INDIVIDUAL CONTEST CATEGORIES:

News

News article
Summary (succinct) lead; inverted pyramid structure; direct quotes.

Sports article
Summary or feature lead; factual; no editorial statements; direct quotes.

Feature article
Creative yet factual lead; engaging details throughout; direct quotes.

News photograph
Storytelling photograph; strong subject matter; imaginative composition; not posed.

Sports photograph
Storytelling photograph; may, but need not, capture action; strong subject matter; imaginative composition; not posed.

Feature photograph
Storytelling photograph; uses creative composition techniques; may, but need not, be posed.

Editorial
Staff (usually unsigned) editorial; focus on a single issue; discussion of opposing arguments; use of strong supporting arguments; accurate throughout.

Cartoons
Clear message; precise focus; usually (but not necessarily) hand-drawn.

Graphics
Infographic, logo, or illustration; usually (but not necessarily) designed on computer.

Sports column
Signed opinion column focused on any area of athletics; accurate throughout.

General/Editorial column
Signed opinion column printed in any section of the newspaper; accurate throughout.

Reviews
Opinion piece usually concerning (but not limited to) music, film, video game, restaurant, or a television show; include headline with submission.
Front page design
Full-page design from the front page of the print newspaper

Inside page design
One full-page design from the print newspaper; clear, cohesive design packages with a dominant visual and story package

Inside spread design
Two-page design spread from the print newspaper; clear, cohesive design packages with dominant visuals and story packages

Video/Multimedia
Short video or interactive graphic on the news website

**Literary magazine**

Poetry
One piece of original poetry.

Fiction
One piece of original fiction writing.

Feature
Nonfiction story told in a creative manner; includes engaging details throughout.

Review
Opinion piece that critically assesses music, film, video games, restaurants, or a television show; include headline with submission.

Personal Essay
Original nonfiction story based in a personal experience or narrative

Drama
One piece of a play narrative.

Photography/Art Layout
A collection of artistic photography designed as a unit; engaging subject matter; creative composition techniques.

Graphic
One piece of original illustration; may be hand-drawn or designed on computer.

Poetry Layout
Design of a spread that contains poetry; submit entire spread (at least two facing pages).
Fiction Layout
Design of a spread that contains fiction writing; submit entire spread (at least two facing pages).

Nonfiction Layout
Design of a spread that contains nonfiction writing; submit entire spread (least two facing pages).

Individual Art
One piece of original art, any medium, in the format it appeared in the magazine; attributed to one artist.

Individual Photograph
Artistic photograph; engaging subject matter; creative composition techniques; attributed to one photographer.

**Yearbook**

Theme Copy
Copy that introduces, advances and concludes the theme or concept of the book; usually found in the opening, divider and closing pages; include headline with submission.

Feature copy
Any article published in the book (except for sports); should consist of a creative yet factual lead, engaging details, and direct quotes; should not include editorial statements; include headline with submission.

Sports copy
An article pertaining to sports; should consist of a creative yet factual lead, engaging details, and direct quotes; should not include editorial statements; include headline with submission.

Captions
A set of captions from one spread; submit entire spread (two facing pages).

Sports Captions
A set of captions from a sports design spread; submit entire spread (two facing pages).

Theme Spread Design
Design of an opening, a divider, or a closing spread; submit one entire spread (two facing pages).

Sports Spread Design
Design of a sports spread; submit one entire spread (two facing pages).
Feature Spread Design
Design of a spread focusing on any topic (excludes theme, sports, and advertising spreads); submit one entire spread (two facing pages).

People Section Design
Two-page spread from the portrait section of the yearbook.

Feature Photograph
Storytelling photograph; uses creative composition techniques.

Sports Photograph
Storytelling photograph; may, but need not, capture action; strong subject matter; imaginative composition.

Theme Photograph
Storytelling photograph that relates to the theme of the yearbook

**TV News/Multimedia**

Spot News
Coverage of a single, unplanned news event; submit a single segment.

Hard News
Coverage of a single planned news event or an investigative report; submit a single segment.

Feature News
Human interest story or profile that is not investigative; submit a single segment.

Sports
Sports report (could be spot, hard, or feature); submit a single segment.

**Radio/Podcast**

News Story
Coverage of a single news story; straight forward; submit a single segment

Feature Story
Human interest or profile that is not investigative; engaging details throughout; creative use of sound, interviews and narration to convey the nature of the story

Sports Story
Sports report (could be news or feature); can be analysis/commentary or recap
Longform Platform
Investigative and feature pieces that focus on one subject and makes creative use of audio elements

OVERALL CONTEST CATEGORIES:

Achievement
Publications, websites and newscasts awarded the “Achievement” rating meet some general journalistic standards but lack depth in coverage and writing and excellence in design, photography and visuals.

Honor
NCSMA’s “Honor” rating is awarded to publications, websites and newscasts that demonstrate a basic understanding of journalistic principles.

Distinction
Scholastic newspapers/websites/magazines/yearbooks/newscasts that receive NCSMA’s “Distinction” rating demonstrate excellence in most areas of scholastic journalism. Any weaknesses are generally limited to one area.

All-North Carolina
This is NCSMA’s highest rating. “All-North Carolina” scholastic newspapers/websites/magazines/yearbooks/newscasts demonstrate excellence in all areas of journalism.