Youth Physics Writing Contest

A magazine-style physics writing competition

§ Overview

Youth Physics Writing Contest is a school-level competition where one physics idea becomes a piece of writing people enjoy reading. Students from grades 9 to 12 take a single scientific corner and shape it into a clear, warm, magazine-style article, the way a feature writer would, rather than the way a lab report gets written. There is one round, every article is judged once against the same scale, and the strongest pieces end up in a Physics Club Magazine issue.

§ Format

Every article follows the shape of a good magazine feature. It opens with a title that promises something specific, and an introduction that pulls the reader in quickly. The body explains the physics in plain language, written for a curious nonspecialist, and points to where the idea shows up in real life. It closes with an interesting insight and a short, memorable ending.

Length sits between **600 and 1500 words**. Warm, clear language beats jargon, so analogies are welcome and graphs, figures, and GIFs help. A strong article usually holds one central idea. AI-generated text is not accepted; the writing has to be the student's own.

§ Topics

Writers begin with a scientific desk and then find the human story inside it. A student might ask why a phone flashlight looks blue in the dark, how one wave can silence another, or what a black hole really is. The six desks below accept that kind of question: the night sky, from the phases of the Moon to the edges of the galaxy; electricity and magnetism, from a fridge magnet to a power grid; sound and waves, from ripples in a glass to noise-cancelling headphones; modern and quantum physics, carefully simplified; thermodynamics, from a cooling cup of tea to an engine; and the physics hiding in daily life.

§ Timeline

Submissions arrive through the contest page as a Word or PDF file, alongside an optional GIF. The form records the student's name, school, chosen topic, and the exact submission time, and no edits are accepted once registration closes. The dates look like this:

Registration opens	September 4
Registration closes	September 30
Judging	October 1 to October 10
Results and medals	October 10

§ Evaluation

Every writer knows the scale before judging begins, so nothing about the score comes as a surprise. Each article earns up to **one hundred points**, spread across six categories, and mentors and editors score every piece independently against the same scale.

- **Scientific accuracy and conceptual understanding (30 points).** The facts and the math have to be right. A concept explained in the writer's own words earns more than a memorized definition, and full marks also require naming the article's assumptions and limits.
- **Physical reasoning and analysis (20 points).** Each claim follows from the one before it, so the argument reads like a chain of thoughts, not a list. Numbers are used honestly and checked twice, and the strongest pieces show insight beyond a neat summary of the textbook.
- **Clarity, structure and communication (20 points).** The article stays organized, and a reader who never took the course can still follow the science. Wording is precise, paragraphs move in a clear order, and grammar never blocks the physics.
- **Creativity and intellectual contribution (15 points).** There is a fresh angle presented in the writer's own way. Independent thinking counts for more than a tidy tour of sourced material.
- **Real-world connection (10 points).** The topic matters outside the classroom, and the physics is applied correctly to that real situation, not just named in passing.
- **Research and references (5 points).** Sources are reliable, evidence is used where it strengthens the argument, and citations are complete enough to trace.

Participants receive brief editorial feedback as part of the experience, with a note about what worked and what could grow.

> *Writing "$F = ma$" on its own shows little. Explaining it, applying it correctly, and noting its limits shows real understanding.*

§ Results and Awards

Medals go to the top 30% of participants in a Gold, Silver, and Bronze ratio of 3 to 2 to 1. The three strongest articles on the leaderboard receive special prizes, and everyone who enters receives a certificate that names the article and its writer. Results are announced on **October 10**, when the leaderboard appears on the contest page.

§ Publication

Selected articles are gathered into a dedicated Physics Club Magazine issue for the wider school community to read, each piece credited to its writer. The finished magazine stays online so writers can share it; the published issue is the real output of the competition, not just a ranking.

Share your writing voice with the Physics Club Magazine.