney at (718) 575-1366 ext. 4051.

You can also e-mail your questions to conference@townsendharris.org.