

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.