YOUNG AUTHOR
TIPS AND GUIDELINES
2013
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The purpose of the McLean County Unit District No. 5 Young Authors Program is to encourage and recognize student authorship. The district program is part of the statewide effort supported and endorsed by the Illinois Reading Council.

The authorship process begins in the classroom. Many teachers begin the writing process with their students early in the year. Students are involved in brainstorming and information gathering followed by a rough draft version of their manuscript. After revision and editing, a final manuscript is published. Students write fiction, non-fiction, and poetry. In addition to their original writing, they illustrate their text designing a book cover to enhance their work.

Each elementary and middle school in the district is allowed to submit two to five books for district level judging. The number of books submitted from each building is determined by the total enrollment in the school. Sixty to sixty-five books are submitted to the district where several authors are selected to represent McLean County Unit District No. 5 at the state Young Author Conference. The authors of the books submitted to the district are invited to a Writer’s Workshop in April sponsored jointly with the Normal Public Library. At this event a children’s author talks to the participants about writing and the publishing process.

Each book is read and reviewed by judges. The criterion includes originality, creativity, grammar, interest to children, illustrations, and total composition. This review process is coordinated by Bruce Weldy, Director of Elementary Education in Unit 5. At the end of the day, books are selected to represent the district at the Illinois Statewide Young Authors Conference held in May at Illinois State University. This conference emphasizes language as a vehicle for communication with others. The participants are recognized as ambassadors of writing. Their books are read, discussed, and affixed with the official seal of the Young Authors Conference.

The Young Author program, from the classroom to the state conference, provides a plethora of opportunities to encourage and support authorship, a love of books, and skills that will benefit our students for a lifetime.

***

Each elementary and middle school has a Young Author sponsor who coordinates activities at the building level. Young Author sponsors are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Building</th>
<th>Sponsor</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Benjamin</td>
<td>Annie Lee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cedar Ridge</td>
<td>Jenny Roop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carlock</td>
<td>Michelle Hanley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairview</td>
<td>Donna Rollins, Betsy Stout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fox Creek</td>
<td>Amy Schumacher</td>
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<tr>
<td>Glenn</td>
<td>Erin Bowman and Sheryl Rosenberger</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grove</td>
<td>Margaret Watson and Nancy Goelitz</td>
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<td>Hoose</td>
<td>Lori Ellison</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hudson</td>
<td>Sharon Abner</td>
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<tr>
<td>Northpoint</td>
<td>Sue Hospelhorn</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oakdale</td>
<td>Mary Sue Groff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parkside</td>
<td>Rebecca Grotho and Dawn Ludwig</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pepper Ridge</td>
<td>Angie Funfar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prairieland</td>
<td>Britta Armstrong and Amy Lucas</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sugar Creek</td>
<td>Karen Showalter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Towanda</td>
<td>Judy Lancaster and Stacie Finlen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CJS</td>
<td>Denise Goben</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PJHS</td>
<td>Julie Nourie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KJHS</td>
<td>Gina Tenuta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EJHS</td>
<td>Michele Southard</td>
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</tbody>
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If you have questions, contact Bruce Weldy at 557-4028 or weldyba@unit5.org.
# How Many Books?

Here is the list of the number of manuscripts to be submitted from each building:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Building</th>
<th>Manuscripts</th>
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<tbody>
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<tr>
<td>Cedar Ridge</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>Fairview</td>
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<td>Fox Creek</td>
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<td>Glenn</td>
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<td>Grove</td>
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<td>Hoose</td>
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<td>Hudson</td>
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<td>Northpoint</td>
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<td>Oakdale</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parkside Elem.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pepper Ridge</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>Prairie2nd</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sugar Creek</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>Towanda</td>
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<tr>
<td>CJHS</td>
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<tr>
<td>KJHS</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PJHS</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EJHS</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The material from the State Board of Education states that, “...the purpose of the Young Authors’ program is to support classroom teachers in their efforts to improve students’ abilities in writing, reading, listening, and sharing abilities.” It further indicates that, “...students who attend the State Conference are representatives of their district, rather than winners of a writing contest.” As you go through the selection process in your buildings, please use the term representative rather than winner.

Many times those of us who have been involved with a program for a number of years forget that there are teachers and parents who are new to our districts who do not know about the program, its requirements, and benefits. You may want to refer parents and teachers new to the district to the Unit 5 Young Authors’ Website for additional information about the program. Since each building handles the Young Authors’ Program in its own way, it is best if specific information about your program is shared at the building level.

Time, effort, and organization are necessary to orchestrate a successful program at the classroom and building level. The district appreciates all that you do to support authorship and the Young Authors’ Program. In each case, you are acknowledging, supporting, and encouraging students to take their writing to the next level. Please remember that quality writing is our goal. While the illustrations are an important element, they are not the focus of the activity. Our judges always look for a good story line, one that grabs their attention and makes sense.

Many of you hold Young Authors’ Teas, Breakasts, Receptions, and Readings to highlight the works that are submitted. That, too, takes extra work, yet is so appreciated by both students and parents. It not only communicates to parents the work of their own child, but allows them to see the work of others. In many cases, this celebration of writing provides parents with a clearer picture of the range of abilities of the students at each grade level in a festive setting.

## Young Authors’ State Conference

In Unit 5, we sometimes take the Illinois State Young Authors’ Conference for granted because it is held locally at ISU. However, each year the parents of 1,200 students from all over the state drive for hours to bring their children to the Young Author Conference. It is an outstanding opportunity for children to meet and interact with adult authors as well as with other students who excel in the area of writing. If students from your school have the opportunity to attend, please encourage them to do so! This year’s event will be held on Saturday, May 18, 2013.
Dear Parent,

We will be involved in a variety of writing activities this year. Learning to write well is like learning to talk – nobody does it perfectly the first time. Gradually, with help and praise, abilities do improve. Just as your child made errors in learning to speak, so will he/she in learning to write well. Although we will work on improving grammar, spelling, and handwriting, we will first focus on the sharing of ideas through talking, reading, and writing. We will work on spelling correctly words that we use most often, and on common rules of punctuation.

Our class will be learning the writing process through the following steps:

1. Pre-writing – brainstorming and gathering information
2. Drafting – writing our thoughts
3. Revising – expanding our thoughts
4. Editing – working on mechanics
5. Publishing – making a final copy

Although we will work on improving the mechanics, at first we will focus on the pre-writing stage. During this time your child may bring home papers with spelling, punctuation, and grammatical errors. Please praise your child’s writing efforts keep in mind that we will cover all steps in the writing process.

To help your child develop as a writer, here are a few things you can do:

1. Go places and see things with your child, and then talk about what has been seen, heard, tasted, smelled, and touched. The basis for good writing is good talk.

2. Let your child see you write often. If children seldom see adults write, they think that writing only occurs at school.

3. Be a helper, not a critic. Talk over ideas with your child and provide help in spelling, punctuation, and usage when asked.

4. Give gifts associated with writing; pencils, pens, notebooks, stationery, pads of paper, erasers, dictionary, etc.

5. Praise your child’s writing efforts. Remember that for every error made, there are several things your child has done well. Focus on the positive.

6. Encourage your child to write for real purposes like helping with the grocery list, taking telephone messages, helping to plan family trips by writing for information, or making invitations for family get-togethers.

I will be keeping a folder in the classroom of your child’s writing this year, and I encourage you to stop in and see the progress he/she is making. I will be happy to talk with you further about the writing program.

Sincerely,
Dear Parents,

This week we are beginning work on our Young Author stories. Much time was spent discussing the statewide program. Listed below are areas that need your attention.

Story – We will be working on the rough copy of the story this week in class. Your child should have an idea that can be developed into a story. He/she should think of a beginning, middle, and end before starting to write. Characters need to be planned before writing begins. Your child has the option of writing a fiction or nonfiction story.

Rough copy – This will be sent home for your editing. We would like you to help with spelling. You can also check to make sure complete sentences are used. Please work with your child to help decide when a new page or paragraph should begin. Final editing will be done at school.

Typing – We are asking parents to help with typing. If this is not possible we need to know by_______. If we will be typing your child’s story all final editing must be done by_______, and the book should be turned in to your child’s teacher.

Covers – Your child should plan on completing the book covers at home. If you are interested in having a binder put on, we will do that at school. I stressed to the class how important it is to market their finished product. Covers should be creative and visually appealing. Books come in many different sizes. There is no rule that a book has to be a standard page. Mini books or shape books can be quite fun. Your child can use his/her imagination when creating the cover. Fabrics, textures, designs, or shape covers may be used. We do have construction paper and other supplies at school if needed.

Deadline – The entire book with illustrations needs to be completed no later than ____________. Please do not wait to turn books in on the last day.

Please contact me if you have any further questions. I appreciate your help with this project. Enjoy!
Dear Parents,

Many of your children will be involved in the Young Authors Program during the next few weeks of school. This statewide program is endorsed by the Illinois Reading Council. The students will be involved in writing, illustrating, and editing their own books. Once completed, these manuscripts are judged on originality, interest to children, creativity and overall quality.

Books will be selected to represent our school at the district level. Several books from the district will be chosen to represent Unit 5 at the State Young Author Conference. The process of creating a story is a worthwhile experience for all children.

To involve as many children as possible, we need your help! Books need to be completed by ______. We are asking parents to help their own children with the typing of their stories this year. If this is not possible, please let your child’s classroom teacher know as soon as possible. Also, if you are willing to do some extra typing, send a note to school with your child.

We will bind all standard size books at school. The binding of books will take place on ______. If you want your child’s book bound at school, please have it here by _____. However, if your child would like to create a more unique cover, he/she is free to do so.

We appreciate all the help!

Thanks,
10 Tips for Young Authors

1. Books should have a sturdy cover with the title, author, and an illustration.
2. Books may include any genre.
3. Books may be any length. Our books have ranged from 8 to 100 pages.
4. Books should include illustrations throughout.
5. Computer illustrations, photographs... may be used.
6. Two students may co-author/illustrate a book.
7. Creativity is highly prized by our judges.
9. Books should be free of grammar, spelling, and typographical errors.

Guidelines for Young Author Stories

- Double space and use 1 ½ inch margins.
- Number pages.
- Typed text at the bottom works best as it compliments child’s illustrations.
- Type title page on separate sheet. (Do not include child’s name as this will be done on a separate form when child returns his/her book to school).
- Type dedication on a separate sheet.
- Illustrations can be done with markers, chalk, crayons, colored pencils, or may be computer generated.
- Lamination of covers and book bindings will be done at school once the child returns his/her manuscript.

Suggestions from past judges

Use descriptive words
Have a catchy title
Make sure the book has proper grammar
For illustrations use other materials in addition to pens/pencils/crayons, etc.
Make the pictures tell the story as well as the writing
Read your rough draft to the class and ask for advice
If it’s a longer book, break it up into parts of chapters
Be creative! Don’t give us a story that’s noticeably similar to others published.
Include what age it’s intended for
Make the title relate to the story
Make sure you haven’t copied anyone’s idea
Edit more than two times
Be sure to keep us interested in your book
Don’t get tired of writing and suddenly end it
You need pictures unless you are very descriptive.
Choose font that matches your story
Make your book neat and clean
Draw pictures or add pictures
Take time on pictures – make them colorful
Young Authors

Kinds of Books

- NON-FICTION
- FAIRY TALES
- MYSTERY
- POETRY
- PLAY
- BIOGRAPHY OR AUTOBIOGRAPHY
- SCIENCE FICTION
- ANIMAL
- COLLECTION OF SHORT STORIES

Tips for Authors

- ORGANIZE YOUR IDEAS BEFORE YOU BEGIN TO WRITE
- ILLUSTRATIONS ARE OPTIONAL – BUT HIGHLY RECOMMENDED
- A STRONG, STURDY BINDING IS NECESSARY
- FINAL BOOKS SHOULD BE TYPED
- THE WORK MUST BE YOUR ORIGINAL
- CO-AUTHOR BOOKS ARE ACCEPTABLE
- TRY TO MAKE YOUR BOOK UNIQUE
- USE YOUR OWN IDEAS
- INVOLVE ALL OF YOUR SENSES IN YOUR WRITING
- WRITE ABOUT SOMETHING THAT YOU KNOW ABOUT OR IS IMPORTANT TO YOU!

What Books Will be Judged On

- INTEREST AND APPEAL TO CHILDREN
- ORIGINALITY
- CREATIVITY
- VISUAL QUALITY OF THE BOOK
- CONTENT

Parent’s Role

- ENCOURAGER
- PRE-WRITING ORGANIZATION
- TYPIST
- TYPING AND BINDING HELP ARE AVAILABLE

Have a great time being creative!
For Primary Grades
My Story Plan

by ________________

My story idea:
the big idea or mail topic of my story
My story will be: what kind of feeling my story will have

happy    scary

sad      exciting

other

The events that will happen in my story are:

I'll make a list of the important things that will happen in the order that they will happen.
The Setting:
where does my story take place

The characters:
who will be in my story
My grabber sentence:
an interesting sentence to begin my story that will grab the
reader’s attention

My Editing Checklist

My Name_________________________
Title of My Story________________________

1. All my sentences begin with capital letters. ☐
2. All my sentences end with the correct punctuation (. ? !). ☐
3. I used interesting words in all my sentences. ☐
4. My sentences do not all begin in the same way. ☐
5. I checked my spelling to the best of my ability. ☐
For Intermediate Grades
YOUNG AUTHORS
WRITING BOOKS AND STORIES CAN BE A LOT OF FUN. IT IS IMPORTANT TO WRITE ABOUT THINGS THAT YOU ARE INTERESTED IN. THIS FORM WILL HELP YOU GET STARTED WRITING YOUR BOOK. YOU CAN USE THIS FORM ON YOUR OWN OR WITH AN ADULT HELPER.

CHARACTERS

ANIMALS  PEOPLE  CREATURES  THINGS

LIST 2 TYPES OF CHARACTERS YOU MIGHT LIKE TO WRITE ABOUT:

__________________________________________

NAMES
LIST 8 NAMES:

__________________  __________________  ____________________  __________________

__________________  __________________  ____________________  __________________

SETTING (WHERE THE STORY TAKES PLACE)

CIRCLE ONE:  PAST  PRESENT  FUTURE

EXAMPLES OF SETTINGS

IN A GARDEN  IN A SMALL TOWN  IN THE BEDROOM
ON A FAR AWAY PLANET  AT SCHOOL  BY A STREAM
IN A BIG CITY  ON A FARM  IN THE KITCHEN

NAME 3 POSSIBLE SETTINGS FOR A BOOK YOU WOULD LIKE TO READ:

__________________________________________

__________________________________________

BEGINNING

THE BEGINNING OF THE STORY IS VERY IMPORTANT. IT CAN SET THE TONE FOR THE WHOLE STORY. MANY STORIES START WITH THE WORDS "ONCE UPON A TIME", BUT THERE ARE OTHER INTERESTING WAYS TO START A STORY: ONE BRIGHT SUNNY MORNING..., EVERY YEAR..., EARLY ONE EVENING..., ONE AFTERNOON IN MRS. WHITE'S CLASSROOM..., IT ALL STARTED AT..., ON MY WAY TO SCHOOL ONE MORNING...

LIST 3 INTERESTING STORY STARTERS:

__________________________________________

__________________________________________

__________________________________________

PROBLEM

ALL GOOD STORIES HAVE A PROBLEM WHICH IS RESOLVED DURING THE STORY. SOME EXAMPLES OF PROBLEMS ARE: FINDING YOUR WAY HOME AFTER GETTING LOST, HAVING A CURSE PUT ON YOU BY A
WICKED WITCH, BEING TRAPPED ON A DIFFERENT PLANET, WANTING SOMETHING THAT YOU CAN'T AFFORD TO BUY...

LIST 3 INTERESTING PROBLEMS THAT YOU MIGHT LIKE TO READ ABOUT:

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

RESOLVING THE PROBLEM IS THE MAIN PART OF YOUR STORY. SELECT TWO OF THE PROBLEMS YOU LISTED ABOVE. IN A FEW SENTENCES TELL HOW SOMEONE MIGHT SOLVE THAT PROBLEM:

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

ENDING

A GOOD ENDING IS IMPORTANT FOR ANY STORY. MANY FAIRY TALES END WITH THE WORDS, "...AND THEY LIVED HAPPILY EVER AFTER". HOWEVER NOT ALL STORIES WOULD MAKE SENSE WITH THAT ENDING. SOME EXAMPLES OF ENDINGS FOR STORIES WOULD BE...WE WILL ALWAYS REMEMBER THAT SUMMER, THEY WERE NEVER SEEN AGAIN, WE FINALLY KNEW THAT EVERYTHING WOULD WORK OUT FOR THE BEST, I KNEW I HAD A FRIEND FOREVER...

LIST 3 POSSIBLE ENDINGS FOR A STORY THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO READ:

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

YOU NOW HAVE THE INGREDIENTS FOR A GOOD BOOK!!! YOU WILL JUST NEED TO ORGANIZE THEM INTO YOUR BOOK AND ADD PICTURES. HAVE FUN!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!
PLANNING A STORY

Planning a story is almost as important as writing it. Following a plot development outline or a story map can help. Organize your ideas about characters, setting, and plot. This type of story outlining is like a rubber band. It should be able to "stretch" to fit the package it holds.

As you write your story think about the following questions:

1. Does the story have a beginning, middle and an end?
2. Do the paragraphs in the story follow the story outline?
3. Is the main character described clearly?
4. Are minor characters introduced to the plot?
5. Is the main character's problem solved by the end of the story?
6. Is the setting described in clear and colorful adjectives?

SOME POINTERS ON WRITING

You don't need a lot of equipment to get started writing. A sharp pencil and a blank piece of paper will usually get you going on the writing part. But...you do need to make a commitment to yourself, your parents and teachers, to do the best you can and to finish the project.

Having your own special place to work may be helpful.

Develop a story map and get the ideas down in what writers call a "rough" draft. With this rough draft you change words you don't like and move sentences around. Read your rough draft to several people...ask for comments and revise it.

Try to follow a schedule. Plan the times you will work on the manuscript and stick to them.
ILLUSTRATING YOUR STORY

Illustrating your book is not a requirement but remember illustrations can help tell your story more clearly and help the readers see the story as they read it.

Illustrations should be simple. Try looking through some books that have some good illustrations. This may help with ideas for your own story's illustration.

You might want to try putting your main character in each illustration. Can you find the inch worm on every page in Leo Lionni's *Inch By Inch*?

Sometimes an illustrator will spread a picture across two pages. This technique tends to help keep the story moving. It also gives you, the illustrator, a large space to help tell the story with pictures. Use all the page - fill it up. *One Snowy Day* by Ezra Keats and Nonny Hogrogian's *One Fine Day* are good examples of the author/illustrator making use of the entire page.

Some illustrations are tucked right around the words on a page. Jack Kent, author/illustrator of *Little Pup*, makes use of the entire page yet he does it in a different way than Keats and Hogrogian.

Take some time to think about illustrations - color, size and spacing can make your book stand out!

Check these books out from your school library or Normal Public Library. Read the stories and pay special note to how the illustrations add to the story.

EDITING YOUR MANUSCRIPT

Good writers edit all their writing. You should always edit what you write. Once you have written your story you are ready to edit it. Edit means you read your story carefully and mark any corrections on your rough copy before you make a final copy.

In addition to spelling and punctuation corrections, you might want to change a paragraph. You may decide you want to add some descriptive details to improve it. This is an important step in editing also. Changing a word if you think of a better one is part of editing also.

After you have read your story carefully and corrected it, call on an adult to give it another "editing job". The final step in editing is copying your manuscript neatly so it can be read by others. Manuscripts can also be typed by "outside" helpers.

Below are some questions to help you edit your work:
1. Look at your main idea sentences in your paragraphs. Do they tell what the paragraphs are about?
2. Are the detail sentences in an order that makes sense?
3. If you used time order words, did you choose the best ones?
4. Did you begin each sentence with a capital letter?
5. Did you use the correct punctuation in each sentence?
6. Did you spell all words correctly?
### YOUNG AUTHOR’S EVALUATION FORM

Exhibits these qualities:
1 Rarely    2 Sometimes    3 Frequently    4 Extensively

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<tr>
<td>A.</td>
<td>Detail of Characters</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>B.</td>
<td>Detail of Events</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C.</td>
<td>Setting is Evident</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>D.</td>
<td>Clear Problem/Solution</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E.</td>
<td>Book makes sense to the reader</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F.</td>
<td>Writer communicates complete thought</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G.</td>
<td>Writes complete sentences</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H.</td>
<td>Uses proper grammar</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>I.</td>
<td>Uses correct punctuation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>J.</td>
<td>Indents paragraphs</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>K.</td>
<td>Spells words correctly</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L.</td>
<td>Shows creativity in writing</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>M.</td>
<td>Well organized</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N.</td>
<td>Artwork has its own style and has been completed neatly</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O.</td>
<td>Uses conversation to enhance story</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Young Authors Poster Checklist

All students must receive these guidelines before starting their posters

**Standardizing Posters**

All posters must be on **standard size** poster board
All posters must have **pockets**
All posters must have the following information on the front of the poster:
- Name
- School
- Grade
- Picture

Posters must not include personal information, such as:
- Email addresses
- Phone numbers
- Home addresses
- Other personal information

**Turning In and Picking Up Posters**

Students turn posters in to teachers.
Teachers check posters against guidelines.
Students turn them in early so that there is time to make changes before teachers have to turn them in.
Teachers turn posters in to District Office.
Second check against guidelines.
Teachers turn them in early so that there is time to make changes before they go to the library.
When all posters are collected and correct, NPL will come get them.
Students will not pick up posters at the Young Authors event.
NPL will bring posters back to the District Office for delivery back to schools.

**Displaying**

Normal Public Library will pick up posters when ready.
Posters will be on display at the NPL for 1 month.
MANUSCRIPT IDENTIFICATION CARD

This card must be TYPED and taped to the inside cover of each manuscript. Do not mail manuscripts.

Name (Author)_________________________________________________________________ Grade _____

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