

# 2020 NISPA Newspaper Contest Rules

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Please read the enclosed materials and information carefully. Specific instructions regarding deadlines, categories, and entries are given. These guidelines **MUST** be followed if the evaluation system is to be successful.

**I. OVERALL CATEGORY:** Each newspaper that is a paid member of NISPA may submit three consecutive newspapers which have been published between August 16, 2019 and January 31, 2020. The three newspapers should be arranged in the order of publication. Attach an overall category contest entry blank to them with a large paper clip.

**II. INDIVIDUAL CATEGORIES:** Each newspaper/website staff may also submit one individual entry per school in each of the following categories: NEWS, FEATURES, EDITORIALS, TEAM-IN-DEPTH, INDIVIDUAL-IN-DEPTH, SPORTS, REVIEWS, COLUMN WRITING, PHOTOGRAPHY, GRAPHICS, EDITORIAL CARTOONS and AD DESIGN. Staple an individual contest entry blank to each entry, which must appear on a complete tearsheet or webpage printout clearly marked.



- A. NEWS:** (one individual story) Fair play is given to topic -- copy is objective and written in third person -  
- writing style is consistent -- paragraphs and sentences are short, but not choppy -- correct punctuation and spelling are used -- inverted pyramid style of writing is used -- lead is strong -- headline is strong and fits the space -- follows professional press rules -- topic is timely -- attribution and quotes are plentiful and used well.
- B. FEATURES:** (one individual story) Topic is well selected and developed -- quotes and attribution are used well and often -- copy is objective -- writing style is consistent -- lead is well written -- story flows well and answers reader's questions -- headline is strong -- topic is not overplayed as to its importance -- fair and consistent treatment is given -- correct spelling, grammar, etc. are used.
- C. EDITORIALS:** (one individual story) Topic is well chosen and developed -- trite topics are avoided -- editorial tends to follow the formal style of introduction, body, conclusion -- the pronoun "we" is used, meaning the editorial board -- attribution is established -- editorial is concise and to the point -- bylines are not used -- material is not preachy.
- D. TEAM-IN-DEPTH:** (May be one or more stories printed together or as a series and written by more than one author.) Topic is well selected and researched -- reader is not left with questions -- background is given -- many sources are quoted -- copy is objective -- topic is not overplayed as to its importance -- leads and headlines are well written -- correct spelling, punctuation, etc. are used -- similar stories are packaged together -- material is not overly repeated in other stories.
- E. INDIVIDUAL-IN-DEPTH:** (Same as team-in-depth, but only ONE story written by ONE author.)

**F. SPORTS:** (one individual story) Lead stresses the future, does not dwell on the past -- story is objective -  
- quotes and attribution used well -- writing style is consistent -- fair play is given to the topic or event --  
story is written in inverted pyramid style -- headline is well written - triteness is avoided

**G. REVIEWS:** (one individual story): Topic is chosen wisely -- triteness is avoided -- background material is  
used well -- attribution is used when necessary -- specific song titles are mentioned -- passages are quoted  
for a book -- key stars are named for a movie, etc. -- material is not preachy -- reviews do not dwell on plot  
-- in-staff jokes are avoided -- reviews follow correct and consistent style.

**H. COLUMN/BLOG WRITING:** (one individual column/blog): May be a personal or sports column -- topic is  
chosen wisely -- triteness is avoided -- background material is well used -- attribution is used when  
necessary -- correct and consistent style is followed.

**I. PHOTOGRAPHY:** (one separate photo or a photo page): Photos are newsworthy -- group shots are not  
used -- photos are action-oriented -- photos are not obviously posed -- photos are taken from strong  
angles, are cropped well, and are technically free of dirt, scratches, etc. -- cutlines identify well with action  
words -- cutlines are not trite.

**J. GRAPHICS:** An illustration created by one student either by hand or computer which complements a  
story or page theme. A graphic may contain or illustrate information or statistics; however, it must  
maintain artistic merit.

**K. EDITORIAL CARTOON:** (one eye-appealing cartoon or panel): Cartoon illustrates a point being made in  
an editorial, column, or other story in the newspaper.

**L. AD DESIGN:** (one eye-appealing advertisement): Student-designed -- applies principles of good ad design  
-- creative approach -- appealing to student readership -- sells the product or service.

**REMEMBER:** Each INDIVIDUAL CATEGORY ENTRY must appear on a complete tearsheet or page of your  
newspaper with the story, photo, graphic, or cartoon clearly marked. You may also submit a printout of a  
webpage for a story that appeared on a website only. Staple a facsimile of the NISPA individual category entry  
blank to each entry. All entries must be original student work. Plagiarism will result in immediate  
disqualification. The decision of the judges is final. ENTRIES WILL BE DISQUALIFIED IF THESE RULES ARE NOT  
FOLLOWED.

Your staff will receive the judge's written evaluation along with each entry. Judging will be done by out-of-  
state experts in scholastic journalism. They will choose the top entries in each category.

ALL ENTRIES MUST BE **POSTMARKED AND MAILED** BY JANUARY 31, 2020 TO:

*Dennis Brown  
NISPA Newspaper Contest  
Huntley HS  
13719 Harmony Rd.  
Huntley, IL 60142*

For more information, email [dbrown@district158.org](mailto:dbrown@district158.org).