

Power of the Pen

2017  
MANUAL  
FOR  
WRITING TEAM COACHES

*Prepared for the Use of Participating Schools Only*



Power of the Pen

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*Revised for 2017*

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## Preface

*Welcome to the 2017 season of Power of the Pen!*

If you are a former participant in the program, you are already aware of the many benefits of this unique interscholastic program. If you are a new school, participating for the first time, you are in for a treat-- but you will also need to know how the program works.

Power of the Pen, as an interscholastic writing program, is now within reach of *all* of Ohio's 88 counties. This season we expect at least 500 schools from over 80 counties to participate in one or more tournaments.

This *2017 Manual for Writing Team Coaches* has been prepared to acquaint you with Power of the Pen and to clarify your role as a writing team coach. If you prefer not to print your own copy, you may order hard copies for yourself or other staff members. Use the Publications Order Form found in the section on "Power of the Pen Forms".

It may be helpful at the outset to keep in mind that Power of the Pen is more than a series of competitive events. It is a comprehensive program designed to

- awaken and strengthen the creative voices of young writers
- identify and reward outstanding young writers who demonstrate excellent skills in the art of written expression
- provide incentives to schools for strengthening their writing programs
- assist in preparing students for State proficiency testing and for implementing the writing process more effectively
- provide, most of all, a common ground for Ohio teachers to interact, share ideas, and take pride in the achievements of their students.

It may also help you to know that Power of the Pen is more concerned with creative expression than with expository writing. The two are not unrelated, but Power of the Pen believes that young writers will be better equipped to handle the rigors of themes and research papers at higher levels of learning if their own voices are strongly developed and self-confident. Power of the Pen is also more concerned with the *elements* of good writing than with the *mechanics* of good writing. Again, these two are not unrelated, but we believe that students will be more inclined to take pride in their work and improve the mechanics if they first develop a love for language and are motivated by praise and encouragement.

There is a fragile magic and mystery that surrounds creativity. It is doubtful that creativity can be "taught". But it is certain that it can be inspired and nurtured. To enhance creative expression, we must respect it and delight in it as appreciative readers of what young people have to say.

With these thoughts in mind, we invite you to join us in learning what good writing is really all about.

Lorraine B. Merrill  
*Executive Director*

## **Summary of Section Contents**

### *Preliminaries*

Welcome from the Executive Director. Scope of the sections in the *Manual*. Note especially the inclusion of a Coach's Checklist with deadlines.

### *Section I (PREP-)*

#### **Preparing for the Tournament**

A subtle exposition of the philosophy behind Power of the Pen through discussions of how a Writing Team Coach can prepare student contestants for tournament participation. Note the emphasis on holistic evaluation. A vocabulary of key words for Power of the Pen is included.

### *Section III (TOURN-)*

#### **Participating in the Tournament**

Detailed discussions of the mechanics of tournament participation as they relate to the Writing Team Coach and the student contestants. These areas include judging, gridding, scoring, and awards.

### *Section III (GVRN-)*

#### **Governance**

The Mission Statement adopted by the Power of the Pen Board of Trustees in 1994; the current membership of the Board; policies governing EEO, Civil Rights Compliance, and Plagiarism; policies and procedures for using POP's name and/or logo, and for holding local Power of the Pen Tournaments; the Constitution of the Ohio State Committee.

### *Section VI (FORMS-)*

#### **Forms**

A collection of forms and instruction sheets of value to the Writing Team Coach.

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#### **Fees**

A complete listing with careful explanations of any fee that could be incurred by a school in the course of the tournament season.

#### **2017 Tournament Season**

A chart of tournaments scheduled for the 2017 tournament season. A directory of the staff serving at each of these tournaments.

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## A Check List for Writing Team Coaches

The success of your in-school program as well as the success of Power of the Pen's Statewide season depends upon how efficiently communication deadlines are met. Here is a handy checklist of your major communication tasks that will help you to remember what has to be done and when.

<u>Deadline</u>	<u>Done</u>
Nov 1	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Registration Fee:</b> To qualify for a reduced early registration fee, submit payment or purchase order number by or before November 1st. Payment must follow Purchase Orders by December 31st to avoid an additional late payment assessment.
Dec 1	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Contestant Names:</b> Send contestant names to the State Office via pink District Registration Form enclosed with enrollment packet. Notify State Office if form has been misplaced ( <i>Tel</i> 330-659-3226; <i>e-mail</i> webmaster@powerofthepen.org; <i>FAX</i> 330-659-6291). Schools will be assessed a \$25 penalty if this deadline is not met. NOTE: For December District events, names must be sent in by Nov. 20th.
Dec 10	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Permission to Publish Forms:</b> Run copies of the Permission to Publish form from masters in the Forms section of the <i>Manual</i> . Send copies home with each contestant for parental signature. (Permission to Publish forms are to be taken to the District tournament where they will be logged in by the Tournament Registrar.) Do NOT send forms to the State office.
ca. Dec 15	<input type="checkbox"/> Check to see if Purchase Orders have been paid before Christmas break so that school is not assessed an additional \$25 late payment fee.
96 hours before District tournament	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Last minute Drops, Changes:</b> Notify your Coordinator of contestant drops or changes in Judge names within 96 hours of the tournament event (by 9:00 A.M. Tuesday, preceding a Saturday tournament). There is no drop fee for same day contestant <i>replacements</i> .
District Tournament	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Last Minute Reminder:</b> Be certain to bring Permission to Publish forms to the District Tournament registration.
post-District ASAP	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>post-Tournament:</b> Submit edited copies of work eligible for publication as soon as possible after District competition. Follow Publication Procedures listed in the Forms section of the <i>Manual</i> .
POP's Instructions	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Regional Registration:</b> Confirm qualifiers for Regional competition within 10 days after notification, or pay a \$25 assessment for late reporting. Official alternates* can replace only qualifiers from <i>their own</i> schools. <small>(*see Vocabulary section for the definition of official alternate)</small>
post-Regional ASAP	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>post-Tournament:</b> Submit edited copies of work eligible for publication as soon as possible after Regional competition. (NOTE: Winners will not receive awards until edited work is received by Power of the Pen.)
May 1st or POP's Instructions	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>State Registration:</b> Confirm qualifiers for State competition by May 1. Confirmation after this means a \$25 assessment for late reporting.
May 10 or POP's Instructions	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>State Conference Reservations:</b> Confirm conference reservations, per POP's post-Regional instructions.
post-State ASAP	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>post-Tournament:</b> Submit edited copies of work eligible for publication as soon as possible after State competition. (NOTE: No awards will be sent until final copies of edited work are on file at Power of the Pen.)



*Section I*

# PREPARING FOR THE TOURNAMENT



## Power of the Pen

*Section I*  
Preparing for the Tournament

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## Identifying Excellent Writers for Interscholastic Competition

Now that you have registered for participation and committed yourself to being a writing coach, your first step is identifying the best writers in your school who will ultimately make up your writing team. Keep in mind that students will not often “volunteer” to be on the team-- especially those new to the program. Most middle school students need to be told that they have talent. They need to be encouraged to participate. Therefore we urge you to set aside a class period in which all students-- or as many as possible-- in seventh and eighth grade are given one of the practice topics which appear in this *Manual* to write on within a 40 minute period. (Additional prompts are available in each volume of the *Book of Winners*). You and other teachers on your staff (even the Principal can help) can then, by reading the results, identify those writers whose responses show the greatest promise.

Most schools find that rather than “drafting” a team immediately, it is wiser to identify as many prospective team writers as possible-- even if this means working with an A, B, and C team at the outset. You will be surprised at the growth and improvement demonstrated in after-school writing sessions. The team that eventually enters the tournament need not be selected until there has been a number of these practice meets. Many coaches prefer to work with 24 to 36 students initially and do not designate those who make the cut and earn a place on the team until December 1st- the deadline for submitting the names of team members to Power of the Pen. Even when this is done, we recommend that students not be told who actually made the team until two weeks before the tournament. We also recommend that you send a letter home requiring a commitment from parents. This will discourage frustrating drops that can occur when parents are not fully informed about their children’s activities and commitments. Most schools charge parents for the drop fees which occasionally occur. Replacement changes can be made without penalty right up to- and including- the day of the tournament itself.

Schools which have had the most success in developing writing teams have told us what works and what doesn’t. We share their suggestions with you.

- DON’T put a poster up on the bulletin board asking students to sign up for a writing team. They won’t.
- DON’T ask an entire English class, “Who wants to be on a writing team?” Unless everybody raises his hand, usually nobody will.
- DON’T assume that students with high grades are necessarily those with the strongest creative talents. It will surprise you to find that students who are not in the accelerated classes are sometimes truly gifted writers who are only waiting for the right kind of challenge.
- DON’T regard Power of the Pen as a “contest” or as an activity solely for the benefit of twelve members of a Writing Team. It is a program designed to benefit an entire Middle School student population when implemented in the right way. In fact, we encourage teachers to use the materials we provide as teaching devices in their classrooms.
- DON’T assume that students who are chosen for the team will stay with it until competition time comes along. Drops are not surprising at this age level. That’s why we encourage coaches to identify *more* than six writers for each grade level team. Writers should earn the right (just as in sports) to be an official team-member representing their school at an interscholastic event.
- DO make a commitment to be a writing team coach and let your own enthusiasm for this new activity become contagious.
- DO accept the fact that you may start out with a small group of writers, but that core will slowly build into a larger and permanent academic activity.
- DO try to get the Principal and other staff members to support you and to help in the actual identification of excellent young writers.

- DO build self-confidence in the writers you have identified by letting them know you think they can do this.
- DO write letters to the parents of potential team members telling them you think their child has talent and should be included in Power of the Pen practice sessions.
- DO recruit parent volunteers to assist you at practice. (You can teach them to be judges.)
- DO invite students you have identified (and perhaps their parents too) to a meeting where-- apart from a larger class environment-- you can tell them about the program and what challenges lie ahead. Invite them to join you in establishing a new kind of academic team that will interact with other good writers in Ohio. In short, challenge them to meet the people with whom they will ultimately compete in life itself. And emphasize, as well, that this interaction will present a chance to develop friendships beyond the limits of their own school.

If you are lucky enough to have a large body of interested writers at the outset, why not hold a mini-tournament of your own to determine the contestants who will represent their school? And finally, once you have identified your potential team members, send a notice home requiring a “contract of commitment” (see a sample contract in Forms VI p.103). At this age, good students usually want to try their hands at everything in sight. Your job is to help them make choices and to realize that honoring commitments is as important as the grades they get on their report cards.

### **Preparing Your Writers for Competition**

Once you have identified your potentially promising young writers, it is up to you to establish weekly or bi-weekly sessions with them in which the practice prompts are used as a basis for (a) writing and (b) discussion and improvement. Some schools ask parents of their writers to assist as monitors during practice writing sessions so that teachers can be free to grade papers or perform other tasks. In some schools where it is difficult for students to remain after school, writing can be done in monitored study-hall sessions or at home under parental supervision. What is important is that all practice writing is timed so that students know what to expect at the tournament.

No topic should be given to student writers in advance since they will not know the prompt at a tournament until just before the writing round begins. Learning to write with no advance knowledge of the topic is an important part of the preparation.

Most coaches have two sessions a week. One is a timed 40-minute session for writing. The second is a discussion session in which students share what they have written and evaluate it themselves in peer-group conferencing sessions.

A model of a winning composition should be shared with students (by copies or on an overhead projector) *only after they have produced a forty-minute piece of writing themselves on the same topic*. Learning will take place (and improvement with it) only when students can compare their writing with writing on the same topic that has won large audience appeal. The big questions are: Why did judges like this piece of work? Why does it have audience appeal? The answer to these questions will help students discover the important elements of good writing (with your guidance, of course).

It is not advisable to give the *Book of Winners*, which contains prompts and models, to your students at the outset. This book is a teaching tool for instructors. To allow students to use the book without supervision can inadvertently encourage plagiarism. We strongly advise coaches to use the models of excellence in the *Book of Winners* for planned learning experiences. Each model can be used to teach important elements such as: dialogue, characterization, description, detail, paragraph development, etc.

## Structuring Your Practice Sessions with the Writing Team

As a writing coach, how you choose to prepare your students is ultimately up to you. You might begin, however, by asking yourself what kind of preparation will serve their needs best. Simulating the tournament experience as often as possible will allow them to feel comfortable and know what to expect. At a tournament, they will be expected to:

1. Write in three different 40-minute rounds against five other opponents from different schools. At the end of forty minutes, their papers will be collected and evaluated by a teacher-judge from another school. They will be graded according to (a) Rank and (b) Quality Points. The highest score they can receive in each round is a “1” in Rank and a “100” in Quality Points.
2. Write on a topic not known in advance. Tournament prompts are written specifically to evoke good responses in narrative, descriptive, and persuasive types of writing. Style is open-ended, so that some prompts may evoke either a humorous or a dramatic response. What is most important is that a writer addresses the topic and remains focused on its development.
3. Write in a manner that is legible to the reader and is basically coherent. If a writer’s handwriting is hard to read, his idea may be superb but weakened by its illegibility. Scratch-outs and minor lapses in mechanics are to be expected, but sloppiness and gross errors will only detract from the total effect of the work and diminish the success of the writing. Students with poor handwriting might be asked to consider printing as a way to improve legibility.
4. Students in competition write with pens (medium, and preferably black ball-point) on two-part carbon-less forms that allow us to “send home” a copy of all writing done at the tournament and still keep a copy of all written work for our files. This means that students should have some practice using the two-part writing form and pressing down with their ball-point. Samples of the forms used by Power of the Pen in competition may be ordered for practice use (See the “Materials Order Form” in the Forms section of this *Manual*.)

In practice sessions, coaches should try to prepare students to:

- Think and write under the constraints of time.
- Arrive at interesting approaches to topics.
- Use dictionaries or a Thesaurus (both permitted as writer-aids at Districts and Regionals, but *NOT* at State) only when time permits to double check spelling and improve vocabulary.
- Discover what ingredients of writing appeal to readers and how they can improve their own efforts. Mini-exercise sessions, for instance, in using concrete imagery, using dialogue effectively, and working on effective beginnings and endings is time well spent.
- Be aware that they are writing for an audience by creating a real and varied audience for them. To do this, make copies of the official Power of the Pen ballot, randomly arrange student work in sets of six, and ask other staff members, and even professionals in the community, to evaluate their work. This evaluation process will give each writer input from a broader range of readers. It will also allow you, as the program supervisor, to remain more objective in the selection of a team.

## The Role of a Writing Coach

Nobody can better define what it's like to be a writing coach than a teacher who undertakes this new kind of challenge. Frequently we receive letters from teachers describing how they implement Power of the Pen as an enrichment activity and also how they use it as a writing program to facilitate student writing in their individual classrooms. In summary, here is what a writing coach must do:

1. Identify excellent young writers within the school population and direct their talents toward this new interscholastic challenge. It is the enthusiasm of the coach that will ultimately determine the size and spirit of the team.
2. Set up practice sessions that prepare individual contestants or writing teams for interscholastic competition.
3. Fund-raise if necessary for entry fees and/or writing team T-shirts (Many schools have these custom-designed.) Schools that wish to use our logo on shirts of their own design must pay a \$25 use fee. See the "Logo Use" form in the Forms Section at the end of the *Manual*.
4. Review the guidelines for holistic evaluation carefully so that you-- as a teacher-judge-- will be prepared for competition yourself.
5. Return all forms required promptly so that plans for the tournament can be executed smoothly. (This is especially important for the "Contestant and Judge Names" and "Permission to Publish" forms.)
6. Turn in purchase orders, if your school requires them, to expedite the payment of fees.
7. Involve parents as volunteer supporters of this new activity. Parents are always needed to assist in many capacities at the interscholastic events, and each school is required to bring along at least one parent volunteer to the initial District as well as the Regional tournament.
8. Mark your calendar well in advance so that you are prepared to accompany your writing team to the interscholastic events. Enlist the aid of other qualified teachers to act as judges if needed.
9. Promote your school's participation and success by getting press releases out to local newspapers.
10. If you are dedicated beyond these duties, get involved in the State Committee. This Ohio-based program needs educational pioneers to steer it toward national growth. Just let your Regional Coordinator know that you are willing to help or call the State Office to discuss areas of involvement best suited to your interests.
11. Adhere to the "Checklist for the Writing Team Coach". It contains the deadlines you have to meet.

## Educational Benefits of Power of the Pen

1. It encourages schools to identify, challenge and reward excellent young writers.
2. It brings together students from different schools who share a common interest in writing. With this newly achieved group identity, they constitute a "visible majority." This lends new-found prestige to the skill of written expression.
3. Interscholastic competition inspires schools to take greater pride in their young writers and to develop more effective in-school programs to foster excellence in written expression.
4. The community becomes more aware of the importance of writing through public events. Writing becomes a less private affair.
5. It creates awareness at a young age of the importance of writing as a competitive skill in the job market.

6. It provides the opportunity and experience to write under pressure (three rounds of impromptu writing), preparing students for the demands imposed by exams and the pressured tempo of a high-tech society's communications.
7. It allows young writers to develop pride, confidence, and self-esteem and to enjoy greater respect from their peers.
8. It awakens and strengthens the creative voices of young writers.
9. Pre-tournament topics and practice techniques, as well as copies of written work and evaluations from teacher-judges, provide schools with a practicum for teaching improvement skills.
10. Teachers benefit from the experience by learning how to evaluate work holistically-- by learning how to identify beyond the realm of mechanics the elements of good writing.
11. Teachers are able to measure the competency of their own writers against writing done in other schools. Through the identification of certain middle schools as strongholds of writing excellence, in-service programs are developed that offer opportunities for sharing successful techniques and methodology in the teaching of writing skills.
12. Writing competency is State-mandated. The program assists schools in upgrading student skills through practice and interscholastic experiences which are not only beneficial but highly enjoyable for the participants. It is a program that helps teachers and young writers to meet all the benchmarks required by the State of Ohio for Grades 7 and 8.



## Every Champion Has a Coach

by  
Alvine Wilson\*

“Coach Wilson.” Gosh, who could have predicted twenty-three years ago that I’d be signing my name that way? Aren’t I the one who stood in line for almost two hours to change my physical education requirement from team sports to folk and national dance?

“Coach Wilson.” It has kind of a nice sound; doesn’t it? Did I ever dream while studying Restoration Literature and Psycholinguistics that somewhere in my professional career I’d become involved in team endeavors? Nah. Not me.

Basketball? Football? Soccer? It’s apparent that I have the skills for none of these so just what is it that I coach? Writing, of course. A full season of interscholastic training and competition, fall to spring, culminating in a State writing tournament has me appreciate just what it takes to earn the title, “Coach.” Team selection, training sessions, bus permits, fund-raisers-- I’ve learned how to do all these things in the past two years all because of a special program called POWER OF THE PEN.

Power of the Pen is a series of interscholastic writing tournaments (presently designed for grades 7 and 8) which encourages schools to identify creative talent, challenge bright young minds to think and write under pressure, and reward the best writers at District, Regional and State levels of interscholastic competition. Founded in 1986 by Lorraine Merrill, an English teacher

at Nordonia Middle School, the program has become a statewide model for national competition. It allows young writers to meet, compete, and receive recognition for excellence in impromptu writing.

Many other types of essay contests exist, but all invariably measure and reward edited and revised samples of work produced under home or school supervision. No program comparable to Power of the Pen exists, however, that brings together schools, teachers, and writers in interscholastic competition to measure more accurately the skills of creative thought and expressiveness. Writing under the constraints of time and in response to topics not known in advance provides this measurement.

In actual competition, [at Middle School-hosted Districts, or college/ university-hosted Regionals], students write three impromptu rounds each forty minutes long. The prompts are kept secret until time for the actual round. Writers must respond, revise, and edit their work in the forty minute sessions. Their compositions are judged, and ranked against other writers in their round, assigned quality points, and given overall ratings in the tournament. Based on quality points and overall merit, students receive certificates indicating Superior, Honors, or Merit awards for their efforts. Teams and individuals compete for trophies and the [eventual] honor of being invited

to compete at the State tournament. (The top twenty per cent at Regionals are given State invitations.)

At West Carrollton, the response to this program has been terrific. For the past several years, the best and most interested writers have engaged in a series of after school “write-offs” to determine team members. That has meant each year that approximately sixty students compete in the junior high write-offs. No interested students are excluded from trying out, but invitations are issued to those who have been identified as excellent writers by their English teachers. Spring writing sample scores help in identifying potential eighth grade team members. By November, the team of ten each from seventh and eighth grade has been selected and then narrowed to six from each grade who actually compete at the tournament. (We still train with all members.)

The writing team meets to write, revise, and edit each week after school. Meetings last longer than forty minutes because students are eager to share their writings with each other for approval and critique.

Audience. Purpose. Voice. Vocabulary. These are the terms that have become everyday language for members of the junior high writing team. As a “coach”, I’ve experienced quite a bit of personal satisfaction in helping these young writers develop their writing potential.

*\*Now retired, Alvine Wilson’s role as Writing Team Coach is now in the hands of other teachers at West Carrollton.*

## **How I Use Power of the Pen to Facilitate Writing**

by  
Charles Debelak

Power of the Pen is not merely a competition, but rather a comprehensive writing approach that builds writing skills into children while they prepare for the competition. Power of the Pen does more for teaching writing than any other program I've observed in my 25 years in the field of education.

Other competitions certainly have their place, but most fail to affect the vast majority of student writers in elementary and junior high schools. In the past, I entered my students' work in many writing competitions. Gradually, I questioned the value. First, a child's work has often gone through numerous revisions under the eye of parents and teachers. Unfortunately, participation by adults is seldom sterile, so it is questionable how much of the final product is solely the child's. Secondly, the larger competitions tend to reward the truly gifted writer. The vast majority of students have little opportunity to win any recognition simply because they are outclassed by those of exceptional ability.

Power of the Pen, however, is quite different. As a competition it first provides an extrinsic goal for the children. Then it puts the writing process, from creative thought to a final, developed product, into the hands of each child regularly and consistently. At least this is the way I have used the program in my own classroom. My children, through the Power of the Pen program, are becoming writers, and I am absolutely thrilled. They not only can write, they enjoy writing. And as a teacher, I cannot tell you what gratification it is to send my children off to high school knowing each of them is able to compose a coherent essay or story.

...I want you to know how I have used the program and why I believe Power of the Pen can be a vital part of every writing program.

First of all, using the prompts, I have my fifth through eighth graders write at least one essay per week. In the lower grades I allow more time, but the seventh and eighth graders work within the forty minute confine. This means that each child is writing a complete composition each week, ranging from 150-500 words. That is practice. And interestingly enough, the children are not bored with all this writing, but in fact they beam with enthusiasm on "POP Day". Seldom does a week go by when the children don't pester me asking, "Mr. Debelak, when is Power of the Pen Day?" I love to see their enthusiasm. But more importantly to me, by the very fact that they write so often, their writing has improved immensely. Even if I did nothing other than have them write each week, their growth as writers would be marked.

Secondly, because writing for Power of the Pen is assessed according to six general elements, the children must learn to continually incorporate style, development, grammar, spelling, etc. into each piece they write. On my part, I use the essays written in the previous week to hone my skill lessons. When sentence structure is monotonous, we spend time learning to vary sentence length. If the development of creative ideas wanes, I will teach them strategies to expand their theme, or techniques to conclude a good essay poignantly. Grammar lessons are easily derived from the multitude of mistakes made the week before. And when vocabulary grows trite, we review the use of the Thesaurus and talk about how to choose precise nouns and verbs. Teaching skills in this manner is so valuable because the individual skills and the completed essay are handled at the same time. They work together, and the children easily draw the connections whereby their next paper frequently reflects the skills we just covered. Surely you can appreciate my excitement. Parallel structure and all the other literary terms and techniques which so often gather dust in children's minds actually mean something to these students because they are working with them all the time.

Furthermore, because my students are writing weekly, I am continually training their ability to think. First, they are learning to be creative. Every essay begins with 5-10 minutes of brainstorming (for which we do many training exercises). I love watching their faces as they ponder which direction they will let their ideas sail. Because I read most of their essays during the following week, each child tries his/her best to write a response that will be striking to the others. They love to show off their creative skill and draw admiration from their readers. Second, they are learning to be analytical. Many of the prompts encourage careful thought. Therefore, the students must organize their reasoning before laying out a persuasive or argumentative essay. So they are not just writing a story. They are creating as well. They are analyzing. In essence, they are involved with the fundamental purpose of writing.

Also, because Power of the Pen prompts address several areas of writing, my children become experienced at writing essays that are narrative, descriptive, persuasive, humorous, and self-reflective. Their ability to approach any topic is automatically enhanced as week after week they approach a new prompt which leads them on exciting paths of self-expression. Since they are writing varied essays each week, many of them have the opportunity to develop their style. It is so gratifying to have children recognize they have particular talents in creating unique plots, or in developing humorous stories, or in presenting logical arguments, or in expressing their deepest feelings. Personal style emerges from the depths of their young hearts.

Needless to say... I am excited about Power of the Pen. My only regret is that I can only enter one team on the seventh and eighth grade level because using this program within my classroom has turned even the mediocre student into a formidable writer. I do my best to placate those who do not make the team. Before the district and regional competition, I have everyone stay at my house the night before for a Power of the Pen party. Then we go to the competition together. Those who are not on the team come along as "runners." They feel too much a part of the writing team not to be included.

May I conclude by thanking you again for helping fulfill a writing teacher's long time aspiration. Through the help of Power of the Pen, [Birchwood is] now producing classrooms of competent, inspiring writers... And you have the right to share in my pride and gratification. Power of the Pen has hit the mark.

Sincerely,

Charles W. Debelak  
*Principal and English Teacher*  
The Birchwood School  
Cleveland, Ohio

*Note: Birchwood, one of Power of the Pen's veteran schools, is one of the highest ranking schools in Ohio.*

## Parents Can Also Coach a Team

by Bob Sikon

I first became involved with Power of the Pen in 2005 as a parent/coach for the St. Angela Merici 7<sup>th</sup> grade team. Since they were 7<sup>th</sup> graders, 2005 was their first experience with the program.

It quickly became evident to me that my students loved to write. To them, writing was fun. It was an activity that they looked forward to and enjoyed, so I made it my primary goal to keep our sessions as enjoyable as possible.

Equal time was allotted to writing and reading. Not only did the team love to write, but they also liked to read their work aloud to their teammates.

Prompts were assigned for writing in class and at home. In class, we held to a 40-minute time limit. This was, of course, to prepare them for competition. I was less concerned with how long they took to write an essay at home, however. For home practice, I was more concerned with giving them the additional opportunity to write and exercise their imaginations.

I tried to make things a bit more interesting throughout the year by adding a couple of special activities and challenges.

For instance, we practiced character development. On several occasions, we created new characters by writing fictional “biographies”.

I also discovered that we weren’t writing with enough dialogue. To practice, as a team, we created two characters. I broke the team into pairs and asked them to write a prompt, as a two person team, using mostly dialogue to tell their story. Each writer took on the “role” of one of the characters that we had created.

Special “challenges” were issued. I compiled a list of “mystery words”. These were simple, everyday, words that I assigned to the students. Each student had a different word. The task was to write a prompt while hiding the “mystery word” in the story. After the writing was complete, each student read their story to the team. The writer’s goal was to hide the word so well that their teammates couldn’t guess the “mystery word”. Of course, the team’s goal was to guess the word. Several students accepted the challenge of hiding two and even three words in their essays!

Similarly, I asked the team to give me twelve words. I compiled those words into a list and assigned them with a prompt. It was their job to use all twelve of these unrelated words in their essay. It was a challenging task but one that they accepted with pleasure.

The whole Power of the Pen experience has been rewarding for both me and my students. In fact, we were fortunate enough to win First Place at our District tournament as well as have one of our writers win 10<sup>th</sup> place in the 2005 State tournament.

The enjoyment didn’t stop with our success at State. Even after the school year ended, we created a Summer Writing Club that was attended not only by veteran Power of the Pen writers but by other interested students as well. The success of this endeavor really paid off. This year over 40 students (!) have tried out for the Writing Team. Together, throughout the Power of the Pen season, we all learned and grew as writers.

-by Bob Sikon, *Parent Coach*,  
St Angela Merici School in Fairview Park

## Using the Prompts for Practice

Power of the Pen prompts are designed to evoke a creative response from the writer. By way of contrast, expository writing is explanatory in nature and requires a body of factual knowledge which the writer communicates to the reader. Whereas expository writing requires the writer to use a voice more like that of a teacher, creative writing encourages the early development of individual style: the writer's voice reflects the personality of the writer or main character. Power of the Pen prompts search the student's personal experience and allow him or her to respond narratively, descriptively, or persuasively. The prompts also allow (generally) humorous or dramatic treatment- which is not normally the case with expository writing.

Power of the Pen's prompts are also intended to produce an *immediate* response. Contestants are expected to address the prompt and move from rough draft to a finished copy within a 40-minute time frame. Each District and Regional event is structured across three such rounds of writing. At the State Tournament, the time is reduced to 35 minutes, and finalists write one additional round.

Coaches can best prepare contestants for competition by assigning as many practice prompts as possible before a tournament takes place. They may design their own prompts- which often proves to be a stimulating challenge for Writing Team Coaches- or they may use Power of the Pen's practice prompts as found in each year's *Book of Winners*. This is an annual publication that contains both (a) the prompts which actually appeared at all tournaments within that program year, and (b) the best student writing, as determined by the tournament judges, that these prompts evoked. These results, many teachers find, serve as models of excellence that truly inspire their students ("Why didn't I think of that?" "I could do better than that!"). They are fast becoming indispensable teaching aids in Ohio's Middle School language arts classrooms.

Additional prompts for practice appear in past copies of *The Book of Winners* and in three volumes of *Prompts that Put Power in the Pen*. These publications are available from the State Office for a small fee. Use the "Order Form" in the Forms section of this *Manual* to purchase these supplements.

## Holistic Grading

Most research and study being done today points to one glaring conclusion: the tedious process of correcting papers with red ink does little to improve the quality of written expression. English teachers who have been using this standard approach to grading compositions for years are often uncomfortable with this conclusion because it immediately raises the question-- *How then do we teach Johnny to write?*

Recent studies also reveal that competency in written expression is the subtle synthesis of a number of factors. Among them are

- (1) the reading background of the writer (a good reader is usually a good writer);
- (2) the environment of the writer (a child who grows up with role models who value reading, writing, and communication is often a good writer); and
- (3) experience itself (the child who has a variety of experiences to talk about will have more to say and the motivation to say it).

Practice too-- that is, the frequency of the writing experience seems to make a difference. Motivating writers with interesting, challenging assignments also seems to be a factor in stimulating the expression of equally interesting thoughts.

At any rate, amid all of this study, holistic grading is an approach that forces the reader's attention away from the mere mechanics of a paper and allows the reader to focus on the whole result. According to Charles Cooper in *Evaluating Writing* (NCTE, 1977),

*Holistic simply means that a paper, read quickly, can be ranked according to the general (or whole) impressions that it gives a reader, since obviously many aspects of writing, including vocabulary, sentence structure, surface features, ideas, etc. contribute to its total impression.*

Power of the Pen encourages teachers who act as judges at its interscholastic tournaments to use the "general impressions" approach in evaluating the merit of student work. No analytical point system is used because the process of analyzing a piece of writing distracts a reader from simply enjoying it. Common sense tells us that we do not read a novel or a short story with a score sheet in hand. Even the success of TV fare is determined by its total viewer-appeal. If a piece of writing succeeds, it is because all of the elements which compose it fit together in such a way that it makes us laugh... or cry... or because it inspires us. Sometimes it provides us with a vivid avenue of escape from reality, or conversely it plummets us into a world of stark reality. But whatever it does is done effectively, and behind what it does is a Voice and a Purpose.

Although many guidelines are available for holistic evaluation, Power of the Pen discourages their use at tournaments because judges, we have found, forget to be good readers when they are busy following check lists. We ask, instead, that you study in advance the criteria listed on the ballot and also study in advance the very simple guide to holistic evaluation included in this manual. Then come to the tournament trusting to your good judgment as an intelligent and sensitive reader, ready to read student work and appreciate the voices of young writers.

A short orientation session is held at each tournament prior to the rounds of writing to give additional support and instructions to judges. If, after reading this material and studying the sample ballot, you feel insecure about your role as a judge, contact your regional coordinator. If enough teachers express the need for pre-tournament orientation, such a session will be arranged at workshop sites throughout Ohio.

## **Holistic Evaluation** or **General Impression Scoring**

It is difficult-- if not impossible-- to write the perfect prescription for “good writing”. But there is fairly universal agreement among teachers and students of writing that one can point to certain characteristics which are *generally* found in successful writing and which are *generally* lacking in writing that is not successful.

This sample guide is not designed for determining the *rank* of writers in a round. Rather, like many holistic charts, it suggests what some of the most important elements of good writing might be and demonstrates how their absence affects a decline in quality.

### **Strong, Effective Writing that Sustains a Reader’s Interest**

Ideas are original, creative, imaginative, and interesting. Ideas are well organized, expressed with clarity. Paragraphs are well developed with vivid, descriptive detail. Sustained level of excellence of expression. Writer has strong sense of purpose and audience-- an individual style. Infrequent or no mistakes in mechanics.

### **Writing Communicates Content without Sustaining Reader’s Interest**

Well-developed topic. Well-ordered details. Clear, easily followed narrative. Some descriptive details. Fresh beginning, but style fades toward the end. Occasional errors in mechanics.

### **Writing is Clear in the Main but Lacks Organization and Detail**

Maintains general ideas of topic development. Identifiable main idea but weak organization. Little variation of sentence beginnings. Few details, little description. Punctuation marks and capitals usually used correctly.

### **Writing Lacks Clarity and Imagination**

Understandable but unimaginative language. Some concrete details. Paragraphs not clearly developed. Some ideas missing or out of order. Complete sentences but little variation-- all begin with “I” or “The”. Some errors in mechanics.

### **Writing is Difficult to Follow**

Unclear, and/or unimaginative writing. Errors in word usage distracting. Lack of clarity in ideas. Poor organization, main idea not developed. Many fragments and/or run-on sentences. Frequent errors in mechanics and syntax.

### **Writing Lacks Intelligibility**

Unclear, dull, or vague language. Many irrelevant sentences, details. Topic unidentifiable because of poor development and missing detail. Difficult to read because of excessive errors in mechanics. Paragraphs not indented. Writing unintelligible.

Developed by  
**Karen Eichler**  
Independence Middle School

## Holistic Evaluation Guide

This is a subjectively prioritized list. Categories should be weighted according to their position from top to bottom when judges make their evaluations.

<b>CATEGORY</b>	<b>SUPERIOR 100-94</b>	<b>HONORS 93-82</b>	<b>MERIT 81-75</b>
<b>CREATIVITY</b>	interpretation is unique and striking	complete but predictable prompt development	prompt is misunderstood or developed in a vague manner
<b>VOICE/UNITY</b>	theme and purpose clear; writer's style is clearly developed	unfocused theme; many parts strong but there is some lack of unity	no clear purpose or style; theme lacks appropriate development
<b>STRUCTURE/ IDEAS</b>	writing shows sustained development of idea with no loose ends; strong beginning, middle, and end	ideas are strong but not fully developed or tightly woven	writing is competent, but unimaginative and ideas are underdeveloped
<b>FIGURATIVE/ DESCRIPTIVE LANGUAGE</b>	writing contains fresh and fitting use of descriptive/figurative language	description and/or figurative language is vague or over-used	writing is unimaginative or trite
<b>PARAGRAPH/ SENTENCE STRUCTURE</b>	paragraphs are well developed and transitions are apparent; variety of sentence structure appropriate to the purpose and tone of the writing	some attempt at paragraph unity and some variety in sentence structure	work has awkward or repetitious sentences and paragraphs seem unstructured
<b>MECHANICS/ SPELLING</b>	mechanics are generally good and don't interfere with the clarity	there are enough mechanical and/or spelling errors to marginally affect clarity and distract from the unity of the writing	the mechanics and/or spelling errors interfere with the flow of the writing and affect the reader's understanding of the writing

*NOTE: This guide was drafted in May of 1991 by a special sub-committee of the Power of the Pen State Committee, chaired by Dan Kovatch and Kathy Troike of Briar Middle School. Its purpose is to assist judges in assigning Quality Points with greater accuracy.*

## A Power of the Pen Vocabulary List

Any program as highly developed and complex as Power of the Pen inevitably produces a vocabulary of its own. The following is a “short list” of Power of the Pen’s key terms— accompanied by thumb-nail definitions. Almost all touch in one way or another upon central concepts or issues, and form the basis of detailed discussion throughout various sections of the *Coach’s Manual*.

- **Best of Round:** an award given in each round at a District or Regional tournament for the best response to a prompt, as determined by a panel of independent readers, among all responses receiving a Rank Point designation of 1. (Note: there are *three* prompts— one for each round— and therefore three Best of Rounds— for *each* grade at District and Regional Tournaments.)
- **Best of the Best:** awards given for the best response to a given prompt from among *all* recipients of the relevant Best of Round awards. Best of the Best awards are made for District, Regional and State competitions— as determined by a panel of independent Judges.
- **Coach:** the person who *prepares* a school team for tournament competition. Generally (but not always) each Coach also serves as a Judge at the tournament. Generally (but not always) the Coach is a school’s language arts or English teacher. Compare “Judge”.
- **Computer Operator; Computer Scorer:** a person, generally in the Tab Room, who enters raw score data from the Judges’ ballots into a Power of the Pen computer scoring program and processes the results. The Computer Operator works in collaboration with with the Tab Room Supervisor (*q.v.*).
- **District Coordinator:** the individual charged with all local, on-site responsibilities preparing for and administering a District tournament. Generally, but not always, the District Coordinator is the Host School Coordinator (*q.v.*).
- **District Tournament:** the initial tournament from which qualifiers are drawn for a Regional Tournament. Generally, 2 or 3 District Tournaments feed into each Regional.
- **Drop:** the non-appearance of a registered contestant, Judge, or school at a tournament. A “Same Day Drop” or “Late Drop” is a non-appearance without appropriate prior notification and results in the assessment of a penalty fee.
- **Grid; Gridding:** the grouping of 6 (or 5) contestants and the appropriate number of judges (1, 2 or 3) into sections for each round of competition at a tournament according to rigid formulae. Gridding is a computerized procedure that must be completed before the tournament takes place.
- **Hire:** *see POP- supplied Judge.*
- **Holistic; holistic grading:** a *comprehensive* assessment founded in the professionally developed critical skills and total life experience of the evaluator. Generally, holistic evaluators avoid the use of a rubric (*q.v.*) except as an initial aid.
- **Host School Coordinator:** the individual from the school hosting a tournament charged with all local on-site responsibilities preparing for and administering the event.
- **Initial Fee:** the fee which a school pays upon entry into the program. This covers the cost of a one-year membership in the Ohio Interscholastic Writing League, and the entry fees for both a District and Regional tournament.

- **Initial Tournament:** the first tournament in which a school participates in a given tournament season. The Initial Tournament is generally a *District* Tournament.
- **Judge:** the person who evaluates student work at a tournament. Generally, but not always, a Judge is a Coach. Judge qualification is the subject of various discussions throughout the *Manual*. Compare “Coach”.
- **Ohio Interscholastic Writing League (OIWL):** (1) an alternate charter name under which Power of the Pen was incorporated in 1989; (2) the name under which Power of the Pen copyrights some (but not all) of its publications; (3) the name of the Ohio membership entity Power of the Pen assigns to schools enrolling in its Ohio-based programs.
- **Models of Excellence:** impromptu student responses to prompts, which can be relied upon as being authentic by virtue of the tournament conditions under which they are produced, which (1) display exceptional merit; and (2) can act as learning exemplars for other student writers.
- **Name Tag:** a label with the name of the tournament and a unique code number presented to each Contestant and Judge at a tournament, to be worn like a name tag. The purpose of the tag is not to make known the person’s identity to others; it is to provide the individual with a constant and highly visible reminder of his own code number.
- **Official Alternate:** After the District tournament, the State Office sends each school a post-tournament report designating which contestants officially qualified for regional competition. When a contestant is close to the cutoff line, he or she may be designated as an “Official Alternate.” This means that if a another regional qualifier from his or her school is unable to go on to Regionals, the Official Alternate is eligible to take his/her place as long as the grade level is the same.
- **Penalty Fees:** Assessments made when important deadlines are not met, or when last minute drops occur. Penalty fees have been authorized by the State Committee to discourage the incidence of problems that inconvenience, delay or otherwise threaten the success of a tightly scheduled interscholastic event. See the section on Fees for specific details.
- **Permission-to-Publish Form:** a routine parental release form enabling Power of the Pen to publish, and otherwise use, a student contestant’s work and any tournament photograph in which their minor child may appear without additional authorization.
- **POP-supplied Judge:** a limited option whereby a school may authorize Power of the Pen to enlist an independent Judge (as needed) to meet a part of the school’s total judging commitment. The option is only available for Regional and State tournaments, and under very strict conditions (consult the relevant discussions in the *Manual*). The option, if exercised, requires payment of an additional fee. Also referred to as “Judge Hire”, “Hire”, “Supplemental Judge”.
- **Primary Contact:** the *one* person in a participating school to whom Power of the Pen addresses all written communications concerning non-billing matters. By default, Power of the Pen designates the 8th Grade Coach (if there is one, or unless it is otherwise directed) as the Primary Contact.
- **Prompt:** a brief statement, generally no more than two or three sentences long, designed to elicit a student’s creative response. Power of the Pen’s prompts are intended to produce narrative, descriptive, and persuasive writing— opposed to expository.
- **Quality Points:** one of the two scores given to each piece of student work by Judges at a Tournament. Quality Points designate the Judge’s evaluation of the *overall achievement level* of the contestant’s writing. Quality Points correspond roughly with conventional classroom percentage grading; they fall within the range of 75-100. Compare *Rank Points*.

- **Rank Points:** one of the two scores given to each piece of student work by Judges at the Tournaments. Rank Points designate the *comparative position* of a given contestant's paper within the 6 (or 5) contestants writing in each Round. 1 is high; 6 is low. Compare *Quality Points*.
- **Regional Coordinator:** the individual charged with all local, on-site responsibilities preparing for and administering a Regional tournament. Generally, the Regional Coordinator assists with one or more of the District Tournaments within the Regional cluster.
- **Regional Tournament:** a tournament from which qualifiers are drawn directly for the State Tournament.
- **Rubric:** a brief rule, or set of rules, by which judgments are made; a small set of rigid criteria. Example: "Two spelling errors means getting no better than a B". Contrast "holistic".
- **Runner:** a student volunteer at a tournament who provides the physical link between the Judge(s) in a room and the Tab Room; the person who brings contestants' papers and Judges' ballots to the Tab Room and carries messages, or supplies, from the Tab Room to the Judges.
- **State Committee; Ohio State Committee:** the body of Ohio educators that meets annually to prepare for the State tournament, and to enact rules, procedures, and principles of conduct governing Power of the Pen's activities in the State of Ohio.
- **Sweepstakes:** the combination of 7th and 8th grade team scores at a tournament as a total School Team result. Sweepstakes trophies are given only at Regional and State Tournaments.
- **Tab Room:** the room, or area, which acts as the nerve center for the tournament; the place where scores are collected and tabulated, and take-home packets are assembled.
- **Tab Room Supervisor:** the person responsible for the on-site training of volunteer help for the Tab Room, and the administration of all activities in the Tab Room. Frequently, the Tab Room Supervisor is also the District or Regional Coordinator; also frequently, the Tab Room Supervisor administers on-site pre-tournament registration.
- **Take-home Packet:** the materials assembled in the Tab Room during the course of the tournament for the Coach to take home at the conclusion of the Awards presentation. These materials include all writing produced at the tournament by his/her student contestants and all of the tournament Judges' evaluations of their work.

*Section II*

**PARTICIPATING  
IN THE  
TOURNAMENT**



**Power of the Pen**

*Section II*  
Participating in the Tournament

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## **Conflicting Dates, and Other Problems**

While Power of the Pen does its best to see that tournament dates do not conflict with other major activities that are available to seventh and eighth grade students, it cannot avoid the occasional case when a tournament and another event happen to fall on the same date. We publish our calendar far enough in advance, however, so that both coaches and students have enough basic information for making choices which work best for them.

As adults, we constantly face conflicting commitments and priorities. We make what we hope are the best decisions-- and then try to follow through on them. We should be encouraging our students to do likewise.

Still, some things can (and will) change at the last moment. That is why we push the deadlines for last-minute changes to the last possible moment (96 hours before a District tournament!) and at this level we also encourage the use of alternate writers- to fill in for any possible last-minute no-shows.

No refunds of fees can be expected, however, when a student, or a judge, or a school determines in the last few days before the time of the event-- when the gridding has been programmed and printed, the computerized scoring templates customized to the event, and all of the other preparations are firmly in place-- that there is no binding commitment to show up. Furthermore, a school that does not show up on the day of the event without ample advance notice incurs a severe penalty fee for jeopardizing the integrity of the painstakingly pre-programmed experience for the other participating schools, as well as running the risk of disqualification from participating in the program in following years.

A school which faces a conflict on the date of the District tournament to which it has been invited is encouraged to inquire about attending a *different* District tournament within the same or neighboring Regional area by calling the State Office- 330-659-3226. According to a ruling by the State Committee (April, 1994), schools may not change sites without making a request in writing and stating the reasons for the change. These procedures are followed to discourage random moves that affect the pre-planned size of the tournament. Schools attending a District event are required to attend the Regional associated with that same District.

### **Dealing with Irresponsibility at the Middle School Level**

It is frustrating for the Middle School teacher when a student at this adolescent age makes commitments and then, quite unexpectedly, breaks them and shows no sense of responsibility to his or her team-mates. It is not unusual for the State Office to receive a call from a 7th or 8th grade coach who-- almost on the verge of tears- tells of a student who has decided to be a mat maid for the Wrestling Team instead of going to Regional competition, or a student who can't make it because of a vacation planned with the family.

This kind of frustration can often be nipped in the bud by one or two simple expedients applied early in the game. First, require students who want to be on the Writing Team to sign a "Contract of Commitment" spelling out what is expected of them- as a condition of participating. Second, consider requiring a co-signature by the parent or guardian as well as the student's. A sample Contract of Commitment appears in the Forms section of this *Manual*.

## Number of Judges Required at Events

*General:* The number of Judges a school must supply for a tournament is not arbitrary. In order for a tournament to take place, there must be a predictable ratio of Judges to Contestants. The numerous discussions that appear throughout the Manual give clear indication of how essential this is. (See the various sections relating to Judges, fees, rules, gridding, etc.) When adhered to, the number requirements listed below allow the tournament to be gridded successfully and to provide, as well, sufficient manpower to insure that all the basic Tab Room operations will be covered.

### District

**Numbers required:** one Judge per each grade level team, regardless of the number of contestants on the team(s). This is an absolute requirement. ***A school that cannot supply a qualified Judge for any team cannot enroll that team.***

**Qualifications:** At the District level, those who are best qualified to judge are the Teacher/Coaches at each grade level who have used Power of the Pen prompts and models in the classroom and who have guided their own contestants through practice sessions and preparation for competition. In those schools where one teacher acts as coach to both 7th and 8th grade teams, it is the responsibility of the school to enlist and train a second judge. That person may be an in-school member of the staff who teaches a content area other than language arts, or a parent or member of the outside community who holds a college degree. In both cases, the team coach must make certain that the Judge (1) has read the Power of the Pen *Coach's Manual* and is comfortable with program procedures and philosophy; (2) receives personal training from a Writing Team Coach or at a Power of the Pen training session; (3) reads and evaluates at least 6 sets of papers using holistic evaluation; and (4) is familiar with all salient features of the tournament format and scoring system.

### Regional

**Numbers required:** Each school must supply, or arrange for: (a) 1 Judge for 1-3 student contestants PER GRADE LEVEL TEAM, or (b) 2 judges for 4-6 contestants per grade level team. *Example: if a school has 5 Seventh graders and 2 Eighth graders going to regional, it must supply- or otherwise arrange for- 3 Judges- 2 for 7th, and 1 for 8th.*

When *two* judges are required at each (or both) grade level(s), a school has the privilege of exercising a “Supplementary (‘Hire’) Judge” option to help meet a part of its overall commitment. There is, however, an absolute requirement which it cannot use the option for: this is the one-Judge-per-grade-level-team threshold. The Supplementary (“Hire”) Judge option may be exercised for the *second Judge only* required of grade level teams numbering 4-6 contestants. (Example: in the preceding example- 5 Seventh graders, and 2 Eighth graders- the school could exercise the option of replacing the second judge required of the Seventh grade team with a “Supplementary Judge”— *but no others.*

The fee for the “Supplementary (‘Hire’) Judge” option is \$50 per Judge- whether or not Power of the Pen must, in fact, hire additional people to meet the gridding requirements for the tournament.

The absolute requirement provides a reasonable expectation (but not a mathematical certainty) that there will be a sufficient number of school-supplied Judges to grid the event.

Qualifications: The qualifications for Regional Judges are more stringent. To be qualified at the Regional level, the Judge must either (1) have had prior experience in judging at a Power of the Pen event; or (2) have received formal training at a certified Power of the Pen training session. Such training sessions are held periodically at various sites throughout the State of Ohio.

### State

Numbers required: The formula for State is the same as that for Regional: Each school must supply, or arrange for: (a) 1 Judge for 1-3 student contestants per grade level team, or (b) 2 judges for 4-6 contestants per grade level team. *Example: if a school has 5 Seventh graders and 2 Eighth graders going to State, it must supply- or otherwise arrange for- 3 Judges- 2 for 7th, and 1 for 8th.*

Each school has an absolute requirement to supply *at least half of its total required number of Judges*. In the preceding example, if a school has 7 contestants, and its total judge requirement is 3, it *must in fact* supply 2 (qualified) Judges. As is the case for Regionals, a “Supplementary (‘Hire’) Judge” option is available, once the minimum threshold is met, for those schools that need it. Note, however, that the Supplementary (‘Hire’) Judge option can only be applied for the *second required Judge* at a given grade level.

‘Waiver of Requirement’: The “at least half of its total required number of Judges” stipulation necessarily implies that any school attending State *must supply at least one qualified judge*.

We recognize that there are times when this last condition presents a real hardship. It may involve a Writing Team Coach with an enthusiastic State qualifier- especially a teacher from a small school, possibly facing a budget crisis, sending one qualifier, travelling some distance, facing the expense of an over-night. And the harassed Writing team Coach is probably caught up in a web of calendar conflicts at the end of the school year as well.

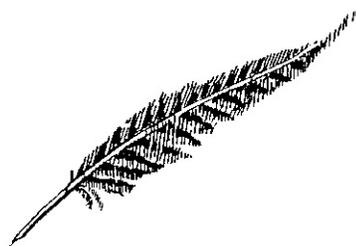
Under such circumstances where there is one writer and no coach, and upon proper request (in writing), the Executive Director *may* relax the “*at least one qualified judge*” requirement. If so, it is with the following four stipulations, to which no exceptions can be made.

- (a) The Coach must arrange for- and supply to Power of the Pen- in writing- the name, address, telephone number, and relationship of a responsible (non-Judging) adult who will accompany the student(s) to and from the tournament site, and who will be available *at all times* during the course of the event in case of an emergency.
- (b) The Writing Team Coach is responsible for providing the parent-chaperone in advance with (1) copies of all necessary information in the school’s possession concerning the State tournament; (2) basic orientation in the procedures followed at Registration and subsequently in the tournament itself.
- (c) The Writing Team Coach and his/her school school must take care of the payment of all fees- both registration and conference- *in advance*.
- (d) A school sending no school coach to State must pay a premium fee (\$100) for the replacement Judge AND instruct the parent chaperone to assist in the Tab Room as needed.

SCHOOLS WHICH TAKE THIS PROVISION FOR GRANTED AND SEND A STUDENT TO STATE ON THEIR OWN WITH A PARENT WHO HAS NOT BEEN WELL-INFORMED IN ADVANCE ABOUT RULES AND FEES MAY BE FINED FOR BURDENING POWER OF THE PEN WITH RESPONSIBILITIES WHICH BELONG PROPERLY TO THE SCHOOL.

Under no circumstances will the Executive Director exempt a school from the minimum threshold requirement when 2 or more student contestants from the school are involved.

Qualifications: Only those persons who have had prior experience as a Power of the Pen Judge may judge at a State Tournament. A school which fails to observe this requirement may be disqualified.



### *Notes to Myself and Reminders*

## Instructions for Tournament Judges

An orientation for judges is held at each tournament before the first round of writing begins. For the purpose of arriving at the identification of excellence in a uniform manner, a video is also available for viewing at the District level when time permits. It is suggested that judges follow these procedures:

1. Read through all of the papers in each round quickly but comprehensively.
2. Arrive at the best composition. Give it a rank of 1 (the highest score). Then assign it quality points according to its overall merit. Remember that the best paper in each round will *not necessarily* be in the 90's. The highest paper might possibly be an 85 or even an 80, depending on the overall quality of writing in the round.
3. This paper becomes the "measuring rod" or "post" against which all other papers are ranked and assigned quality points in descending order. *Do not duplicate rank point or quality points awards.*
4. The assignment of quality points is very important for two reasons.
  - (1) They will indicate whether the round was a tough one or an average one and give the writer a better idea of what his/her holistic score actually means.
  - (2) In the case of Districts and Regionals, they will be used to break ties. At State, they determine the winners.
5. Even though two papers may be very close in quality or rank, a decision must be made that gives one an edge over the other. The guidelines for evaluation provided in this *Manual* are not intended for specific point deduction. Use them to help you in identifying the strengths of the writer's work.
6. Comments on the ballot should be helpful and encouraging. Try to remember that young writers need reassurance. Every writer in the tournament should feel valued and should leave *wanting to write more often* because the experience has been enjoyable and challenging. No improvement can take place unless the writer (through his/her own discovery) wants to improve.

Because judges seem to have the greatest difficulty in assigning Quality Points, four samples of student work will be found in the pages that follow preceded (below) by a discussion of the reasons why these scores were rightfully awarded.

## Quality Point Ratings

Evaluators generally feel more comfortable when they are ranking six papers in a round than when they are assigning Quality Points. These are scores which fall into one of three performance ratings: Superior (100-94), Honors (93-82), and Merit (81-75). It is important for teachers and students to understand that these ranges are not identical to the percentages upon which report card grades are traditionally based.

For our purposes, Judges can view these ranges broadly as an A, B, and C-- with deviations (example: 93 or 92 would be high B pluses, 94, a low A minus).

After reading a large number of papers in a short period of time at a Power of the Pen tournament and evaluating them holistically, Judges quickly develop an automatic sense of where each paper rightfully belongs. Newcomers, however, may require some assurance that their grading is comfortably in accord with what others are doing. Accordingly, we are including a set of sample student papers (8th grade), drawn from actual tournaments, with examples from each of the ranges. We have also provided notes to explain why these ratings were assigned. The papers, which follow the immediate discussion, were written in response to the prompt: *Ouch! Somebody just stepped on your feelings. Develop a narrative based on this situation.*

### I “From Battered to Beautiful” SUPERIOR (95 Quality Points)

This paper received a Rank Score of 1, went on to receive a Best of Round Award (best response to the prompt in a tournament of approximately 100 8th grade participants), and ultimately received a Best of the Best Award-- which means that it was measured against all Best of Round papers across the State written in response to that same prompt (an estimated 1,000 writers).

What this record tells us is that this composition succeeded in appealing to a wide audience. It is easy to see why. First of all, its approach to the prompt is remarkably creative and original. The prompt states figuratively that “somebody just stepped on your feelings”. The writer chooses, however, to set up a situation in her narrative in which somebody literally steps on her feelings. When the reader actually sees them lying on the floor and witnesses the pathetic attempt of the victim to administer first aid to her wounded spirit, the effect is strikingly poignant. All readers can easily identify with the feelings of the writer. Since that is the purpose of the prompt, there is no doubt that this composition deserves the highest rating. Because of the strong voice of the writer, the simple and sincere expression of feelings, and an ending that makes us want to applaud the restoration of the victim’s confidence-- we are able to overlook the minor errors in mechanics and usage, and even the occasional clichés which appear from time to time.

This paper is an excellent model for evoking honesty of expression and originality of thought.

### II “Extreme Emotions” HONORS (85 Quality Points)

While this paper at first glance appears to be well-written and to move in an organized manner from an initial expression of hurt feelings to an ending which resolves those hurt feelings, it does not attain Superior status for the following reasons. The first three paragraphs explain what happened to cause the pain, but then the writer abruptly departs from the central purpose of the paper to describe a departure by spaceship to an alien world. One half of the composition deals with this strange experience, and we begin to wonder, as readers, if we are reading two narratives instead of one. Then, almost as if the writer himself realizes with a jolt that he has strayed far away from the topic, he wakes up from this “weird dream” feeling better and finds himself able to cope with his emotions. The last sentence, however, makes reference to the alien experience instead of the real-world in which a cruel remark hurts his feelings, thus leaving the reader once again confused.

This paper is a good example of what happens when a piece of writing lacks that important ingredient: unity. Waking up from a dream is also a favorite gimmick that has become overused. Beyond these defects (which can, with guidance in post-tournament revision, be corrected), this paper reflects a strong voice and an interesting writing style.

### III “A Lost Friend” MERIT (80 Quality Points)

This paper-- although it is basically well-written in terms of mechanics, usage, unity of purpose, and logical progression of thought-- received and deserved a Rank Score of 6 and Quality Points which placed it in the performance rating of Merit. What, then, is wrong with it? Instead of writing in first person about a time in life when his own feelings got hurt, the writer chooses to personify a tennis shoe and speak from the point of view of this inanimate object which now assumes his own human voice. What about originality, you may wonder. Isn't this a paper that takes a unique approach to the topic and achieves an effect that is unusual and different from the other papers in the round? Perhaps... but this was not the intent of the prompt. What is clearly asked for and expected in the prompt is honesty. What the paper delivers is a cute gimmick that succeeds in avoiding any discussion at all of the writer's feelings.

### IV “Upperclassmen” MERIT (75 Quality Points)

This paper is offered as an additional example of writing in the Merit range because its weaknesses are different from the previous sample (“A Lost Friend”). If we agree that the central theme of this composition is how feelings are hurt and the purpose in writing is to arouse sympathy from the reader, we can immediately see why this paper falls short of these goals.

Of the six (underdeveloped) paragraphs that comprise the narrative, one paragraph (the second) deals with a description of how and why the writer's feelings were hurt and by whom. Within two sentences, which describe the injury, all we learn about the abusers is that they are “guys” who call names and play pranks. The rest of the composition deals with the writer's attempts to get even-- attempts which are described as far more severe than the injustice inflicted upon the victim. True, the writer gets paddled for getting even, but he only retaliates again with another attempt to get even. The total effect of the narrative is negligible. As a reader, we don't feel sorry for the writer or dislike the upperclassmen who pick on him. What this writer needs to do is to turn paragraph #2 into several paragraphs, using much more detailed description to characterize his assailants and specifically what they do to make his life miserable. This is a good model for demonstrating a common weakness at this age level: the inability to develop a paragraph through detail, description, and concrete imagery. This writer needs help in “showing” instead of “telling”.

Sample SUPERIOR Paper  
Quality Points awarded: 95

Pen AT \_\_\_\_\_

Contest for Young Writers

(Tournament Site)

K801 Round Number 2  
Cue: *Somebody  
stopped on your  
feelings*



Write  
Clearly

Give your work a TITLE *From Battered To Beautiful*

As I began to pick up the glass on the floor, a tear gently trickled down my cheek. I finally got it all cleaned up. I carefully placed my "feelings" in my bag and began to think of ways to get all of this "stuff" back together again. People smirked as they walked by and looked at me strangely. I was used to it and just shrugged off their comments that really jolted into my heart like a knife.

Now, I was the all-around school "geek". I was used to people throwing my feelings around like a football. But, never had anyone just come right out and stomped on them. I was so tired of being used and unpopular. Why do I have to be me? It was about time I did something about it! Maybe a beauty

make: new. um, how would you know  
class? Saxophone lessons? O.K. How  
about.....

I tried and tried to think of something that might make me more popular and help me get some friends. When I ~~came~~ got home, I carefully scooped out my wretched, wounded feelings and surveyed the damage. It was pretty severe! As I carefully ~~looked~~<sup>digged</sup> around <sup>in</sup> my first-aid kit I found my most important tool: the Bible. In it I found words of encouragement and was reminded that Jesus was always my friend, no matter what happened and he liked me for who I was. I didn't need to change! As I read on, I watched my feelings gradually begin to mend. Next, I took out the ointment of self-confidence. Rubbing it on the wounds soothed all my doubts and insecurities. Then, I covered my soul with a huge band-aid of compliments and "I'm special" person written on them. Now that I had completed my emotional surgery, I was ready to face life with new outlook. I was a "special person!" I was just what the doctor ordered! No plague of put-downs could keep me down now.

Sample HONORS Paper  
Quality Points awarded: 85

Power of the Pen AT \_\_\_\_\_  
An Interscholastic Tournament for Young Writers (Tournament Site)



Write  
Clearly

Contestant Code Number AB06 Round Number 3  
Topic (copy from board) OUCH! Somebody just stepped on  
your feelings. Develop a narrative response  
to this situation.

Give your work a **TITLE** Extreme Emotions

I walked down the hall feeling very grim. Based on past experiences I can sometimes relate to insults, but this one was the worst thing I've ever been called. Not only did this phrase slap me, it shattered my emotions. They said I was born in Odd Lots.

Really I think I should know where I was born. I can clearly see that they didn't just step on my emotions, they made a field goal with them.

As I walked down the stairs to my next period class I realized I was over exaggerating. I mean I realize it was just an <sup>immature</sup> ~~insecure~~ pun to make me angry.

Right as I was about to go to class a laser beam zapped me. Thousands of aliens stared at me. I was in some sort of space ship.

The biggest little alien started calling me names and slandering me. I ran through the ship, was I going crazy! I ran into a room that seemed to be a control place for the ship.

Quickly, I started pushing buttons. Suddenly, a transdimensional portal opened sucking me inside of a giant vortex. I was in a world where instead of people being a dominant species, dogs

... I realized that they had not seen him...  
so I was in an alley to get away.

From out of nowhere a herd of angry dog people came after me. I ran through a door and there I met McGuff the dog judge. He called me a white fantom.

The crowd of dogs forced me away and sent me to the back of the parking. Suddenly I slipped and fell off the roof.

I landed on something soft. When I opened my eyes I realized I had been dreaming the whole thing. All of this just because the coach cut me and I felt lonely.

I stood up feeling better. Who cares if I got cut. At least I tried. I'll just have to learn to cope with my emotions better the next time. That way I won't have more weird dreams.

I looked over just in time to see McGuff on TV saying "Take a bit out of your..."

## Sample MERIT Paper

Quality Points awarded: 80

# Power of the Pen AT \_\_\_\_\_

An Interscholastic Tournament for Young Writers

(Tournament Site)



Write  
Clearly

Contestant Code Number F805 Round Number 3

Topic (copy from board) Ouch! Somebody just  
stepped on your feelings. Develop  
a narrative based on this situation

#6

Give your work a **TITLE** A Lost Friend

Hi! I'm an old tennis shoe that belongs to a twelve year old kid named Joey. Joey has had me for two years now. Joey used to <sup>take</sup> take me everywhere that he went. He played basketball in me, he wore me to gym class, and he even wore me on hiking trips with his friends, and he told them that I was good luck.

Then one dreadful morning, I sat waiting for Joey to come and put me on, but he never came! Instead he put on his new tennis shoes that his mom had gotten for him. Boy was I offended! I mean, I thought that we were actually friends, buddies for life, but no, he drops me for the new ones, that will probably give him blisters, and get holes in them. Personally, I thought that I was much better looking than them.

What am I supposed to do now? I mean, what's an old worn out shoe like me supposed to do these days? No one wants me, they wouldn't give a nickel for me. I'm finished! That's all there is.

to it! I'm done for it!  
I'm not going to sit around here all my  
life in an old smelling closet with nothing  
to do but whine. I'm getting out of this place.  
I'm going to find some dog to play with. I'm  
sure he won't throw me away!

# Sample MERIT Paper

Quality Points awarded: 75

## Power of the Pen

AT \_\_\_\_\_

An Interscholastic Tournament for Young Writers

(Tournament Site)



Write  
Clearly

Contestant Code Number 0803 Round Number three

Topic (copy from board) OUCH! Somebody just stepped on  
my feelings develop a narrative based on the  
situation.

Give your work a **TITLE** "Upperclassmen"

It was a cold, harsh and windy day. The wind sliced out me like a knife. I was bundled up warm and I was headed for the bus stop.

When I reached school I was being picked and shoved and called names that I despised as I would go to class. When I reached my locker the guys had put my books in my friend's locker.

By lunch I was getting pretty fed up with all of their pranks. So I decided to get all of their belongings and put them in the showers. I turned on the showers and let them run.

I had to pay for what I did to them, the principal paddled me, my father paddled me, and the guys beat me up.

I was really glad I had got them back but they were still picking on me so I got myself a plan. My teacher didn't like people that picked on little kids so I told them my problem, they settled it.

I guess it takes a lot to be able to live with upperclassmen.

## Judges' Comments on Ballots

In addition to determining the Rank and Quality Point awards for each of the six papers in the round, the Judge is asked to make a short comment about each paper. This third part in the evaluation process is particularly significant to the student writer: he is more than just a little anxious to see what the anonymous reader-audience-judge has to say about *his* work. If what he finds is harsh, or somehow inappropriate-- and doesn't offer something that is positive and reinforcing-- it can very easily reduce him from the brink of high expectation to a state of despair.

Fortunately, this is something that does not occur *too* often. But there *are* times when it does. And when it does, an occasional disheartened teacher-coach may send the offending ballot back to the State Office with a note begging us to remind Judges of the need to write *constructive* comments.

What kinds of comments are "constructive"? What are "non-constructive"?

Before attempting to answer that question, let us first consider what, at their best, judges' comments should accomplish:

- They should sustain or increase, but certainly not diminish, the confidence of the writer.
- They should acknowledge enthusiastically outstanding talent whenever it appears.
- They should offer helpful suggestions to writers whose work reflects the need for improvement.

The fact that a student is present at the event is testimony to (1) the student's interest in writing, and/or (2) the teacher's belief in the student's ability. The mission of the evaluator, then, regardless of how the paper ranked in the round, or what its overall quality was, is to assist the writer in becoming a better writer-- or to revel in the discovery of outstanding talent.

Comments, of course, can sometimes be misinterpreted by contestants. Some coaches are wise in withholding the ballots from their students until they have had a chance to read and understand them themselves. Then they are in a better position to guide their students toward a clearer understanding of the ballot: its scores and its comments.

Because this is an area that requires on-going attention and thought, we formed a team of Tab Room evaluators during the 1994 tournament season with a special mission. Part of their task was to collect examples of Judges' comments and to transcribe them verbatim from actual ballots: whatever seemed either clearly "positive" or clearly "negative". We share a representative sampling of these with you at this time in the hope that they will assist you in this important part of the evaluation process.

### Constructive Comments

1. I truly enjoyed your story. It was creatively written, suspensefully executed, and delightfully told!

*This comment tells the writer loud and clear that an audience totally appreciated the composition. The accompanying high scores in both Rank (1) and Quality Points (98) affirms the talent of the writer.*

2. Perhaps your approach to the prompt was a bit too ambitious for the length of time you had to develop the idea. The narrative needs more detailed development and deserves the time I hope you'll give it on your own.

*While this comment does not praise, it offers an honest appraisal of the work and an indication that the idea is good enough to merit further development. The comment also matches the average scores it assigned: Rank Points 3, Quality Points 88.*

3. A good narrative! But make sure your verb tenses agree throughout (past or present). When you shift tenses, it confuses the reader.

*A constructive comment because it first praises the paper, then goes on to tell specifically how it could be improved. Problems in tense, incidentally, are quite common at this age level. The score here was Rank Points 2, Quality Points 93.*

4. You got off to a good start with a strong opening; but your lack of paragraphs makes smooth reading and understanding of your composition difficult. Think of paragraphs as a kind of travel map that tells the reader when you change direction or shift gears.

*This writer can go home with confidence intact plus a mini-lesson in paragraphing. That's why this comment is a helpful one and the score (4/85) is a fair one.*

5. Very entertaining! Well thought out. I especially liked the way you started at the end and used a flash-back to tell the story. The only reason you didn't receive a first place rank was because the round was a tough one with first and second only a Quality Point apart.

*An honest comment that lets the writer know how close he was to the First Place paper. Also reveals that a round can, by the luck of the draw, be teeming with talent. (Score: 2/99)*

6. You are good at writing dialogue. But without the use of narration to describe and flesh out the characters, the story becomes only a conversation that is more suitable for the script of a play. In fact, you might want to turn it into a play as a classroom project!

*An honest and perceptive comment that will probably get this writer thinking very seriously about the difference in genre and realizing that indirect characterization also has a value. Not surprisingly, the score on this one was 6/82.*

### **non-Constructive Comments**

1. Please check your spelling. The errors tend to distract from the quality of your writing. Consider purchasing a spell checker-- only \$50.

*An extremely insensitive and inappropriate comment. Power of the Pen does not allow any aids at the tournament other than a dictionary and thesaurus; \$50 to many students is a sizable sum of money; and most important of all, we do not encourage Judges to criticize mechanics or usage. These are areas that can easily be improved in the process of revision. This Judge failed to focus on content which is of primary importance. Comments indicate that this Judge failed to read the Power of the Pen Manual for Coaches. (Score was 6/75)*

2. I really enjoyed reading this. It was interesting. Keep on writing.

*But the score given by this Judge was 6/80! It is obvious that the comment is not sincere. If the Judge truly enjoyed the writing, an explanation of the low score should have been given. The last sentence is also a condescending comment that is highly over-used.*

3. You received a low score rank because you didn't finish copying your rough draft onto the essay form. In the future try to pace yourself.

*This Judge did not listen to instructions in the orientation session. Power of the Pen does not penalize writers for failing to recopy their rough draft at the district level of competition. It is the content of the paper that matters most. The score given to this work (6/83) has highly questionable validity.*

4. This is an excellent retelling of The Running Man. Unfortunately, I've seen it too many times.

*What is most objectionable here is the Judge's sarcasm. Originality, of course, is to be praised highly. But students at this age are often not sophisticated enough to understand where literary ownership really begins and ends. A more direct statement saying that the other papers in the round approached the topic with more originality would have been more appropriate and kinder in the long run. NOTE: If a Judge believes that a writer is guilty of out-and-out plagiarism, this observation should be reported to the Tab Room so that the paper may receive a more careful judgment— according to the rules. (6/75)*

5. Vague use of words. Ideas do not flow. Hard to see what you mean.

*Unfortunately, the criticisms here can be applied to the Judge's comments as well. What is meant by the words "vague" and "flow"? If vocabulary is a problem, say so. If the writer is using too many abstractions instead of concrete words, give an example. If the writer finds it hard to see what a Judge means, the ballot is of no value to the writer. (6/75)*

6. Too many violent and disturbing thoughts. Try approaching the prompt in a more positive way.

*This comment suggests that the score of 4/80 was given because the Judge was upset by the emotional content and felt compelled to censor the piece. A judgment of this kind may too easily be interpreted as a personal attack upon the writer rather than an objective evaluation of the writer's work.*

## Writing Poetry at a Tournament?

Questions are often raised at tournaments about the acceptability of poetry-- whether it should be “allowed”. Here is the position taken by Power of the Pen.

POP is in strong disagreement with the suggestion that poetry is “not allowed”. To adhere to such a rule would be to deny the value of poetry and its use and especially to dictate the voice of the writer. We would feel uncomfortable if a student were penalized by such a ruling, for example, from employing poetic expression successfully in a passage of figurative language, or if he used it successfully to convey stream-of-consciousness thought, or if he incorporated it successfully in a longer prose piece.

It should be noted that POP does *discourage* student contestants from submitting poetry in response to tournament prompts. The reason is that part of the essence of poetry lies in its “compression”. (We distinguish here between poetry and verse). This “condensation-of-thought-and-words” normally requires a more leisurely pace than prose does for the student-writer to create successfully-- and the Judge to evaluate responsibly.

*Student-writers who ignore this recommendation generally place themselves at a severe competitive disadvantage. Even a mature, skilled poet would find writing impromptu, and writing within the time constraint of 40 minutes severely limiting.*

Second, the tournament experience requires that the Judges make rapid-fire holistic evaluations of a number of pieces of work. They cannot help but find it difficult to evaluate and compare the relative merits of compressed poetic thought against those of 5 other uncondensed prose pieces in the thirty minutes at their disposal.

While we discourage the use of poetry, we feel that we cannot, in clear conscience, disallow it. We cannot help thinking about an analogous situation in a parallel art form. A successful watercolor may very well enjoy the same high degree of artistic merit as an oil painting. But because these two works of art are expressed in different media, it would be a difficult to judge the value of one against the other. Poetry and prose are different genres. While both are valuable, it is wiser not to have to judge the merits of one against the merits of the other. Teacher-coaches are therefore advised to make these difficulties known to their contestants. The final decision is theirs.

Because poetry more often than not plays a prominent role in the life of any successful writer, we offer a major Poetry Award each year at the State Tournament . Details about this are found in the *Manual* and in the Awards brochure.

Lorraine B. Merrill, *Executive Director*  
Power of the Pen  
March 27, 1994  
*Statement Adopted by the State Committee,*  
*April 1994*

## Tournament Gridding

The assignment of student contestants and judges to the individual sections in the rounds of a tournament is called gridding. (A sample grid appears below. Note how contestants and judges receive code numbers, and that these are assigned to various rooms for the three rounds of writing.)

Each tournament in reality is *two* tournaments: a seventh grade and an eighth grade tournament. Each grade level is gridded separately; each grade level is scored separately (until the final stages at Regional and State levels where the scores for the two grade levels are spliced together to determine sweepstakes results.)

Seventh and eighth grade gridding assignments are made by computer programs prior to the tournament according to ten specific conditions:

1. Each section contains six student contestants. When the total number of contestants in the grade level is not divisible by 6, the minimum number of sections of 5 is scheduled.
2. The number of judges assigned to each section in a District Tournament is one; in a Regional Tournament, two.
3. Judges remain in one location for all the rounds. This is to facilitate grading papers. Contestants move to different rooms between rounds. This is to provide an opportunity for a short “activity break”.
4. No judge is assigned a contestant from his own school.
5. No judge is assigned the same student more than once during the course of the tournament.
6. No student contestant is judged by a judge from his own school (this is the same as #4 above), and no contestant is judged by the same judge more than once.
7. No student competes against another student from his own school during the course of the tournament (District, Regional, and the morning rounds of State).
8. Normally, no student competes against a student from another school more than once during the course of the tournament (District, Regional, and the morning rounds of State).
9. In the case of Regional Tournaments preceded by two or more District Tournaments, every effort is made to distribute the District qualifiers proportionately through the sections so that the contestants are competing across District lines to the greatest extent possible.
10. A final gridding condition can only be met when there is a minimum of 19 schools in a District Tournament (22 in a Regional), with 114 District contestants (132 for the Regionals), and 19 judges at a District (38 at a Regional) per grade level: *No contestant will meet more than one contestant representing any given school in the course of the tournament.*

### Gridding of Small Tournaments

In order for ALL gridding conditions to be met, there must be a minimum number of school, contestant, and judge participants. As noted above, for a District tournament, the minimum is 19 schools (22 for a Regional), with 114 student contestants (132 for the Regionals), and 19 judges (38 judges at a Regional). Note, however, a minimum number of 7 schools with as few as 37 contestants MAY meet the most critical conditions above- numbers 1 through 6 (only)- depending upon the distribution of partial grade team participants. *NOTE VERY CAREFULLY:* the numbers cited above refer to the grids for EACH grade level: for computer gridding and scoring purposes, each POP Tournament is actually *TWO* tournaments- one for 7th graders and one for 8th graders.

If registrations total less in either grade--

- some contestants from a given school in that grade level will be competing against different contestants from the same school in more than one round;
- if the registrations total less than 54 students from 9 schools, some contestants will meet the same contestant from another school more than once. When this does happen, however, the pair of contestants will be judged by *different* judges.

In any event, the following conditions still apply:

1. No student competes against a student from his own school.
2. No student is judged by a judge registered as coming from his own school.
3. No student is judged by the same judge more than once.

#### *Brief Explanation*

For a student not to meet another school more than once, it requires (a) his own school, (b) 15 *different other* schools against which to compete in the 3 rounds of 6/round, and (c) 3 *additional* schools to provide judges whose schools are not presented in the first 16. This totals 19 schools.

When the enrollment falls below the minimum, one (or more) of the conditions must be sacrificed.

(Please note, however, that if 3 (or more) *Hired* judges can be made available, not affiliated with *any* of the participating schools, the minimum number of schools which will meet all programming requirements can be reduced to 16.)

## **Manual Gridding Reassignments**

Gridding assignments are made as close to the time of the tournament as possible. At a District event, this is within 96 hours before Opening Registration. In the event of a significant number of no-show contestants (or judges), the tournament coordinator may be called upon to make manual reassignments in the computer grids to maintain section enrollments of no more than 6 and no less than 5. When this is the case, on-site manual reassignments shall be made giving priority in this order:

1. No contestant may appear in a round judged by a judge from his own school.
2. No contestant may compete against another contestant from his own school.
3. No contestant may compete against the same contestant more than once in the course of the tournament.

*NOTE: "Significant number of no-show contestants" is defined as either (a) 6 minus the number of 5-contestant sections in a given grade level; or (b) 1 (or more) no-show contestants who were scheduled to compete in any section of 5, or 2 (or more) no-show contestants who were scheduled to compete in any section of 6.*

# Sample Grid

## SEVENTH GRADE

### ROUND ONE

<i>Room</i>	202a	202b	203a	203b	204a	204b	208a	208b	210a	210b
<i>Judge</i>	AA7J	AB7J	AC7J	AD7J	AF7J	AJ7J	AK7J	AM7J	AQ7J	AL7J
	AJ71	AK71	AM71	AQ71	AL71	AA71	AB71	AC71	AD71	AF71
	AK72	AM72	AQ72	AL72	AA72	AB72	AC72	AD72	AF72	AJ72
	AL73	AA73	AB73	AC73	AD73	AF73	AJ73	AK73	AM73	AQ73
	AF74	AJ74	AK74	AM74	AQ74	AR71	AA74	AB74	AC74	AD74
	AB75	AC75	AD75	AF75	AJ75	AK75	AM75	AQ75	AR72	AA75
	AM76	AQ76	AA76	AB76	AC76	AD76	AF76	AJ76		

### ROUND TWO

<i>Room</i>	202a	202b	203a	203b	204a	204b	208a	208b	210a	210b
<i>Judge</i>	AA7J	AB7J	AC7J	AD7J	AF7J	AJ7J	AK7J	AM7J	AQ7J	AL7J
	AC71	AD71	AF71	AJ71	AK71	AM71	AQ71	AL71	AA71	AB71
	AF72	AJ72	AK72	AM72	AQ72	AL72	AA72	AB72	AC72	AD72
	AJ73	AK73	AM73	AQ73	AL73	AA73	AB73	AC73	AD73	AF73
	AQ74	AR71	AA74	AB74	AC74	AD74	AF74	AJ74	AK74	AM74
	AD75	AF75	AJ75	AK75	AM75	AQ75	AR72	AA75	AB75	AC75
		AM76	AQ76	AA76	AB76	AC76	AD76	AF76	AJ76	

### ROUND THREE

<i>Room</i>	202a	202b	203a	203b	204a	204b	208a	208b	210a	210b
<i>Judge</i>	AA7J	AB7J	AC7J	AD7J	AF7J	AJ7J	AK7J	AM7J	AQ7J	AL7J
	AQ71	AL71	AA71	AB71	AC71	AD71	AF71	AJ71	AK71	AM71
	AJ72	AK72	AM72	AQ72	AL72	AA72	AB72	AC72	AD72	AF72
	AM73	AQ73	AL73	AA73	AB73	AC73	AD73	AF73	AJ73	AK73
	AK74	AM74	AQ74	AR71	AA74	AB74	AC74	AD74	AF74	AJ74
	AC75	AD75	AF75	AJ75	AK75	AM75	AQ75	AR72	AA75	AB75
	AB76	AC76	AD76	AF76	AJ76		AM76	AQ76		AA76

### Instructions

1. Find your Code Number, and circle it in each of the three rounds.
2. Report to your assigned room on time. If you should, by accident, arrive in the wrong room, remain there and write. Your Judge will then direct your paper to the right room for evaluation. If you are late to a Round, you will not be given extra time to write beyond the allotted 40 minutes.
3. Judges remain in the same room. Contestants are the ones who change rooms.
4. If you finish before the 40 minutes are up, turn in your work to the Judge. Then remain seated until you are dismissed with the group.
5. Be sure to put your Code Number clearly on your ballot and all pages of your work. The computer scores by Code Number. If the Code Number is wrong or unreadable, you may not receive credit for what you have written.

## Tournament Scoring

### Rank and Quality Points

Power of the Pen tournaments employ a dual scoring system. Each system measures student achievement in a different way. When used together, but with different emphases, as they are throughout the tournament season as a whole, they render a remarkably accurate *quantitative* profile of students' *qualitative* achievements.

Judges evaluate student writing by Rank Points and Quality Points.

#### Rank Points

Teacher-judges compare submissions of the six student-contestants in each section and rank them against one another. The best paper in the section of a round receives a “1”, the second best a “2”, and so on.

Judges cannot give ties. There can be only one “1”, one “2”, etc. in each round-- *regardless of the overall quality of the section.*

What Rank Score reveals is how six papers compare with one another under a carefully defined set of conditions. Putting it in another way, it shows how successfully one student-contestant *competed* against five other student-contestants in one section of one round of one tournament.

What Rank Score does *not* reveal is how well a student-contestant measures up against the *overall* notion of excellence that the teacher-judge brings with her-- a perception that is the natural outgrowth of the critical objectivity she gains in determining what makes good writing throughout the whole of her intellectual life and, more specifically, in evaluating student written work as a matter of course throughout the whole of her teaching career.

#### Quality Points

Teacher-judges simultaneously evaluate student submissions on a percentage system which parallels the traditionally based grading system. It is modified, however, as follows:

100 - 94	Superior
93 - 82	Honors
81 - 75	Merit

A teacher-judge does not make a Quality Point assignment below 75. Power of the Pen places great emphasis on the significance of positive “feedback” from judges to student-contestants (and their teacher-coaches). It also assumes that no student who has been sanctioned by his teacher-coach to participate would do so without having achieved Merit status.

Teacher-judges are again disallowed from giving tie scores. Two papers may appear to be of equal merit, but the teacher judge is *required* to make a reasoned decision. The requirement to discriminate, especially when the overall quality of student work may be very high and very close, is part of the teacher's educational experience in a Power of the Pen tournament.

Quality Point scores supply judgment factors missing from Rank Point scores:

- (a) they show how close (or far apart) the papers are from one another;
- (b) they show how close (or far apart) the papers are from the judge's educated sense of what "Writing Excellence" truly is;

but in measuring work against these more comprehensive "objective" norms, Quality Point scoring loses the ability to discriminate and compare a specific sample (one student's submission) within a limited data subset (one section of-a-round-of-a-tournament).

*Rank Point scores give higher priority status to competitive achievement. Quality Point scores give higher priority status to normative excellence.*

The two systems are integrated into a comprehensive scoring matrix throughout the whole of the tournament season. Computerized scoring, however, places temporarily greater emphasis on Rank Scores (competitive achievement) in District and Regional Tournaments, and Quality Point Scores (normative excellence) in the State Finals.

## **Computing the Scoring Data**

The Rank and Quality Point data which the teacher-judges assign to student writing are carried to the Tab Room where they are entered into a computer scoring program. The program processes this data in carefully prescribed ways.

### **Quality Points**

Quality Points are processed as judges report them. A judge's Quality Point score of "100" is entered and processed as 100; a judge's Quality Point score of "92" is entered and processed as 92.

### **Rank Points**

Rank Points are entered into the computer program as the judge reports them (a third place is entered as a "3", a first as a "1"), but the computer program immediately converts Rank Points to different values before processing them.

It has been found in the past that Rank Scores which are not converted produce misleading results. A student who writes quite well may have scored "1" in Rounds 1 and 2. In Round 3, however, he may have (a) found himself in a round where there are three other exceptionally strong writers, or (b) written more poorly to the topic than he should have, or (c) been judged by someone who, for whatever reason, rated his work much lower than other judges in all probability would have done. The end result in all three cases is the same: the student is penalized unduly when the scores are added up.

In September of 1990, the State Committee observed that in general there may be more difficulty in discriminating between first and second place, and fifth and sixth place, than between the middle places. Accordingly, in the 1990-91 tournament season, the Rank Point Score spread (1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6) is overlaid on a bell-shaped curve where first and second place are closer together than second and third; second and third closer than third and fourth. At the other end of the spread, fifth and sixth are closer than fourth and fifth; fourth and fifth closer than third and fourth.

The values for the conversions are as follows:

Rank Point of 1 = Computer Value of 100

Rank Point of 2 = Computer Value of 95

Rank Point of 3 = Computer Value of 85

Rank Point of 4 = Computer Value of 70

Rank Point of 5 = Computer Value of 60

Rank Point of 6 = Computer Value of 55

*NOTE CAREFULLY: These computer value conversions for Rank Scores are in no way meant to be considered as equivalent with traditional percentage grading scores. They are solely interim computer working tools that are used to (a) close up the spreads (and the penalties) between top and bottom contestants while opening up the middle, and (b) produce other desirable results (i.e. make it possible to flag automatically score totals incorporating grossly disparate addenda- an indication of radical differences in judges' scores).*

A perfect rank score total for a District Tournament is 300. (A perfect Quality Point score total for a District Tournament is also 300.)

### **District Tournaments: Scoring and Breaking Ties**

District Tournaments are judged by **one** judge in each section of each round. There is no prior school score data. Winners in each grade level are determined by total Rank Score. Ties are broken: first, by Quality Points; second, whether the tied contestants competed against one another in the course of the tournament; third, by whether either of the contestants received a Best of Round Award; fourth, by looking at all three rounds of writing and checking to see which competitor scored the highest individual quality point score.

If a tie cannot be broken by any of the methods above, contestants earn duplicate place trophies.

The three top ranking *school teams*- at each grade level- are also determined by the total number of Rank Point scores for all of the individual team members. Ties are broken by total Quality Points.

The scores of contestants receiving a "Superior" rating (only) are transferred to Regionals, and entered there as values which are computed into the determination of Sweepstakes.

### **Regional Tournaments**

Regional Tournaments are judged by **two** judges in each section of each round.

Score data for Rounds 1 and 2 are individual ballots (i.e. 2 per contestant entry). Round 3 score data is a single (conferenced) ballot. The computer program doubles both Quality Point and Rank Point scores reported in Round 3 before computing. A perfect Quality Point or Rank Point score in a Regional Tournament, then, is 600.

Judges are asked to rank papers with *no more than a two-place difference between them* in the non-conferenced rounds (Rounds 1 & 2). For instance Rank Point scores of 1 and 3 for the same paper are acceptable; a 1 and a 4 are not acceptable. Similarly, Judges should allow no more than a 5-point difference in Quality Point awards in these same non-conferenced rounds. For instance, Quality Points of 90- and 85 for the same paper are acceptable; 90 and 84 are not acceptable.

Winners in each grade level are determined by total Rank Scores. Procedures for breaking ties are the same as those used at the District level.

The three top ranking school teams in each grade level are determined similarly.

In addition to the winning 7th and 8th grade school grade team, a School Sweepstakes Winner (7th and 8th teams *combined*) is also determined. For Sweepstakes, each school's qualifying score data from its earlier District Tournament (i.e. scores achieved by contestants meriting Superior certification *only*) is weighted at 50% of the value of the current Regional score data and then added to it.

The primary criterion for both grade level School Team winners and Sweepstakes is the Rank Point Score team score total. Ties are broken by total Quality Points.

## State Tournament

The format of the Power of the Pen State Final Tournament is reviewed at its annual meeting by the State Committee and modified as necessary. Its essential features to date have included:

1. The State Tournament consists of 3 morning rounds, involving *all* contestants, and one afternoon writing round for the top 54 contestants at each grade level.
2. To the extent that it is possible, *three* Judges are assigned to all sections of all rounds (all sections receive at least *two* Judges). In sections where there *are* three, the Judges determine among themselves which *two* actually judge each given round.
3. Single-ballot conference judging is employed in all rounds.
4. Priority criterion for top winners are total *Quality Points*, ties being broken by Rank Points

As at Regionals, judges are asked to rank papers with *no more than a two-place difference between them* in the non-conferenced rounds (Rounds 1-3). For instance Rank Point scores of 1 and 3 for the same paper are acceptable; a 1 and a 4 are not. Similarly, Judges should allow no more than a 5-point spread in Quality Point awards in these same non-conferenced rounds. For instance, Quality Points of 90- and 85 for the same paper are acceptable; 90 and 84 are not acceptable.

In District and Regional Tournaments, scoring emphasis is placed upon *competitive* achievement. Rank scores describe how effectively one student competes against five other contestants in a given section of a given Round. Quality Points are used to break ties and determine Certificate grades.

In State competition, the emphasis is placed upon *how a student measures against an objective norm of excellence* that the judges bring to bear in their evaluation of the students' work. All contestants at State receive a "Superior" rating on their certificates.

At State, students are measured against one another by Quality Points. Ties are broken by Rank Points. This reverses the order of priority used in the District and Regional Tournaments.

For the specific values of computer conversions of Rank Points, see the section on computerized conversions of Rank Point scores earlier. Please note, however, that all State Tournament scores, both Rank and Quality Point, are automatically multiplied by a factor of 2 to reflect the fact that all State judging ballots represent the judgment of two Judges.

### Qualifiers for the Afternoon Final Round

The top fifty-four contestants from each grade level-- approximately 18%-- are qualified after Round 3 to continue on to the final writing round in the afternoon. The determination is made by the highest numbers of Quality Points. Ties, if they exist, are broken by the highest numbers of Rank Points.

## **Top Rated Individual Seventh and Eighth Grade Writers (15 Awards per Grade Level)**

As was true in the morning rounds, contestants are measured against one another by the highest number of Quality Points. Ties are broken by the highest number of Rank Points.

Final contestant standings were determined as follows in the 2002 Ohio State Finals at The College of Wooster:

1. All contestants compete in the first three rounds of writing. The time allotted for all rounds at State is 35 minutes each.
  2. Two judges evaluate the work of each contestant in each round of writing. Judges confer in their decisions and reach a consensus. One ballot is turned in for each round of writing. The ballot counts as two scores instead of one, thereby indicating that the vote is a collaborative one.
  3. Judges in Rounds 1 through and including the first stage of 4 (note special scoring used in the Power Round below) give each contestant a Rank Point score (1 to 6) and a Quality Point score (75 to 100). Winners in the State tournament are determined by total Quality Points. Ties are broken by Rank Points.
  4. At the end of three rounds, Quality Points accumulated by each contestant are totaled. The top 54 contestants in each grade level, measured by the total number of Quality Points, qualify as finalists to continue into the final round of writing.
  5. ROUND 4- FIRST STAGE: Contestants who make it into the fourth round again have 35 minutes in which to write. As in the first three rounds, each contestant is evaluated by two judges who confer about each paper. Their joint decision again is recorded in a single ballot.
  6. ROUND 4- SECOND STAGE “THE POWER ROUND “: Contestants receiving either a 1 or 2 Rank Point Score in Round 4 are then judged a second time by special two-Judge panels. This panel re-judges each paper on a scale of 1 to 10- 10 being the highest. They may give as many (or as few) ties as they wish. When the conferencing Judges cannot agree within 2 points of one another, the Executive Director (or her designee) will referee the final award decision
  7. CONTESTANT AWARD COMPUTATIONS: Winners are determined by the total number of Quality Points. Quality Point totals are the sum of: (1) Round 1 through 3 scores (which have been doubled to reflect a two-judge consensus)– 600 total points possible; (2) Round 4 scores (which have been doubled to indicate a two-judge consensus), multiplied by a factor of 1.5 to reflect semi-Finalist round status– 300 total points possible; (3) Power Round bonus point awards (1 through 10), doubled to indicate a two-judge consensus, and multiplied by a factor of 2.5 to reflect Finalist round status– 50 total points possible; and (4) a Bonus Award of 50 points (arithmetic constant), given to ALL Finalists– 50 points.
- The highest possible number of Quality Points is 1,000. The additional factor for Round 4 (and the Power Round) acknowledges that the Finalist competition is regarded as being considerably more rigorous than Rounds 1 through 3.

### **Ohio State School Team Championship Trophies 3 Awards**

Ohio State Championship Trophies are awarded to those schools which have demonstrated in Power of the Pen competition, at both the Regional and State levels, that they have the finest records of writing excellence in the State of Ohio.

The determination of the winners takes into account both quantitative and qualitative factors. Grade 7 and Grade 8 scores are added together and computed in Sweepstakes fashion. Final school standings since the 2002 Ohio State Finals at The College of Wooster have been determined as the sum of the following:

1. Transferred scores from the Regionals for only those contestants who, in Regional competition, achieved Superior standing. Transferred scores are weighted at 50% of the value of State scores. They account for 1/3rd of the total calculated values.
2. Quality Points earned by all State tournament contestants in Rounds 1 through 3— provided the total falls within the Superior range— regardless of whether the contestants qualify for the final rounds. Score totals which fall below the Superior range are ignored in the computation.
3. A bonus addition of 100 Quality Points for each contestant qualifier in the final rounds. Grade 7 and Grade 8 scores, per the above, are computed in “Sweepstakes” fashion. NOTE: scores actually earned during Rounds 4 & 5 do not enter into the calculation.

## **Awards**

Through a unified system of awards, students receive recognition at District, Regional, and State levels of competition.

### **District Tournaments**

1. Certificates for all contestants
2. First to sixth place trophies for best writers in both the Seventh and Eighth Grade levels
3. Medallions for seventh through twelfth place writers, each grade level. NOTE: District tournaments with more than 15 schools registered issue medallions for seventh through *15th* Place.
4. First, Second and Third Place Team Trophies for each grade level
5. Best of Round Awards\*: a writing journal for each student who writes the best response to a single topic in each round of writing
6. Director’s Choice Best of Rounds\*: announced in the post-tournament school report, sent by mail.
7. Blue ribbons for Regional qualifiers

*\* These award-winning compositions go on to be judged against winning work from all district events for possible cash awards of \$25 if funding is in place.*

### **Regional Tournaments**

1. Certificates for all contestants plus gold (“Superior”), silver (“Honors”), or bronze (“Merit”) seals designating the quality of the performance.
2. First to Sixth Place trophies for best writers in each grade level (7th and 8th)
3. Medallions for Seventh through Twelfth place writers, each grade level. NOTE: Regional tournaments with more than 30 schools registered issue medallions for Seventh through *15th* Place.
4. First, Second and Third Place Team Trophies for each grade level
5. A Sweepstakes Trophy to the school which has accumulated the most points in both grades at the district and regional events.
6. Best of Round Awards: a writing journal for each student who writes the best response to a Regional prompt in each round of writing.
7. Director’s Choice Best of Rounds\*: announced in the post-tournament school report, sent by mail.
8. Best of the Best Awards: special savings bond awards for best responses to single topics written at the district level competition which are judged to have Statewide merit (see #5-6 under District awards).
9. Blue ribbons for State qualifiers.

## State Tournament

1. Certificates for all contestants plus gold seals
2. State of Ohio plaques for top fifteen contestants in each grade level (7th and 8th)
3. Special cash awards for first, second and third place writers in each grade level:
  - First Place     \$250
  - Second Place   \$150
  - Third Place     \$100
6. A State Championship Trophy to the first place school
7. Second and Third place trophies to the runner-up schools
8. Other scholarship, memorial, or special awards (see next section)
9. Outstanding teachers and/or volunteers may also be singled out for special recognition awards at the State Tournament.

## Publication

The highest award a young writer can receive is publication in the *Book of Winners*. Only writers whose work receives a Best of Best is published. Out of 25,000 pieces of writing produced annually, less than 200 are published. There are currently 26 volumes in the POP library. One volume is distributed free to a school when it registers. Additional copies of those from earlier years may be published for \$25.

## Special Awards

In addition to the awards which contestants and schools may win at District, Regional and State levels of competition, Power of the Pen has established a system of evaluation that allows outstanding writers to achieve even greater honors.

## Best of Round

Each District and Regional tournament consists of three rounds, and a different prompt is used in each round. A “Best of Round” represents the best response to a given prompt, in a given round, at a given tournament. At both District and Regional levels of competition, the work of all contestants receiving a #1 Rank Point score in each section, in each round, is evaluated by a panel of Master Judges for Best of Round Awards. Winners for each of three rounds receive:

- 1) a black journal with POP’s gold-stamped logo
- 2) a blue Best of Round ribbon, and gold “Superior” seal
- 3) the opportunity for the winning work to be measured against all District and Regional Best of Round winners throughout the State for Best of the Best Awards.

No ties may be given for Best of Round awards; but Honorable Mentions may be made. These papers, as well as all #1 papers, will be eligible for post-tournament Director’s Choice Best of Round Awards (announced in the Post-tournament School Report and sent by mail).

At its 1994 annual meeting, the State Committee resolved that:

- 1) Since the purpose of Best of Round is to measure the best response to a prompt in each round of writing in both the District and Regional events, judges will award a journal to the deserving writer of each round.
- 2) A writer may be the designated recipient for more than one Best of Round award at a given tournament.

### **Best of the Best**

At each District and Regional event, at least three seventh and three eighth grade papers are selected for Best of Round awards-- producing well in excess of 300 Best of Round winners Statewide. These papers are then carefully evaluated against one another for a higher award- the "Best of the Best". Winners of the Best of the Best awards receive 1) a cash award (if funding is available), and 2) the promise of publication in the current *Book of Winners*.

### **Director's Choice Awards**

Best of Round Awards are designated by judging professionals who read all #1 papers at the District and Regional events-- on site. The Executive Director also reads all #1 papers after the event (with special attention given to Honorable Mentions), and has the option of presenting additional post-tourney Best-of-Round Awards if such seem appropriate. These awards are annotated in the post-tournament reports issued to all schools that participated at the event, and the awards are sent by mail to the designees.

### **Special Awards for Excellence**

Contestants whose work appears in the current annual *Book of Winners* are eligible for special honors. Each year a panel of judges composed of professional writers read unidentified copies of winning 7th and 8th grade work and award a total of \$1,000 in cash awards to work deemed to be outstanding. Since 2011, these special awards have been made possible by Barbara Beachler via the Dayton Foundation. Only those students whose work is published in the *Book of Winners* are eligible for these annual awards presented at the State tournament.

### **Promising Young Talent Award**

This award is presented annually at the State Tournament by a guest author who has read the work of 8th grade winners from the previous year and who has singled out that writer who demonstrates the most promise as a young novelist. Only eighth graders whose work appears in the current *Book of Winners* are eligible.

### **The Humor Award**

A \$100 cash award is offered at State to a young writers whose work appears in the Book of Winners as a candidate for the category of Humor.

### **The Powerful Pen Award**

This award is not an annual one. Candidates are exceptional writers who meet the high standard of having received four Best of Best awards over a two year period. The cash value of the award is determined each year by the sponsor.

### **Poetry Award**

This annual award, first established in 1991 by the family of Renee Hairston of Shaker Heights, is presented each year to one 7th or 8th grade writer from among those contestants who qualify for the State finals. To be eligible for this award:

- 1) a contestant must qualify for the State Finals;
- 2) a contestant must submit an entry of pre-written poetry, verified by his/her teacher to be original by May 1 of the current year;
- 3) the entry may consist of a single poem or more than one shorter poem, but the entry may not exceed one typed 8 1/2 x 11 sheet of paper.

Only State qualifiers are eligible for this award. The Cash Award (usually \$100) may vary from year to year.

### **Distinguished Friend to Young Writers Award**

To honor outstanding volunteers whose dedication and service has made a significant impact upon the quality of Power of the Pen, this award was established by the State Committee in 1998. The Committee must unanimously approve any candidate recommended for this award. (Not necessarily presented on an annual basis.)

### **Other Local Awards**

1. The Donald Baker Awards, established by Dr. Joan Baker of Cleveland State University in memory of her brother, are \$25 cash awards for contestants attending Cleveland inner city schools whose work shows outstanding promise.
2. The Rick Bagby Memorial Awards (three \$25 cash awards) were established as a tribute to members of his family who valued literacy and the creative arts. Eligibility is limited to Power of the Pen participants in Lancaster area District tournaments.
3. The Megan Wagner Memorial Award was established in 1997 by Mr. and Mrs. John Wagner of Northfield in loving memory of their daughter, Megan, and her creative spirit. Megan was a student at Nordonia High School at the time of her death. This \$25 cash award is presented annually to that student (7th or 8th) who achieves the highest Rank Point and Quality Point scores (combined) in the Summit and Portage County Regional competition. In case of a tie, two awards will be made.
4. The Jane Lemon Harp Memorial Award is a \$25 cash award presented annually at the KSU Regional Tournament in memory of an outstanding coach and teacher from Manchester Middle School. The award is funded by donations from Summit County teachers.
5. The Dennis Gray Memorial Award was established in 2001 to honor Dennis Gray, Bethel teacher and Writing Team Coach. Through a grant from Vanguard, the award recognizes top writers in the Miami Valley District Tournament, with two \$25 cash awards.
6. Two Memorial awards established recently: a \$50 cash award in loving memory of Paul Hilty, by his wife Merry Ann Hilty, of Heskett Middle School; and a \$25 cash award in memory of Clyde Patterson, by the Landis Circle Kiwanis Club, a long-time special friend and sponsor of Power of the Pen.

## **Instant Results and Post-tournament Reports to Schools**

Power of the Pen believes that recognition, to have its maximum effect, should follow as quickly as possible upon accomplishment. For this reason, trophies, certificates, and special journal awards are presented the day of the competition. Teachers take home with them (1) all student work that was written in the three rounds of writing, and (2) the Judges' ballots containing the scores they awarded and brief comments. The only information not normally supplied is which contestants qualify for the next level of competition.

Some contestants qualify automatically. All trophy winners are qualifiers, as are all Best of Round winners. Apart from these, approximately the top 50% at the District level, and the top 18-20% at the Regional level, will qualify to proceed to the next level of competition. The precise percentages are fixed after the score sheets are examined at the State Office of Power of the Pen. All schools that participated at the event receive written notification of their qualifiers, generally within 10 days after the tournament is over.

This post-tournament mailing also includes the following:

1. A follow-up data report of the tournament.
2. A composite of that particular school's individual and team performances. This individualized performance profile (aside from trophies and award winners) is not shared with other schools.
3. An official list of qualifiers for the next event.
4. Blue ribbons for contestant qualifiers.
5. Regional tournaments only: Bronze (Merit), silver (Honors), and gold (Superior) seals that rate the quality of the contestants' work. These are to be placed on each contestant's certificate.



*Section III*

# GOVERNANCE



## Power of the Pen

*Section III*

Governance  
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## **The Mission Statement of Power of the Pen**

*(Adopted by the Board of Trustees, September 1994)*

Power of the Pen is committed to being the leading interscholastic program in written expression, designed for young writers at the 7th and 8th grade levels. It assists teachers in the on-going task of writing improvement by providing quality tools and resources to identify, challenge, and reward excellence. It provides teachers with an educational network that shares ideas and instructional materials to improve expressive writing skills. Power of the Pen inspires a love for the beauty and power of language for writing as a life skill. It encourages creative and critical thinking, and enriches and enhances the writing curriculum of schools. This is accomplished in a collaborative environment that includes community support and involvement at all levels.

### **Power of the Pen Board of Trustees**

*Power of the Pen was incorporated in March of 1989 as an educational non-profit (501c3) organization. It is helmed by a Board of Trustees which draws its membership from the educational, corporate, and professional communities. Distinguished Trustees of Power of the Pen, serving as of September 2013, are:*

Dr. Joan Baker  
*Consultant, Author and Cleveland Teacher*

Larry Braverman  
*Columbus Public Schools*

Robert R. Chaffin  
*General Motors Corporation- retired*

Dr. Harold Foster  
*The University of Akron*

Gary E. Johnston  
*Arrow International*

Lorraine B. Merrill  
*Founder- Power of the Pen*

David J. Millstone  
*Squire, Sanders & Dempsey*

David Nedrich  
*Parma Chamber of Commerce*

Dr. Patricia Rowell  
*Cuyahoga Community College  
West Campus*

#### *Advisory Board*

Don Balduf  
*Dayton Daily News*

Michele Ballinger  
*Columbus City Schools*

George Bilgere  
*John Carroll University  
Professor of Creative Writing, and published poet*

Aurelia Blake  
*Yellow Springs Schools*

Wayne Greene  
*Ohio Middle School Association- retired*

Merry Ann Hilty  
*Bedford City Schls- retired*

Beverly Kan  
*Brecksville-Broadview Hts MS- retired*

Richard Peck  
*Author, Young Adult Fiction*

## **Tax-exempt Status**

Power of the Pen was incorporated in March of 1989 as a non-profit organization. A copy of the letter of determination to document its tax-exempt status is available upon request.

The FEIN number is 34-1620043.

Grants, gifts and fees are made to: Power of the Pen, Box 442, Richfield, Ohio 44286.

## **Equal Employment Opportunity Policy Statement**

It is the permanent policy of Power of the Pen to recruit, hire, train, and promote its employees without regard to age, race, sex, color, religion, national origin, or handicap, in accordance with applicable Civil Rights Law; and it will fervently continue to hire and develop individuals, based on their job related qualifications as a moral and legal responsibility to support equal employment opportunities for all.

Attitudes, biases, or prejudices will not be permitted to operate in matters of employment and personnel practices.

Therefore, Power of the Pen pledges to insure that all procedures for recruiting, hiring, training, promoting, transfer, layoff or termination are designed to further the principle of equal opportunity and that all valid requirements are imposed when promotional opportunities exist. Further, it will insure that all personnel actions related to compensation and benefits will be administered without regard to age, race, sex, color, religion, national origin or handicap.

## **Statement of Civil Rights Compliance**

Power of the Pen will conduct its Programs in accordance with the policies and practices described below.

No individual will on the grounds of race, color, national origin, handicap, sex, or age be denied any services, aid or benefits in a manner different from that provided to others under the Program. Such services include all services under the Program including the quality of the services provided.

No individual will on the grounds of race, color, national origin, handicap, sex, or age be subjected to segregation or separate treatment in any manner related to the receipt of any service or benefits under the Program, nor will the individual be restricted in any way, in any advantage or privileges enjoyed by others receiving the services or benefits of the Program.

The Executive Director of Power of the Pen, Lorraine B. Merrill, will have overall responsibility for insuring that Power of the Pen operates in accordance with its stated principles.

## Policy Statement on Plagiarism

The mission of Power of the Pen, as a creative writing program for Middle School students, is to awaken and strengthen the individual's creative voice, and to foster and reward originality in written expression.

For this reason, an act of plagiarism— that is, the deliberate appropriation of someone else's words and/or ideas and the attempt to pass them off as one's own- is in direct conflict with the essential thrust of Power of the Pen.

Unlike contests where work is prepared by individual contestants who formally attest to the originality of their submissions, writing for Power of the Pen takes place in a public setting under careful supervision by one or more classroom Judge/monitors. It is not possible for parents or teachers to lend a direct or indirect helping hand in the Contestant's writing. The only way that the originality of a Contestant's work can be compromised is by the student 1) copying material physically carried into the classroom, or 2) adapting and retelling material that has been carefully and fully studied in advance.

Since it *is* at least theoretically possible for the work of one writer to resemble that of another- purely by chance and *not* by intentional modeling- the question may rightly be raised: *How does Power of the Pen determine that plagiarism has, in fact, taken place?*

From the time of the program's founding, instances of plagiarism have been extremely rare. In all cases to date, an alert Judge or Teacher/Coach evaluating the work was able to trace the work in question to a specific source with which a *direct comparison* could then be made. To insure greater confidence in that determination, Power of the Pen requires that three other independent Judge/readers- none of whom are affiliated with the school of the contestant alleged to be in violation- concur that the writing is *unequivocally* an act of *deliberate* plagiarism.

On the basis of established precedents, Power of the Pen invokes the following penalties once an act of plagiarism has been established beyond a reasonable doubt:

- If the violation occurs at the any level of competition, the contestant is prohibited from advancing to any higher level of competition during that current tournament season.
- If the violation is detected after he or she has received an award based on plagiarized work, the contestant must relinquish that award and any right to publication of the plagiarized work.
- If the school, by virtue of the offending contestant's scores, receives a Team award, that award must be relinquished to the next lower ranking school or school team- if a re-tallying of the scores so warrants.

Power of the Pen respects the privilege of the Writing Team Coach, or the School administration of the contestant in question, to impose any additional sanctions deemed appropriate.

Beyond these consequences, what is most important when plagiarism occurs is to discourage a recurrence of similar incidents by educating *all* students fully in matters of personal ethics, ownership and basic copyright law. Students of a young age should be made acutely aware that severe consequences inevitably result at the secondary level of education- as well as at the collegiate level- in matters that arise involving cheating on tests as well as copying work written by someone else.

In promoting pride of workmanship and rewarding examples of outstanding creative expression, Power of the Pen promulgates the importance of originality in building character as well as in building voice.

Lorraine B. Merrill, *Executive Director*  
June 1, 1996

## Self-Plagiarism

Normally, we think of plagiarism as targeting *someone else's* work, and then attempting to pass it off as one's own. Recently, Power of the Pen has had to address a somewhat murkier issue- one that, more often than not, revolves around "self-plagiarism".

Consider the language of the third paragraph above. Plagiarism is described to include the "2) [deliberate] adapting and retelling [of] material that has been carefully and fully studied in advance". Here the targeted work is not necessarily someone else's- although it could very well be. It could also be *one's own*.

For example, if a student- well read in the history of the Holocaust- resorts to this subject matter repeatedly in his tournament writing, this in and of itself may be the result of an overly narrow focus or a preoccupation with one piece of subject matter but still be perfectly legitimate. Grounds for questioning its integrity arise, however, when the individual pieces of writing are lined up side by side and what begins to emerge is *one* story with minor variations rather than distinctly different narratives. The writer is plagiarizing one central theme to meet the particular requirements of more than one prompt. The crucial point, of course, is that the writer is guilty of making a tacit misrepresentation. He is inviting the teacher/judge/reader to accept each of his writing products as an authentic, "unrehearsed" response that is uniquely specific to the prompt at hand when, in fact, this is not at all the case.

In an attempt to prevent a contestant from carefully scripting a basic "story situation" (or "story line") in advance and then modelling it- deliberately and with care- to the requirements of more than one prompt, the State Committee drafted the following ruling:

- "The purpose of Power of the Pen is to challenge young writers. Prompts issued at the tournaments in each of the three rounds of writing (four or five at State) are designed to evoke *different* responses. Students who deliberately adapt a single response in a way that appears to meet the requirements of two or more different prompts, but in essence remains one response rather than two, shall
- receive default scores of 6 Rank Points, 75 Quality Points in the offending rounds
  - be disqualified from receiving a Best of Round award
  - be disqualified from advancing to the next higher level of competition

If any such violation is detected after the tournament is over, penalties shall be applied by the State Office conjointly with the Writing Team Coach(es) of the student involved. Any team and/or sweepstakes award(s) thereby affected shall also be stripped and re-awarded."

## Policy on Censorship

The Writing Judge's role is different from the Writing Teacher's role. Every teacher certainly has the right to decide what is appropriate in his/her classroom, but this is not your classroom and the writers are not your students. They come from a wide variety of backgrounds and experiences in school and in life. That must be honored at this tournament.

Professional expertise, not personal bias, should guide each judge. The genre, subject, and even language of the piece should not be subject to the judge's personal biases. Each piece should be judged on whether or not it thoughtfully and creatively addresses the prompt with quality writing.

Audience is important to any piece of writing. At the tournament, you are the judge and NOT the audience. The piece has been written for publication, and the audience is anyone who might read it.

Remember that these writers are seventh and eighth graders, often writing from their own personal experience. They have not seen or experienced the world as you have. What is “old hat” to you may very well be new and exciting to them. They have no idea that every middle school student in the state has studied the Holocaust. To them, their thoughts on this topic are “original.” And the adolescent issues with friends, parents, and school that we as teachers and adults have seen time and time again are “original” to someone going through them at the moment.

Many of the prompts lead the writers to produce a piece of fiction. The comment, “This is not believable,” may not apply. Soap operas are NOT believable. They are what they are... escape. Judge the writing for what it is... well-constructed and well-written or not.

If a judge finds a piece of writing is disturbing in any way, this should be brought to the attention of the Tab Room coordinator. The coordinator can then speak with the coach that knows the student. That coach is in a better position to make comments to the student who wrote the piece. (A Post It note or something could be attached for those kind of comments rather than putting them in the comment section.) Coaches sometimes disagree with comments made by judges. We have to realize that we are all trying to do our best for these writers. We’re not perfect. Neither are our young writers.

The bottom line should be that we are looking for a well-constructed, well-written piece that addresses the prompt in a way that sets it apart from the other pieces. We are not there to judge these students. We are there to judge the merits of the writing they produce.

We must all remember that being a Power of the Pen judge does not grant one the right to critique the personal lives of the writers. Ours is a program that should focus instead on improving and celebrating their talent in written expression.

*Draft by Melanie Jerse based on thoughtful discussion by Members of the State Committee. Edited and approved unanimously by the State Committee on May 13, 2006*

### **Permission to Use Power of the Pen Name, Logo, Artwork**

Power of the Pen’s name, logo, and artwork are fully protected under copyright and trademark laws. Schools currently and actively enrolled in the Ohio Interscholastic Writing League (Power of the Pen), and which have paid their annual membership fee, may apply for full legal permission to employ the name, logo, and artwork belonging to Power of the Pen on T-shirt designs intended for use by their school’s Power of the Pen writing teams. Application is made by completing the application found in the Forms Section of this *Manual* and sending it with a \$25.00 check to cover the cost of processing to: Executive Director, Power of the Pen, Box 442, Richfield, Ohio 44286. “Permission to Use” is granted for one school year/ tournament season.

## Pre-District Mini-Meets

### A Policy Statement

Power of the Pen enthusiastically endorses the concept of local interscholastic mini-meets and pre-District competitions. Experiences such as these not only help prepare students for Power of the Pen tournaments, they provide a reliable way of identifying who the strong writers really are. Mini-meets, by committing a group of schools to a common educational project, foster a sense of joint purpose and camaraderie. In so doing, they reinforce Power of the Pen's objective of encouraging the development of District structures that can conduct fully autonomous Power of the Pen District events.

At the same time, Power of the Pen must remain sensitive to the obligation it has to its family of student, teacher, and educational/administrative participants actively engaged in the program's normal range of activities; to the friends of education in the corporate, business, and private sectors providing significant financial support on the basis of clearly formed expectations; to a Board of Trustees charged by law to certify the program's integrity and authenticity; and to the growing number of parents, friends, and volunteers across Ohio committing their time and energies to an idea of what they believe Power of the Pen to be.

This obligation is to preserve- to the fullest extent possible- the integrity of Power of the Pen as a whole, and to discourage the misuse or abuse of those features and elements which have contributed so significantly to the program's phenomenal success.

Accordingly, schools intending to sponsor an interscholastic writing mini meet or pre-District competition containing any element or feature of Power of the Pen tournament competition which is protected in whole or part by the organization's legally registered trademark and/or copyright, is required to apply to Power of the Pen to do so.

The policy governing such permission is fixed for the current tournament season as follows:

1. To apply for permission to hold a mini-meet, complete the relevant form in the Forms section of this *Manual*. Return it with a check (or PO number) for the \$25 registration/processing fee made out to Power of the Pen to: Executive Director, Power of the Pen, Box 442, Richfield, Ohio 44286.
2. Only schools currently enrolled in Power of the Pen and/or the Ohio Interscholastic Writing League may apply. *Schools not enrolled in Power of the Pen and/or the Ohio Interscholastic Writing League are expressly forbidden the use of any element or feature protected in whole or part by the organization's legally registered trademark and/or copyright.*
3. Permission is granted for *one* mini tournament only, within the current school year. Schools wishing to sponsor more than one event, or a similar activity in a subsequent year must reapply. (This restriction is designed to permit other schools in the district the opportunity to hold similar mini-meets- and not jeopardize Power of the Pen's local calendar in so doing.)
4. Schools receiving permission from Power of the Pen to organize and sponsor a local interscholastic mini-meet or pre-District competition, based in whole or part upon a Power of the Pen model or utilizing any (or all) of Power of the Pen's protected features or elements, are expected to involve *only those schools which are currently enrolled in Power of the Pen* (or who intend to do so). The mini- tournament should not abuse the freely extended use privilege by competing against the standard program for school enrollments.

5. No mini-meet may be scheduled on a date which conflicts with a Power of the Pen tournament already scheduled in the same area.
6. No mini-meet may be scheduled after February 15.
7. Permission, when granted, is an extension of privilege accorded by membership in Power of the Pen and/or the Ohio Interscholastic Writing League. Power of the Pen reserves the right to refuse any school or school district, permission to register for any reason, without prejudice.
8. Power of the Pen reserves all use rights pertaining to its copyrighted prompts, which appear in various publications, for its own officially designated interscholastic activities. *Power of the Pen prohibits their use in mini-meets, practice tournaments, and/or pre-District competitions of this kind.*
9. Power of the Pen relies heavily upon corporate and community support throughout the State for its regularly scheduled activities. Fund-raising for mini-meets and/or pre-District competitions cannot conflict with fund-raising for Power of the Pen's scheduled District and Regional tournaments.
  - a. Any fund-raising for a mini-meet must be conducted in the name of the school (or some other appropriate entity- e.g. the school's "Seventh Grade English Class", or the school's "Writing Club"). *Under no circumstances can it be conducted in the name of "Power of the Pen".*
  - b. Schools must report to Power of the Pen any fund-raising activity for POP-registered, locally sponsored, mini-meet or pre-District tournament that yields more than \$350.
10. The administrative policy stated herein is to be regarded as in effect for the current Tournament Season, and/or until such time as it is formally modified or replaced by action of the State Committee, or by the appropriate committee of the Board of Trustees.

## **Students with Special Needs**

### **A Policy Statement**

We take great pride in the fact that since its inception, Power of the Pen has made every effort to include students with special needs fully in its activities— long before the practice of inclusion was mandated by legislation.

Over the years, ‘special needs’ has not been limited to signify only those students with an Individual Education Program (IEP). Power of the Pen has responded to logistical, religious and emergency situations. In every instance, Power of the Pen has made every good faith effort to accommodate special needs within a framework that supports the success of student writers, respects the integrity of the program, and acknowledges the unique spirit of the Power of the Pen experience.

With regard to students with IEPs, POP follows the basic guidelines as set forth in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) 2004. Special needs writers are afforded the appropriate accommodations and modifications as spelled out in their Individual Education plans. However, these modifications must fit within the structure that enables the program to be conducted successfully (e.g. no frequent breaks, doubled time).

It is the responsibility of the special needs student’s Writing Team Coach, acting in behalf of his school, to provide whatever supports are actually necessary, whether it is a laptop computer, printer, scribe, individual aide, et al. The reasons for this are twofold. First, consistent with State and Federal guidelines, it is the home district’s responsibility to fulfill the conditions of the student’s IEP. This includes providing whatever technological and staff supports are required by the student on a daily basis in his own classroom. The second, and more practical, reason is to insure the best possible outcome by providing aids in which the student has already established a level of comfort and confidence. Moreover, they can feel confident that going into the tournament their device is in good working order. Power of the Pen and the host school may not have ready access to the particular modifications or equipment that is required, nor is their staff necessarily trained to oversee its proper use.

Power of the Pen reserves the right to evaluate any proposed human assistance, equipment, or device that will be used in the program’s interscholastic competition that provides an undue advantage to the special needs student.

Over the years, Power of the Pen has offered countless special needs students a tremendous outlet for creative exploration, personal expression, and public recognition for their talent. We will continue our efforts to present an opportunity for a similar experience to as many young writers as possible.

*Drafted by Beth Dixon*  
*Approved unanimously by the State Committee, May 2008*

Power of the Pen  
**State of Ohio State Committee Constitution**

Article I  
Name

The name of this organization shall be the Ohio Power of the Pen State Committee. This organization is the advisory committee for the State of Ohio branch of Power of the Pen (POP). In the state of Ohio it shall be known as the State Committee.

Article II  
Governance

Power of the Pen is helmed by a Board of Trustees which draws its membership from the educational, corporate, and professional communities.

The State Committee is an advisory body for Power of the Pen, comprised of educators school administrators, and others. The State Committee is accountable to the Executive Director, who, in turn, serves at the pleasure of the Board.

The State Committee, in its advisory capacity, acknowledges the mission of Power of the Pen and defines its own role and goals from the educational philosophy embodied in the mission statement governing the Board of Trustees:

“Power of the Pen is committed to being the leading interscholastic program in written expression. designed for young writers at the 7th and 8th grade levels. It assists teachers in the ongoing task of writing improvement by providing quality tools and resources to identify, challenge, and reward excellence. It provides teachers with an educational network that shares ideas and instructional materials to improve expressive writing skills. Power of the Pen inspires a love for the beauty and power of language for writing as a life skill. It encourages creative and critical thinking and enriches and enhances the writing curriculum of school. This is accomplished in a collaborative environment that includes community support and involvement at all levels.”

Article III  
Objectives

The duties of the State Committee shall include:

- formulating the rules, procedures, and policies which govern all competitive events
- providing a forum for the annual review of the district, regional and state scoring, awards, rules, policies, and structure of the tournament season
- planning and providing adequate staffing for the annual State Tournament
- providing a standing committee for appeal/mediation

Article IV  
Membership

Members of the State Committee shall be composed of the State Coordinator and all tournament coordinators, President, President-elect, Secretary, heads of standing committees, the Executive Director, and the Chair (or designee)

of the Board of Trustees Program Committee. Also included shall be appointees of the Executive Director, upon approval of the President.

It is the responsibility of each member of the State Committee to attend the two annual State Committee meetings or to send a representative. Attendance records will be established by the Secretary.

Visitors (non-voting) to the State Committee meetings may include Power of the Pen coaches, judges, members of the Board of Trustees, and others invited by the Executive Director and/or President of the Committee.

## Article V Meetings

The State Committee shall meet twice each tournament season. Generally, the spring meeting will be held on the third or fourth Saturday of April at the discretion of the Executive Director and President. Generally, the fall meeting will be held the second or third Saturday of November at the discretion of the Executive Director and President.

Notice of said meetings shall be sent by the President or President-elect at least one month in advance.

## Article VI Leadership

The State Committee shall have an Executive Committee which shall be composed of the President, President-elect, Secretary, State Coordinator, Executive Director, and heads of standing committees. The President will preside over meetings of the Executive Committee; in the event of his/her absence, the President-elect will preside.

The Executive Committee is empowered to prepare agendas for the State Committee, prepare motions for action, and act on behalf of the State Committee as a whole between its scheduled meetings if circumstances, as determined by a quorum vote of the Executive Committee, require. When a quorum action is taken by the Executive Committee, the Secretary is required to send a written notification to the membership as a whole within two weeks of such action.

Executive Committee quorum actions are subject to review at the next regularly scheduled State Committee meeting; such actions may be revoked by a 2/3 vote of the membership in attendance.

The Executive Committee also functions as an Appeals/Mediation Committee. Issues relating to mediation will be determined by a simple majority vote. Executive Committee actions relating to mediation are not subject to reversal by the State Committee.

The President will serve a term of two years after having served two years as President-elect. The President will be responsible for presiding over the State Committee meetings, helping to set the agendas for the meetings, and listening to the concerns of State Committee members. The President will also arrange for the site, planning, and preparations for the State Committee meetings.

The President-elect will be elected at the spring meeting. The President-elect will spend the following two years serving as the Rules Committee Chair, assisting the President, and training to become President.

The Secretary will be elected at the spring meeting for a two year term. The Secretary may be reelected to one additional two- year term.

The Secretary will keep an attendance record, be responsible for making a careful record of the proceedings at all State Committee meetings, and send a copy of those minutes to all State Committee members within one month from the time of the meeting. The original copy of the minutes will be maintained in a State Committee Log. The Secretary shall be accessible to review wording of any resolution, proposed rule changes, or actions of the body that will appear in any official Power of the Pen publication. The Secretary may also be called upon by the President to assist with official Committee correspondence.

## Article VII Standing Committees

Unless otherwise specified, the Standing Committees shall be appointed by the Executive Director and President. The Appeals/Mediation Committee consists of the members of the Executive Committee. This committee shall review written complaints or appeals lodged by judges, coaches, or coordinators that have been forwarded by the Executive Director. Decisions made by this committee are final.

The Rules Committee shall include the President-elect and at least five coordinators drawn, as far as possible, from different geographical regions of the state. The President-elect shall preside over this group as its Chair. The Committee membership shall be determined by the President. The Rules Committee includes in its charge an annual review of the *Coaches' and Coordinators' Manuals* and the State Constitution. It shall consult with the Secretary in matters concerning appropriate language.

Other standing committees include, but are not limited to, the following:

Awards Committee: This Committee will conduct periodic reviews of the awards structure for District, Regional, and State events, and forward its recommendations to the State Committee as a whole for appropriate action.

Volunteer Committee: This Committee will conduct periodic reviews of all practices and procedures relating to student and adult volunteer assistance. It shall include in this review the proper recognition of volunteer assistance. The Volunteer Committee shall forward its recommendations to the State Committee as a whole for appropriate action.

## Article VIII Voting

Members in attendance at the State Committee meetings shall constitute a quorum.

A simple majority of those present is necessary to pass new rulings and to elect officers.

Only those duly designated as members of the State Committee (see Article IV) may vote on any measures brought before the Committee.

There will be no absentee voting.

## Article IX Ratification and Amendments

This Constitution may be ratified by a 2/3 vote of those present at the Fall 1996 meeting.

The Constitution shall be reviewed annually by the Rules Committee, which shall report at the fall State Committee meeting.

Amendments may be suggested by any State Committee member and must be presented in written form to the Chair (President-elect) of the Rules Committee. The Rules Committee will review suggested amendments and make recommendations to the State Committee.

No constitutional amendment may be presented to the State Committee as a whole that is not first reviewed and approved by the Rules Committee. Ratification of any constitutional amendment requires a 2/3 majority of those in attendance at a meeting of the State Committee

*Section IV*

# FORMS



## Power of the Pen

# Section IV

## Forms

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## Power of the Pen 2017 Publications Order Form

*Use this Form to Order Published Materials*

A complimentary copy of the *2015 Book of Winners* (published annually, at a cost of \$25 per volume) is enclosed in this enrollment packet. Since this publication and the prompts and models it contains (as well as *Books of Winners* from earlier years) are excellent tools for preparing students for competition as well as for use in the classroom, teacher-coaches often want to place orders for additional copies. Publications presently available *FOR THE EXCLUSIVE USE OF PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS ONLY* appear below.

**Prompts that Put Power in a Pen** (6 vols) all topics used in all tournaments over a twenty-five year span. This publication, produced at the request of teachers throughout Ohio who have found POP topics beneficial for stimulating written expression, is available only through special order. Each volume contains over 100 prompts used by Power of the Pen at its District, Regional and State Tournaments over five year periods: 1986-1990 (Volume I); 1991-1995 (Volume II); 1996-2000 (Volume III); 2001-05 (Volume IV); Volume V (2006-10); Volume VI (2011-15). Writing models are not included in the first three volumes. Recommended use: as a companion to the annual *Book of Winners*, and for generating practice in written expression prior to competition.

**Book of Winners 2016** will be available in the spring of 2017. One copy of this book will be made available to each participating school free of charge at the beginning of the following tournament season (2017-2018).

**The 2017 Power of the Pen Manual for Writing Team Coaches** Printed copies of the Coach's *Manual* may be ordered at \$25.00 each. Hard print copies of *The Rules* are also available at \$5.00 per copy. These materials can be accessed free of charge on our website.

**Please send me these Power of the Pen publications:**

\_\_\_\_\_ (number of extra copies) of *Book of Winners 2015* @ \$25.00 per copy

_____ <i>Winners 14</i> @ \$25	_____ <i>Winners 07</i> @ \$20	_____ <i>Winners 00</i> @ \$15	_____ <i>Winners 93</i> @ \$10
_____ <i>Winners 13</i> @ \$25	_____ <i>Winners 06</i> @ \$20	_____ <i>Winners 99</i> @ \$15	_____ <i>Winners 92</i> @ \$10
_____ <i>Winners 12</i> @ \$25	_____ <i>Winners 05</i> @ \$20	_____ <i>Winners 98</i> @ \$15	_____ <i>Winners 91</i> @ \$10
_____ <i>Winners 11</i> @ \$25	_____ <i>Winners 04</i> @ \$20	_____ <i>Winners 97</i> @ \$12	_____ <i>Winners 90</i> @ \$7
_____ <i>Winners 10</i> @ \$25	_____ <i>Winners 03</i> @ \$20	_____ <i>Winners 96</i> @ \$12	_____ <i>Winners 89</i> @ \$6
_____ <i>Winners 09</i> @ \$20	_____ <i>Winners 02</i> @ \$20	_____ <i>Winners 95</i> @ \$12	_____ <i>Winners 88</i> @ \$5
_____ <i>Winners 08</i> @ \$20	_____ <i>Winners 01</i> @ \$20	_____ <i>Winners 94</i> @ \$12	

\_\_\_\_\_ (number of copies) of *Prompts that Put Power in a Pen - Vol I* @ \$10.00 per copy  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (number of copies) of *Prompts that Put Power in a Pen - Vol II* @ \$10.00 per copy  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (number of copies) of *Prompts that Put Power in a Pen - Vol III* @ \$15.00 per copy  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (number of copies) of *Prompts that Put Power in a Pen - Vol IV* @ \$15.00 per copy  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (number of copies) of *Prompts that Put Power in a Pen - Vol V* @ \$15.00 per copy  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (number of copies) of *Prompts that Put Power in a Pen - Vol VI* @ \$15.00 per copy

For individual selections above, enclose check or P.O. number for total, plus \$8.00 for Shipping and Handling on orders totalling \$15 or less; \$10 S&H for orders totalling \$15.01- \$50; and \$15 for orders over \$50. Send checks, payable to **Power of the Pen**, to: **Power of the Pen**, Box 442, Richfield, Ohio 44286.

Check here if you wish to order the complete 28-year library of the *Books of Winners* at the special rate of \$300 (includes postage).

Order is to be mailed to: **Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**(School)** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

*include name of school, even if mailing is elsewhere*

**Total for Items Ordered** \$ \_\_\_\_\_ **plus Shipping and Handling** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Total Amount Enclosed** \$ \_\_\_\_\_ **Purchase Order # (if applicable)** \_\_\_\_\_



**Power of the Pen**  
**2017 Tournament Materials Order Form**

*Use this Form to Order Tournament Materials*

Teacher-coaches from schools registered in any Power of the Pen tournament may place prepaid orders for any of the following in any quantities. Please allow at least 10 working days for order processing and delivery. If stock needs replenishing, delivery may take longer.

**Postage and Handling:** Please include **\$8.00 postage/handling for orders totalling \$15 or less; \$10 for orders totalling \$15.01 - \$50; and \$15 postage/handling for orders totalling more than \$50.**

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**Please send these Power of the Pen materials:**

- \_\_\_\_ (qty) Certificates for Team Alternates (for those who are not official writers at a tournament) @ \$ .50/certificate
- \_\_\_\_ (qty) Certificates of Appreciation to Volunteers @ \$1.00/ certificate
- \_\_\_\_ (qty) Standard Power of the Pen ball-point Pens - black ink @ \$ \$1.00/ pen
- \_\_\_\_ (qty) Ball-point Pens- silver/ graphite- engraved “Power of the Pen Writing Team” (nice pen for team members) @ \$3.00/ pen (limited inventory)
- \_\_\_\_ (qty) Ball-point Pens- silver/ graphite- engraved “Power of the Pen Writing Team Coach” (nice pen for teacher/coaches) @ \$3.00/ pen (limited inventory)
- \_\_\_\_ (qty) Deluxe Ball-point Pens- gun metal/ gold for Writing Team members has flashlight as added feature @ \$5.00/ pen
- \_\_\_\_ (qty) Deluxe Ball-point Pens- gun metal/ gold, slender, for Coaches @ \$5.00/ pen
- \_\_\_\_ (qty) Carbonized Essay Forms (2-page sets) @ \$5.00 for 12 2-page sets
- \_\_\_\_ (qty) Souvenir badges- 2” diameter. Copy: “Power of the Writing Team” \$2.00/ badge
- \_\_\_\_ (qty) POP official tournament pocket folders- various colors. Available in minimum lots of 15 or more @ .75/ folder.
- \_\_\_\_ (qty) Clear Glass Mug with logo and Power of the Pen art @ \$7.00/ mug
- \_\_\_\_ (qty) State Tote Bags @ \$10.00/ tote bag

Check must be enclosed for total amount of materials plus shipping and handling and made payable to:  
**Power of the Pen**, Box 442, Richfield, Ohio 44286.

Order is to be mailed to: **Name** \_\_\_\_\_  
**[School]** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

*Include name of school, even if mailing is elsewhere*

**Total for Items Ordered** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Postage & Handling** \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (see costs for Postage & Handling above)

**Amount Enclosed** \$ \_\_\_\_\_ or **Purchase Order** (if applicable) # \_\_\_\_\_



## Publication Procedures

Outstanding student compositions that emerge during the current Power of the Pen tournament season will be published and distributed in the spring of the next tournament season. It is from this body of published material that selections are made for all special awards and scholarships.

Work eligible for selection in this publication is as follows:

1. Best of the Best winners at District, Regional, and State.
2. Top three students at each grade level at State. (Submission may be writing selected from any round)

Outstanding work at any level may be submitted by Writing Team Coaches for publication, but they cannot be guaranteed publication.

Coaches must assist students in submitting final drafts. Corrections may be made in mechanics and usage, but not in content. Attach a copy of the completed form at the bottom of this page to page one of the submission, and send to: "Publication Submissions", Power of the Pen, Box 442, Richfield, Ohio 44286.

Please submit eligible entries as soon as possible after a tournament with photos of contestant, if possible. Do not paper clip or staple photos. Submissions and photos submitted for consideration will not be returned.

*Power of the Pen does not guarantee publication of student work which is not typed, single-spaced, properly edited, and submitted in a timely manner.*

Since the traditional Double EE Savings Bonds are no longer offered by the U S Treasury, cash awards are being made- but only when funding is available. The amount of the cash award is the same as what Power of the Pen would have paid for the bond it replaces (50% of the face value). To receive the cash award, however, writers MUST send an edited, typed copy of the winning work to Power of the Pen.

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### Power of the Pen Submission for Publication

*Complete, attach to page 1 of submission, and send together with a photo (if possible) to:*

*"Publication Submissions", Power of the Pen, Box 442, Richfield, Ohio 44286.*

*Written work is not acceptable unless it is properly identified.*

*(Run off as many forms as needed. Use one for each submission.)*

Contestant's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Contestant's Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Home Telephone Number \_\_\_\_\_

School \_\_\_\_\_

Grade \_\_\_\_\_

Coach \_\_\_\_\_

Tournament Site \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Level: District/Regional/State \_\_\_\_\_

Prompt \_\_\_\_\_

Date Submission Mailed \_\_\_\_\_







# Power of the Pen

Interscholastic Tournaments for Young Writers



Tournament Site: \_\_\_\_\_

## Official Ballot

Contestant Code \_\_\_\_\_ Room Number \_\_\_\_\_ Round Number \_\_\_\_\_

Title of Composition \_\_\_\_\_

### Instructions

1. PLEASE MAKE SURE THAT THE CONTESTANT CODE NUMBER AND TITLE MATCH THE NUMBER AND TITLE OF THE PAPER YOU ARE EVALUATING.
2. Rank the compositions in this round holistically, highest to lowest.
3. Award Quality Points (see scale below)
4. Students value your comments. Please praise strengths, and offer suggestions for improvement as time permits.

<b><u>SCORE</u></b>						
<b><u>RANK POINTS</u></b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b> (circle one)
	(Highest)					(Lowest)
<b><u>QUALITY POINTS</u></b>	100 - 94 = Superior 93 - 82 = Honors 81 - 75 = Merit					
	(Quality Points will be used to break ties.)					
						
(Indicate Quality Points Here)						
<b>Signature of Judge</b> _____						
<b>Judge's Code Number</b> _____						

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



*Power of the Pen*  
*Academic Interscholastic Writing Team*  
**CONTRACT OF COMMITMENT**  
**WRITING TEAM MEMBERS**

NOTE to Coach: *The copy below is suggested as a model- to be modified to the requirements of your particular school. It is recommended that copies of the contract be run off and sent home for parent as well as student signature BEFORE final team selections are made.*

Being chosen to represent your school as a member of an interscholastic writing team is a high honor. It means that you show a high degree of creative talent in writing and that your teacher believes you will benefit significantly from this opportunity. The Writing Team is no different from a soccer or a basketball team. In sports, a team member knows that others are relying on his/her performance. Students who commit to representing the school on a Writing Team must make a commitment in advance that others know they can depend upon.

Before a final selection for the writing team is made, please study the following list carefully. Then sign the contract, have your parent or guardian sign it too, and return it to your Writing Team Coach.

If selected as a Writing Team member, here is what will be expected of you:

- Faithfully attend all practice session that are held for team members.
- Show a willingness to accept constructive criticism and a willingness to improve your writing in all pre-tournament meetings that are held.
- Edit your written work as required by your Writing Team Coach.
- Conduct yourself at all times in interscholastic competition as an official team representative for your school, and in a manner that will be a credit of your school, your coach, your fellow team members, and yourself.
- Be present at all tournaments that you are qualified to attend (except in the case of unexpected illness). The dates and locations for the District and Regional events are:
  - District \_\_\_\_\_
  - Regional \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

I understand what is expected of me and will do my best to fulfill my responsibilities if I am selected by my Writing Team Coach as a member of the Power of the Pen Writing Team.

Student Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_



**Power of the Pen**  
**Permission to Participate Form**  
*(For School Use only-- do NOT return to Power of the Pen)*

All teachers who become involved with their students in activities beyond the classroom know full well the importance of communicating with parents-- and if possible-- engaging their cooperation as volunteers.

The last pages of the *Manual* contain "Permission to Publish" forms which require signatures from parents or guardians. We recommend that you send copies of these forms home for each of your contestants as soon as possible so that they can be brought to the initial Power of the Pen tournament to complete your on-site registration.

In addition to the "Permission to Publish" form, which we must have on file for each contestant, we recommend that you communicate with parents in the following ways:

1. Send a letter home that lets parents know of their child's special talent in writing. Request at the same time a signature from parents that gives approval to the child's participation. (This will reduce the number of contestant drops when the time of the actual tournament arrives.) Parents should be informed early of dates and the commitment that a student must make in order to participate.
2. Invite all parents of your team members to a meeting. Let them know how much their help is valued as active supporters of this enrichment program. Allow interested volunteers to sign up for a number of duties: fund-raising, assistant coach, tournament judge\*, etc.  
*\*Parents with college degrees are qualified to judge at initial tournaments provided they receive training in holistic evaluation by the school's Writing Team Coach.*
3. Obtain written permission for each contestant to attend an event that necessitates travel. A version of such a form follows:

**Contestant Permission Form**

Return this form to \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_ (date)

\_\_\_\_\_ has my permission to participate in the Power of the Pen District/Regional Tournament on \_\_\_\_\_ (date) at \_\_\_\_\_ (tournament). We understand that all precautions possible will be taken to

insure the safety of students attending this event. We further understand that the teacher, school officials, Board of Education, and tournament staff are not to be held responsible in case of an accident.

Parent/Guardian Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_



**Power of the Pen  
Permission to Publish**

**Grade 7**

A copy of this entire page must be completed in advance for each contestant, and presented at registration at the initial tournament, in order to insure his/her eligibility for participation. **Please comply fully with this request.**

*This form must be on file for each contestant at the time of the initial tournament. Coaches should bring this form, completed for each participating Contestant, to the District Tournament*

We hereby grant to POWER OF THE PEN permission to reprint any essays or other writing produced by the student named below in connection with his/her participation in the Power of the Pen program. This license to reprint shall be royalty-free, irrevocable, and shall remain in existence as long as the copyright is valid and subsisting and extends to distribution of the work by Power of the Pen throughout the United States and the world. We also give to Power of the Pen permission to publish any photographs taken during the tournament season.

*Please print this information CLEARLY*

Name of School \_\_\_\_\_ County \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Tournament Site \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Student \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address of Contestant

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Student \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Teacher \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Parent \_\_\_\_\_

Date Signed \_\_\_\_\_

*Thanks for making duplicate copies of this form and obtaining the necessary signatures from each contestant who enters. Since we publish winning essays and pictures taken at tournaments, it is necessary to maintain these releases on file.*



**Power of the Pen  
Permission to Publish**

**Grade 8**

A copy of this entire page must be completed in advance for each contestant, and presented at registration at the initial tournament, in order to insure his/her eligibility for participation. **Please comply fully with this request.**

*This form must be on file for each contestant at the time of the initial tournament. Coaches should bring this form, completed for each participating Contestant, to the District Tournament*

We hereby grant to POWER OF THE PEN permission to reprint any essays or other writing produced by the student named below in connection with his/her participation in the Power of the Pen program. This license to reprint shall be royalty-free, irrevocable, and shall remain in existence as long as the copyright is valid and subsisting and extends to distribution of the work by Power of the Pen throughout the United States and the world. We also give to Power of the Pen permission to publish any photographs taken during the tournament season.

*Please print this information CLEARLY*

Name of School \_\_\_\_\_ County \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Tournament Site \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Student \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address of Contestant

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Student \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Teacher \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Parent \_\_\_\_\_

Date Signed \_\_\_\_\_

*Thanks for making duplicate copies of this form and obtaining the necessary signatures from each contestant who enters. Since we publish winning essays and pictures taken at tournaments, it is necessary to maintain these releases on file.*



# Permission to Use Power of the Pen Name, Logo, Artwork

*Power of the Pen's name, logo, and artwork are registered and fully protected under copyright and trademark laws. Schools currently and actively enrolled in the Ohio Interscholastic Writing League (Power of the Pen), and which have paid their annual membership fee, may apply for full legal permission to employ the name, logo, and artwork belonging to Power of the Pen on T-shirt designs intended for use by their school's Power of the Pen writing teams. Application is made by submitting the application below and a \$25 processing fee to: Executive Director, Power of the Pen, Box 442, Richfield, Ohio 44286. "Permission to Use" is granted for one school year/ tournament season. Schools which violate this requirement may be disqualified from competition in Power of the Pen.*

## Application

*Complete, and return with a check or Money Order for \$25.00 to Power of the Pen.*

School \_\_\_\_\_ County \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ FAX \_\_\_\_\_

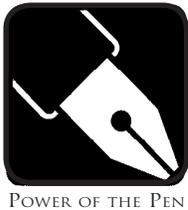
Writing Team Coach \_\_\_\_\_

*We agree to pay Power of the Pen \$25 as a processing fee for rights to use the name, logo, and or artwork that is legally registered to **Power of the Pen** on our School's Writing Team T-shirts. We understand that this authorization does not include permission to use these properties in or on other products, merchandise, and/or publications.*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Writing Team Coach's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date





# Power of the Pen pre-District Mini-Meet Application for Permission

Policy allows participating schools to host one (only) pre-District mini-meet involving other schools in their area. Only schools enrolled in POP Districts may be invited to attend. Dates may not conflict with POP District events in the same area. No mini-meet may be held after February 15. Non-compliance with this policy may result in disqualification from District participation. A fee of \$25 must accompany this application.

**Mini-Meet Site** \_\_\_\_\_

Name of School

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher/Coordinator and/or Sponsoring Coach(es)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### Schools Invited to Attend

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Prompts** that will be used (*Prompts must be original and not taken from Power of the Pen publications.*)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

*Fund-raising must not conflict with Power of the Pen's fund-raising in the area for its District and Regional events. Contact the State Office if funding for your Mini-Meet exceeds \$350.*

### Funding Sources

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**For Office use only:** Permission \_\_\_\_\_ Granted \_\_\_\_\_ Denied

Comment: \_\_\_\_\_



Power of the Pen

# Nomination

for

## The Distinguished Friend to Young Writers Award

This award was established by the State Committee in 1998. It is not intended to be an annual Volunteer Award. Rather, it allows Power of the Pen to recognize—when it is appropriate to do so— an outstanding volunteer at the State Tournament whose dedication and service over the years has made a significant impact upon the program as a whole.

Nominations submitted for this award will be considered at the Spring Meeting of the State Committee prior to the annual State Tournament.

Candidate's Name \_\_\_\_\_

School/School Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ County \_\_\_\_\_

Estimated Hours of Service \_\_\_\_\_ Years Served \_\_\_\_\_

Description of Outstanding Services Rendered:

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Nomination submitted by (person or persons):

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

(Title or School Affiliation)

*NOTE: In 2000, **Tom Stafford** of the Springfield News-Sun was recognized for volunteering more than 100 hours as a Best of Round Judge, providing consistent and comprehensive newspaper coverage for local tournaments, and for helping to secure funding for the program's growth. In 2003, **Bob Headly**, Professor of English at Southern State Community College, was honored for his significant contributions over a five-year span. Bob served as a Best of Round Judge at the District, Regional, and State levels; he judged the State Poetry Awards; and he made numerous presentations when his help was needed. In 2004, Power of the Pen recognized **Clyde Patterson** of Lander Circle Kiwanis and **Jim Sandegrin** of Dayton Kiwanis for their dedicated long-term support.*

*No Volunteer Award was made in 2005.*

*In 2006, Power of the Pen recognized **David Nedrich** of General Motors for his long-time exceptional service on the Power of the Pen Board of Trustees. In 2007, the recipients were **Dr. Stan Hales**, President of the College of Wooster, and **Dr. Joan Baker**, Distinguished Cleveland Educator/writer and long-term member of Power of the Pen's Board of Trustees. No Volunteer Award was made in 2008. In 2009, **Dr. George Bilgere** of John Carroll University, our annual Poetry Award Judge at State, was so honored.*



# Nomination

## Outstanding Teacher and Coach Award

From the outset, Power of the Pen has recognized dedicated teacher-coaches whose enthusiasm for writing inspires students to write so well. Each year in the State Program, a Teacher Honor Roll is published, listing by name and school those teachers and administrators whose contribution to Power of the Pen is particularly noteworthy. Some of these outstanding educators have not only served as coaches to winning teams and individuals, but have made major contributions to Power of the Pen's development Statewide.

Nominations submitted for his award will be considered at the Spring Meeting of the State Committee prior to the annual State Tournament.

Candidate's Name \_\_\_\_\_  
School/School Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ County \_\_\_\_\_

Years served as a Teacher/Coach for Power of the Pen  
from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ Total \_\_\_\_\_ years

Description of Service beyond role of Coach

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Nomination submitted by (person or persons):

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(Title or School Affiliation)

NOTE: Special Teacher Awards were presented in 2001 to **Dennis Gray** (posthumous) of Bethel Middle School in Miami County; and both **Pete Scriven** and **Marian Mittler** of the Strongsville School system in Cuyahoga County. In 2002 the recipients were **Merry Anne Hilty** of Heskett Middle School in Cuyahoga County and **Mary Anderson** of St Sebastian School in Summit County. In 2003, **Susan Furlong** of L T Ball, Miami County, and **Polly Ruedebusch**, McBroom JHS in Auglaize County were honored. **Denise Hynick** of North Royalton MS was honored in 2004 as was **Ellen Arena** of Field MS in Mogadore in 2005. In 2006, Writing Team Coaches and Host School Coordinators **Diana McFadden** and **Linda Sturgil**, both of Unioto JHS, received Outstanding Teacher/Coach Awards.

