



The Write Challenge Anthology

DIFFERENCES

Spring 2014

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Differences...

This year's Lakota LEADS Write Challenge theme is Differences. The abacus and the computer; shells on the beach; human faces; oil portraits and digital snapshots—differences surround us. Thank you to all of this year's entrants. Here are the top three students in every category and their wonderful literary works!

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POETRY K-2: 1st PLACE

Everyone's Different

By Haylie Yeazell, Grade 1

Tall's and short's
all different sorts.
Fast and slow
go with the flow.

No matter the background
friends can be found.
No matter the color
be friendly with each other.

No fists, no fights
no hair pulling, no bites.
Everyone's different, everyone's the same
but being kind is the name of the game.

POETRY K-2: 2nd PLACE

Being "Deaf" firent

By Drew Willits, Grade 2

Did you know I am deaf?
Everyone else can hear properly
Always facing challenges in my life
Funny things on my head

I am different!

Must keep them on to hear

Please don't touch them

Laugh at me all you want, but I won't care!

Am just at the starting point

Now I can hear like everyone else.

Tell me something, am I different?

So are you!

POETRY K-2: 3rd PLACE

It is Okay to Be Different By Kais M Alwawi, Grade 1

To be different is okay.

You were born this way.

Go to your friends and say: "Hey!"

Let's enjoy recess and play.

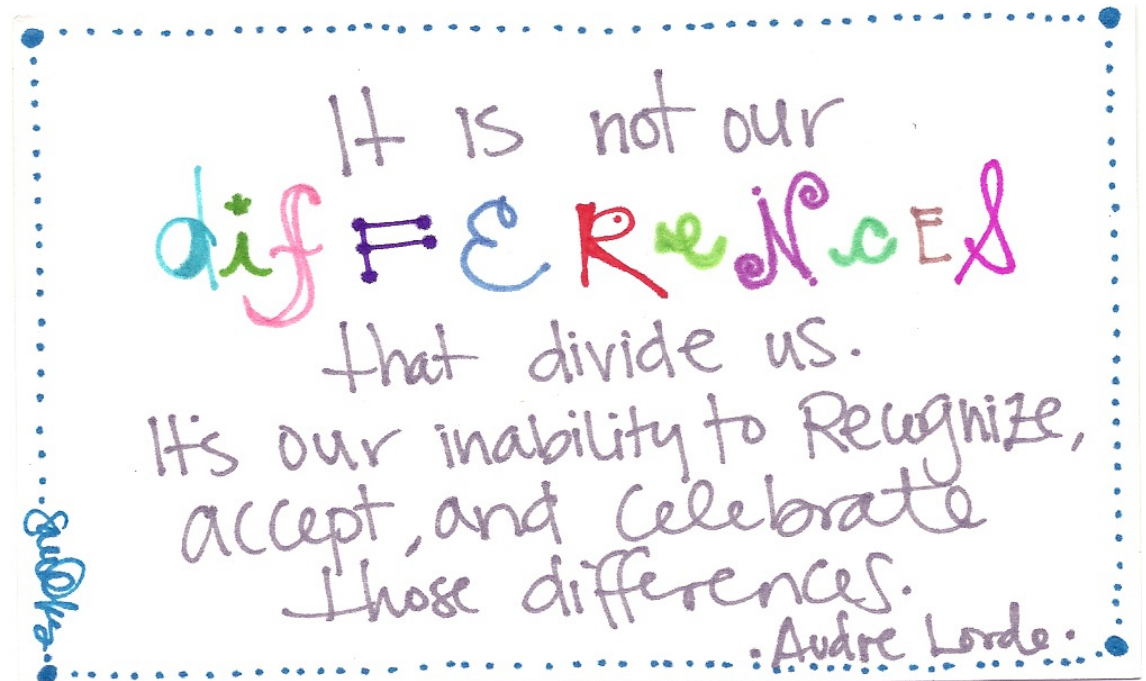
Different looks are okay.

Different languages are okay.

Even different ways to pray!

Don't be shy, don't go away.

You are special in your own way



ESSAY/STORY K-2: 1st PLACE

Making a Difference Can Change the World By Sunitvir Taunque, Grade 2

Making a difference can change the world in many ways. People can change the world by their hard and honest work. Thomas Edison made a difference by inventing the light bulb. If it weren't for him, we would still be in the darkness today. Schools make a difference in people's lives too. They help people learn and gain knowledge. With this knowledge they make the world a better place to live in. Firefighters and policemen make a difference by risking their lives to help other people. Firefighters help by putting out fires. Policemen help by catching thieves and criminals. But the biggest difference of all, was when God made man. Any difference, big or small can change the world for good.

ESSAY/STORY K-2: 2nd PLACE

Difference means to me... By Ojas Chadwell, Grade 1

Sometimes we want to be different. Or you want to be the same. Maybe you want to be the same because your friend is more athletic. Maybe you want to be different because you're going to do something you want to do, but you don't want to do what your friend wants to do.

My friend wanted to go to The Web for my birthday but I didn't want to. I wanted to go skiing for my birthday.

The night before picture day, my mom and dad said I have to wear Indian clothes but I didn't want to wear Indian clothes. I wanted to wear an American suit because I didn't want to be different. The next day I wore Indian clothes and it felt pretty good to be different. My pictures turned out pretty well.

POETRY 3-4: 1st PLACE

Difference

By Josie McKain, Grade 4

Dad, did ewe know?
I'm afraid it is sew!
For eye got a sea two-day,
Fore aye four-got the weigh!
Evidently isle never sore,
Righting "Pie" as three-point-won-for"!
Everyone nose what two dew, and sow there scores are grate!
Nobody else counts tu-tu...oar fore...ore ate!
Confusing words won't leave me a loan!
Each won *sounds* correct, butt...it's a homophone!

POETRY 3-4: 2nd PLACE

About the Ending

By Audrey Green, Grade 4

For you it will be like a hailstorm blender.
But for me it's a place where I can drink water, spit it, laugh.

For you flowers wilt and slowly freeze, afterwards decompose
and rot.
Then they're gone.
But for me I'll lie on a picnic blanket on the clouds and take a
nap.

For you never feeling the freedom of riding the Flight Deck
coaster with me again is like trees losing beautiful leaves.
But for me I will feel the breeze of Pipsqueak and Annie on my
bare skin.

For you the heart turns gray and cloudy and rainy.
But for me I'll fly while hiding and I could seek for other angels
and play tag and pull their wings.

For you it's a foot frozen after losing its boot in cold, cold
snow.
A foot turning cold red, a little stinging.
But for me my singing might be more beautiful there.
There might be singing everywhere.

POETRY 3-4: 3rd Place

Differ-ants

By Luke Eagle, Grade 4

There's a differ-ants
In all living things,
like when you're comparing teeny ants,
to the great giant eleph-ants,
who romp around they're all differ-ant.

One can be big and strong,
One can be small and weak,
One can dash right
Through the creek.
Like the big bear,
And the little hare.
One likes to prowl and growl,
And another likes to run,
Right under the sun.

The house cat,
He's where it's at,
When he gets in a fight,
With a wild cat.
Then they're
Tumblin',

And rumblin',
And grumblin',
As they're lying on the ground.
'Cause they're different,
But they're related,
It's all so
Very, very complicated.



ESSAY 3-4: 1st PLACE

Board Games and Computer Games By Gus Hankinson, Grade 3

Have you ever landed on Boardwalk during the game Monopoly? I have and I always buy it! My family often plays board games, especially during the holidays. My brother and I also like to play computer games. Board games and computer games are different, but both are fun.

Computer games are usually played alone. Board games are played with two or more players. People play board games with their families and friends. A lot of times, board games make people laugh and be silly. Games like Operation and Connect Four make people smile. Everyone has a favorite board game.

When people play board games their hands do not cramp. People playing computer games will probably end up with hand cramps after playing a long time. I always get cramps in my hands while on the computer! Computer games are plugged in and usually on the Internet. Board games sometimes need batteries, but usually only require people and dice, cards, and games pieces. I play travel board games and computer games in the car on long trips.

Board games do not get "sick" like computers. Computers sometimes catch viruses and then the computer has to be fixed to play again. I have problems with viruses on the computer sometimes, so my dad or my brother has to help me.

Board games have lots of things computer games do not have. For example, board games have boards to play on and computer games have a screen. Board games have fun pieces to move around, toss, spin, and throw. These things are fun, but you can sometimes lose pieces to board games. There are no pieces to lose on a computer.

Computer games are played alone or online, but board games are played with people right beside you. During board games, you can talk to people and laugh with them. During computer games, you cannot laugh out loud and talk with others.

People can learn numbers, counting, and how to be a good sport from playing board games. People can learn math playing computers games too. But while you are playing computer games, you do not have to be a good sport. My family prefers board games because you can learn to play fair. In some board games and computer games you can learn science, social studies, and even math.

On computers, you can also learn from your mistakes. Sometimes people get in trouble from sending others a bad message. You should be careful when you play computer games because if you write something bad, you cannot take it back.

All in all, both computer games and board games are fun. Board games are for people, like me, who enjoy playing in person with a lot of fun people. Computers are best for people who might like to play alone or with people all over the country or the world. Both types are fun, but very different.

ESSAY 3-4: 2nd PLACE

The Abacus and the Computer

By Yashmit Deshpande, Grade 4

The Computer and the Abacus are both machines used to calculate numbers. When I started researching about the Computer and the Abacus the first thing that I came across Google is that both are machines that have the same purpose of calculations but they are so different. Just think about it. What are those differences?

Well, first of all, one difference is that the Abacus is made up of wooden frame and beads and the Computer is made up of hi-tech electronics. When you use an Abacus you tell it how to calculate numbers but when you use a Computer you only tell it what to calculate and it does it for you. It is as if the Computer is a kind of a magic box.

Even though the Computer is the latest Abacus the Computer can do a lot more than the normal Abacus. For example, the XBOX One that I got for my Tenth birthday is a kind of a Computer that can take my voice commands but an Abacus cannot do such things.

Also, if I am using an Abacus and a Computer to do the same mathematics problem, I am going to get my answer faster on the Computer than on the Abacus. Chances of getting the answer wrong on the Abacus are far greater than chances of getting the

answer wrong on the Computer. This is because you are doing all the work when you do it on the Abacus and sometimes human beings can go wrong! But on the Computer, all the work is done for you. As long as you enter the correct numbers the Computer will always give you the right answers. So, I can say that the Computer is never wrong.

One more interesting thing I was thinking about was, what if there is a thunderstorm and I lose power. What will I be able to use, Computer or Abacus? Although, a Computer is much faster and powerful it will be useless without an electrical power. I can still use my Abacus because it doesn't require any electrical power.

I usually like to build simple things at home. So, I think I would be able to make an Abacus at home using the right tools and household items but to build a Computer from scratch I would require a lot of fancy tools and technology. So, it is impossible to build a Computer using household items.

Although the Computer is far more powerful and faster than the Abacus, just like Henry Ford could invent a car because someone invented a wheel first, someone could invent a Computer in the twentieth century because someone invented an Abacus centuries ago. So, we all should be grateful to the inventor of the Abacus because if he/she hadn't invented the Abacus we wouldn't have the latest and greatest Computer to enjoy today.

ESSAY 3-4: 3rd PLACE

Differences

By Kyra Balyeat, Grade 3

Differences should be noticed and seen. Our differences distinguish us from one another and differences are a big part of life. Differences can be good and bad. A good difference would be knowing how to make someone laugh or being good at reading. A bad difference would be bragging too much.

One day I saw people call a girl with new glasses “Four-eyes.” The people in the group were usually nice. I was scared to tell because they might have picked on me. Now I know that differences are a good thing to have and set people apart so we are not all the same. Life would be boring if we were all the same.

We should give people compliments about the good things about them, but not tease them about their flaws. We should not be judged by how we talk, look or dress. Instead, you should be judged by what is inside.

Martin Luther King, Jr. had a dream that blacks and whites should be together and I think that he was trying to say that differences should be seen but not judged and what is inside is the most important thing you have. He was also saying that pigment or hobbies are a big part of you. They make you

special. It doesn't matter if you dye your hair orange, but if you have the same hobbies you should be noticed for them not by your orange hair. Differences are very important because they separate us all, but our personalities will still bring us together. Being different and being the same can both be good and bad. We just need to accept the fact we are both different and the same.



NARRATIVE 3-4: 1st PLACE

The Difference between Being a Bully and Being a Good Friend

By Taylor Smyers, Grade 3

Chapter One: Mean Words

“Hey,” said Flutterby. “What is your name?” “My name is Dee, what is your name?” asked Dee. “My name is Flutterby, much prettier than Dee.” replied Flutterby. “Well that wasn’t very nice.” said Dee. “Well I don’t really care Ms. Dee.” exclaimed Flutterby. Dee decided to walk away.

Flutterby was not finished with Dee yet. “Hey Dee,” called Flutterby. “That dress you’re wearing is totally ugly and your hair is even worse.” “Well that wasn’t very nice either queen bossy pants!” cried Dee. Dee ran home and started crying into a pillow. Then Dee’s mother, Caroline patted Dee on the back.

“It’s okay,” said Caroline, Dee’s mother. “I think that Flutterby is just jealous of you, because you are a beautiful young girl.” “Thanks mom you are beautiful, too.” replied Dee. Dee started off to go to Flutterby’s house to apologize and ask to be friends...

Chapter Two: Apologizing?

Flutterby was devastated to see Dee at her door. This is how Dee got inside, “Knock, knock.” said Dee. “Who’s there?” asked Flutterby. “Can.” said Dee. “Can who?” asked Flutterby again. “Can I come in to apologize?” Dee quietly asked. “Sure.” replied Flutterby nervously. “Look, Flutterby I am super sorry that I called you bossy.” said Dee sadly. “You shouldn’t be apologizing to me,” said Flutterby. “I should be apologizing to you. I mean your hair and dress are totally cute and your name is much prettier than mine and I am sorry.” Flutterby picked up a cookie and ate it, breathing heavily. “No, my name is not prettier than yours, and your name is not prettier than mine. Our names have the same amount of prettiness!” said Dee with a smile on her face. “Thanks Dee, I feel much better now.” said Flutterby getting a little grin on her face. Dee took a cookie and ate it. “Hey Flutterby,” said Dee. “Do you want to be BEST FRIENDS?”

Chapter Three: Best Friends?

Flutterby was speechless for a minute. Then Flutterby said, "You know what Dee, I'd love to be your best friend!" answered Flutterby happily. After that they did everything together, like painting their nails together. Flutterby and Dee decided to make a shop together. Their shop was called "The Lollipop Sweet Shop!" they made all sorts of cakes, sweets, and candy! They sold their food for ten dollars or even less! "You are the best, Dee!" said Flutterby. "No, you're the best, Flutterby!" Dee argued cheerfully. "You're my best friend!" They both said at the same time. Dee and Flutterby had the best shop in the whole universe. Everyone came to their sweet shop and loved it! "Flutterby I guess you can be different, I mean you used to be a bully and now you stand up to bullies!" exclaimed Dee. "Thanks Dee!" replied Flutterby. That is the difference between being a bully or changing and becoming a good friend.

NARRATIVE 3-4: 2nd PLACE

The Helping Friend

By Alexandria White, Grade 4

One day in August Bob started school for the first time. This is so special because he has never been to school. He has never been to school because Bob is "heavier than he needs to be," said the doctor. With that said he got bullied a lot because of his weight. His mom thought it would be good for him to go to school. On the first day of 4th grade nobody sat by him on the bus, except a girl named Ally. "Hi my name is Ally. What is your name?" said Ally. "Bob. This is my first day of school since 1st grade," Bob said nervously. "That's ok," said Ally. Right when they arrived at school they went their separate ways. Not surprised a dude walked up to Bob and said, "Why are you so fat?" Bob felt like crying, so he hurried inside the school and went straight to homeroom.

When Bob entered the room everybody stared at him. When the first bell rang everybody had to say their name and one fact about them. "Hi my name is Bob. I like to eat a lot," Bob mumbled. "Ha-ha!" laughed everybody in the class. "Kids don't laugh it's not nice," said Mrs. Reed the teacher. In writing, Bob first subject, they had to write a paragraph about cause and effect. This is what Bob wrote:

I stayed up late. Because I stayed up late I was tired in the morning.

“Good job Bob. Josh why don’t you share next,” said Mrs. Reed.

Bob ate too much. The effect was he weighs a lot.

At that point Bob was finished. The teacher didn’t say anything but, “Josh, go to the office.” The rest of the day was worse. At lunch everybody laughed when they saw Bob eating a cookie. Then a guy sat down next to him, “Hey I am Jack. What is your name?” “Bob,” Bob mumbled. “Hi Bob. I am a kid who tries to make bullies stop picking on people,” said Jack. “So you want to help me, and be my friend?” asked Bob. “Yes I want to help you and be your friend,” said Jack.

When lunch was over Bob had one more subject. That class was good since Jack was there. At the end of the day Jack asked, “Would you like to come over, Bob?” “Would you like to come over to my house?” asked Bob slowly. “Sure,” said Jack. Bob rushed home to tell his mom the good news. “Really?! Do you know where he lives?” asked Bob’s mom. “I said he could come down to my house,” said Bob. The doorbell rang and Bob answered it. “Hi Jack!” said Bob really happy to see Jack. Bob and Jack rushed upstairs to Bob’s room.

“Can we work on standing up to the bullies?” asked Bob.

“Sure,” said Jack. They worked on that all afternoon. The next day Josh said something mean to Bob. “Please don’t say that ever again. I’m different and that is ok,” said Bob. That ended bullying Bob.

NARRATIVE 3-4: 3rd PLACE

Seasons

By Sudiksha Mukherjee, Grade 4

Long, long ago when god made earth...there were 4 girls born in heaven. The first girl was named Spring, second was named Summer, third was named Autumn and fourth was named Winter.

The 4 girls went straight to Earth. The 4 sisters lived a very beautiful and great life filled with love and joy. With them their happiness spread upon the Earth. When they died they left they're characteristics behind like spirits. The first daughter Spring was always blooming with ideas and was very beautiful so that's how the season spring was made with all flowers blooming and beautiful ideas of spring coming back to life.

The second daughter Summer was always filled with joy and gave warmth all around the world. That's how the season summer was made with warmth and joy.

The third daughter Autumn was very colorful. She had a magical touch turning leaves to red, yellow, orange, and brown from green. That's how Autumn was created by falling colorful leaves of red, yellow, orange, and brown.

Last but not least Winter was the coldest and prettiest between the 4 sisters. That's how the season winter was made. It was the coldest of all and most beautiful time of the year filled with fluttering snowflakes everywhere

All 4 sisters combined their spirits together creating weather. With this they created our days better and awesome with spring, summer, autumn, and winter. The weather is all different creating difference in the world.



POETRY 5-6: 1st PLACE

Only One You

By Caroline Batt, Grade 6

Just as no two snowflakes are the same as they can be
All of us have differences you may or may not see.
My hair is brown and eyes the same
But my eyes are weak so I wear a frame.
I have tubes in my ears so that they are clear
And this helps so that I can hear.
I couldn't breathe at night you see
So tonsils and adenoids came out when I was three.
But there is so much more about me...
I like to stay active and not sit in a chair
And dancing is something that I do with flair.
Reading is something that I love to do
And I always have a good book or two.
Drawing pictures and creating art
I would say that is a good start.
Each of us has something different to show
And from our differences we learn and grow.
All of these differences you may or may not see
But these are the things that make the one and only me.



POETRY 5-6: 2nd PLACE

Slave Owner-Slave (Two Voice Poem)

By Jazmine Yun, Grade 5

Slave Owner

I am a slave owner.

Me, my slaves
must honor.

They think I am
mean, but I was
the one who gave
them jobs and
shelter.

What they have to
do is farm in the
hot sun and
swelter.

They think I am a
jerk. Why?
Because I don't
work. I too have
to work to make
my family strong.

Slave

I am a slave.

I get whipped and
abused when I do
something wrong
or misbehave.

For me, working is abuse.

I have many cuts and a bruise.

They are cruel.
Why? Because we
are the ones that
make his family
strong.

But they are
wrong.

But they are as
different as aliens.

They are different.
They are
different...

But, I tell you,
they are wrong.

We are humans with a heart.

We are equal.
We are equal...

POETRY 5-6: 3rd PLACE

Home is Where the Cake is By Reeya Dighe, Grade 6

We all have our thoughts,
Our feelings
Unique in every way
But what happens,
When you mix very different people
And tell them to live together?
What happens is a
Family

Powdery flour,
And crystal like sugar,
Combined with fragrant vanilla,
Or decadent chocolate
But what happens.
When you mix very different ingredients,
And tell them to make something together?
What happens is a
Cake

A mother,
Is like the flour
That holds that whole cake together,
Just like she holds,
The whole family together

A father,
Is like the eggs
Perfect partner for the flour,
Just as flour is
For eggs

A sister,
Is like sugar
She adds just enough sweet,
To make the family
Feel joyful

A brother,
Is like the vanilla,
Giving the family flavor
For a family is remembered by,
The children they have raised

Grandparents,
Are like the butter
Cozy and comforting,
They give the family moistness,
Through their cherished memories

All these people,
As different as the ingredients of a cake,
But put them together,
And you get something deliciously distinct,
With a unique texture of its own,
A family

ESSAY 5-6: 1st PLACE

Together We Learn

By Alex Merk, Grade 5

I am a typical kid. I go to Heritage Elementary, and there, I have learned an important message in diversity. Ever since second grade, I have had a friend there. His name is J.T. When I met him in second grade, he seemed to be lonely. No friends were ever with him. But that wasn't all. J.T. didn't talk at school.

When I realized how lonely he must be, I thought I should be a friend. I sat with him at lunch. I stayed with him at recess. I talked to him when I had the chance. I did this, the whole time urging him to talk. I asked him questions, told him facts, and tried to be the best friend I could be. I promised to make him feel comfortable here at school!

I declared to myself.

Other kids caught on, devoting their free time to him. We were all very determined to make him feel comfortable enough to talk. I felt maybe we were giving him too much attention. I didn't want him to be overwhelmed and feel even more uncomfortable. Slowly, I started to let the other helpers take over.

The school year went on, and J.T. didn't seem quite as lonely, as he was never alone. But he still wouldn't talk, and very sadly, he still wouldn't smile. Then one day, I was doing some work in class when I heard some girls shouting from a corner where J.T. was sitting. I rushed over.

"J.T., say Alex!" one of the girls exclaimed excitedly.

My heart stopped. My eyes bulged. I waited. I wasn't thinking about overwhelming him anymore. I stared at J.T.

"A...Alex!" whispered J.T.

"He said my name!" I cried. Yes, it was only a whisper, but hey! It was a start.

Not only had J.T. said my name, but he had cracked a big smile while doing it. For the remainder of the year, J.T. continued to whisper small things like people's names, and he would occasionally smile.

J.T. wasn't in my class the next year. But one day, I stumbled across him in the hall. "Hi J.T!" I said. "Hi Alex!" he replied casually. I stopped dead in my tracks. J.T. had full out said my name! No trace of a whisper. He said it like he had been saying it his whole life! By the time I gained my composure again, J.T. was already down the hall behind me. But I knew that wasn't the last time he would respond to me.

Now I am in fifth grade. J.T. has so many friends it's hard to count! He's never alone, he's always excited, he loves to talk... and he never stops smiling!

I have learned a lot from J.T. I've learned that friends can help us do hard things.

I've learned to always stay hopeful and happy. Most importantly, I've learned that we can all be friends, even if we have differences.

ESSAY 5-6: 2nd PLACE

Difference

By Becky Horwatt, Grade 6

The difference among humans is that we don't have the same thought processes as each other to fully understand the feeling of connection or similarity in our heads but only "in" our hearts. We can all look upon something and see it in a different view or an opinionated way. We could see a problem as being a positive or negative or even maybe a solution.

The thing that makes humans different from each other is that we label each other. We divide everyone among their grouped section and split them off from others. Though we could see the world as one, we develop our own sense of mind to establish our own opinions. We have a feeling of selfishness when it comes to seeing things in the world. We might see ourselves as not doing anything to hurt others, and we don't see how we may hurt others. Our opinions are what we believe. Adding our view on the world can separate us from other humans because we do what we believe.

You can see entirely different things if you stand in the exact same spot as someone else just by being a different and separate human being. You can see the glow of someone's eyes light up in excitement just by being there next to them and you can share that same happiness but in an entirely new way that's separate from anyone else who is alive or was alive. We each are a little unique in our own special way. Every generation there is something that sets us apart from

everyone else, and as time goes on these differences change until they have evolved into something entirely new.

We all have a difference, but this difference causes us to connect together, like the relationship of plants and animals. Plants and animals are compatible to each other, because animals breathe out carbon dioxide, which plants use. Then, plants give off oxygen, which animals breathe. We all have that difference among us, but it unites us like a piano. The black and white keys on a piano accompany each other and create perfect harmony. We can use our difference to build our harmony with one another and connect to everyone around us. For example, a student who speaks English as a second language could need to be tutored in English. Then, that student could tutor another student in Spanish. This is an example of how people can compliment each other with their differences in the classroom. An example in society where things are compatible is a company. At a company, every person has their own job, but they also work together to accomplish a larger goal. Another example is a sports team. Everyone has a different position or job to do, but it obtains a win for the entire team if they work together and do their separate task.

In conclusion, difference ignites something new in everyone but syncs up all our harmonies to make our own beautiful song.

ESSAY 5-6: 3rd PLACE

My Experience with Cultural Differences By Osmaan Mysorewala, Grade 5

We see a lot of different cultures in the U.S.A. itself today, but when you actually visit another country, is when you have that profound experience of being immersed in a different culture. When I went to Pakistan I saw many differences in culture compared to the U.S.A. The most striking difference is that Americans and Pakistanis dress differently. Another significant difference is the type of food eaten in Pakistan. Yet another difference is the unique languages spoken in Pakistan.

Although western clothes might be getting more popular among the younger generations of Pakistanis, traditional Pakistani clothes are still very common. The traditional Pakistani dress is called Shalwar Kameez. Shalwar are loose pants and kameez is a shirt that goes below the knees. Women will typically wear another piece called a Dupatta

that is essentially used as a scarf or head covering. Pakistanis dress much more conservatively than in the U.S. A lot of men and women often cover their heads especially during prayers.

Pakistani food is also majorly different compared to American food. Pakistanis like to make a lot of spicy and salty foods. The curries they make are very spicy. The staple foods are rice, curries, and flatbread. In the late afternoons most Pakistanis will have tea and snacks. Pakistan also has an abundance of fruits and is especially known for its varieties of mangoes. These mangoes are as sweet as honey! Pakistan it is traditional to eat meals sitting on the floor and eating with their right hand. Modern homes have dining tables and chairs but sitting on the floor to eat is still widely practiced.

Unlike the U.S.A where mainly one language is spoken many are spoken in Pakistan. Urdu is the official language of Pakistan. It is made up of a few different languages mainly Arabic and Persian. Although Urdu is the official language many other languages and dialects are spoken in Pakistan. An interesting fact is that each noun in the Urdu language is either masculine or feminine.

NARRATIVE 5-6: 1st PLACE

A World of No Differences

By Emily Mason, Grade 5

RING. The school bell rang and it was time for Carly to walk home from school. As Carly was gathering up her homework she noticed something unusual. Everyone was shoving papers into red backpacks. She realized that no one stood out. They all looked the same wearing red shirts, red pants, and even red gym shoes. "What is going on here?" she thought to herself.

As Carly walked around outside, she noticed that the world was bland. Everything around her was the same. The streets were lined with the same type of oak tree. Every car driving past was a blue Mercedes Benz. All of the buildings were a standard rectangular shape with the same number of windows. At this point, Carly wondered if she would even be able to figure out which house was hers. As she continued to walk, she noticed that although the mailboxes looked the same, they had different last names on them. "Finally something is different!" she yelled out.

Carly started looking for the mailbox with her last name on it. The smell of chicken filled the air like an invisible fog as she walked past each house and she realized everyone was outside at their grills. Just as she was wondering why everyone would be grilling chicken today, she saw the mailbox with her last name on it. Her dad was at the grill just like all of the others, and she dashed inside to find her mom. "Why is everyone grilling chicken?" she shrieked at her mom.

Her mom seemed baffled by her question. "We always barbecue chicken on Tuesdays," she replied.

Carly was very confused and didn't understand why everything had to be the same for everybody. It bothered her that the world was no longer different and she felt like a prisoner with no choices. This was making her head spin and her stomach ache so she went to lie down on her bed.

"Wake up Carly," said Carly's mom. "It is time to eat breakfast." Carly was confused. She thought that it was time to eat dinner. "Maybe I just misheard her," Carly thought. "But I am in my pajamas. I smell bacon cooking. Wait- this must have all been a dream! No wonder everything was so crazy!" Carly was relieved that it was all just a dream and was thankful that she didn't live in a world that was indistinguishable. A world like that would be mundane and no one would be able to tell anything apart. "If everything was the same, everyone would be frustrated because we would not get to choose what we wear or eat or what we want to do," she continued to think to herself.

That day at school, Carly told all of her friends about her crazy dream. She was thankful that all of her friends were different and had different talents. She was very glad to be living in a world of differences.

NARRATIVE 5-6: 2nd PLACE

Will You Play with Me?

By Anne Mathew, Grade 5

There was this one girl who I admired. I saw her every day as I worked for our owner on the farm. She seemed nice. One day I asked my mom if I could go play with her. My mama said it's probably best if I didn't but I don't even know why. My mama looked upset, so I went away. I really wanted to go meet that girl, but how could I if my mama wouldn't let me?

I went and decided to ask my owner, Mrs. Wilfred. My mama liked Mrs. Wilfred because she is very nice to us unlike her husband, Mr. Wilfred. He always spansks me. It really does hurt. I went up to Mrs. Wilfred and I said, "Can I go play with that little girl past the fence?" Mrs. Wilfred seemed to have qualms about this. I told her that I would be nice, but she said that's not why she was worried. She said, "I'm not worried you won't be nice, Annalise, I just don't know if she would want you to come over." "Okay," I said in spite of me feeling melancholy.

All through that night I wondered why Mrs. Wilfred and my mama wouldn't let me play with that girl. We are just girls. It's not like there is much difference in us. What is separating us from playing? Everybody's different. That night I couldn't sleep. I woke up my mama and told her that I couldn't sleep.

My mama told me to pray and my mama told me a Bible story. This story was about God creating Adam and Eve. In the Bible God made everything equal. That made me think. If everything is equal, what is keeping me from playing with that girl?

As I grew older I realized why. In those times, blacks weren't equal even though in the Bible it says, "Everything is equal." Blacks were treated unfairly and horribly all because of our skin color. I never got to play with that girl. I always wondered who she was. I never got to ask her the question every seven year old loves to ask. Those powerful five words, "Will you play with me?"

As I wrapped up my speech everybody stood up, they applauded loudly. I had never gotten that much feedback from my speeches ever. I was surprised. As I left the stage there was someone standing there. A girl who I'd never seen.

She seemed sort of shy. I finally realized who she was and I finally got to say what all my life I had been waiting for.

NARRATIVE 5-6: 3rd PLACE

The Good Old Days

By Rachel Anderson, Grade 5

Brrring! Brrring! I was calling my dad. My Grandma Polly's car wouldn't start and we were supposed to be going out to eat at a fancy restaurant.

Apparently calling someone for help means inviting them to dinner because that's what my Grandma did! She invited my dad along with us to our special dinner after he fixed the car.

"Why don't we call your mom too, Lauren?" asked my Grandma as we were sitting down at the restaurant. I sighed and reminded her that my mom had to work late again tonight.

After I ordered, I reached for my i-Pad. "Ugh," I moaned to my Grandma, "my i-Pad won't work."

"Well, you could just talk to your dad and me like the good old days!" my Grandma said sweetly.

"But that's boring!" I was getting frustrated.

"Lauren!" Okay...maybe my dad was a little more frustrated than I was!

"I'll take this one, Jeff," my Grandma said calmly. "Lauren, I want to tell you a story of when I was a little girl. There were no cell phones that you could use to call for help if your car broke down, but there was a party line."

"What's a party line?" I asked.

"Hold on, I'm just getting started. You'd pick up the phone and there was an operator and you could hear other people's conversations, which seems so strange now. And the cars were very different – there were no seatbelts and three people sat in the front seat!"

"Speaking of cars, my friend told me that you could fill up your gas for 25 cents."

"Oh yes! You could get a lot of things for 25 cents. I could buy lunch, a drink, and have ice cream for 25 cents. You could also go to a movie, buy popcorn, and have change left over. People also filled up your gas for you at that cheap price!"

"You mean that was their job?" I asked.

"Yes! That makes me think, moms rarely ever worked like your mom is now. They did stuff around the house - like cooking, for instance. They did a lot of that since there weren't as many

restaurants. Going out to eat was a treat. Now we go out to eat all the time. And back to the subject of your i-Pad not working, when I was little we didn't have i-Pads, or any electronic devices that you have. I read a lot and played outside all the time. I played jump rope, hopscotch, and spent a lot of time playing dolls. The point I'm trying to teach you is that things were a lot different than they are now. You should be thankful that you have electronics, but those things shouldn't affect your attitude.

"Thanks grandma, things are a lot different now and I should be happy that we're here together." I really did like hearing about grandma's childhood. I wonder what other stories she has to tell.



POETRY 7-8: 1st PLACE

Seven Billion

By John Ferguson, Grade 8

seven billion;

a number not one can imagine, yet we do so everyday
you, me—we are not special; insignificant beings that seek
purpose in life
we are savages—ruthless animals, with no care for what
damage we may cause to mind and body. we have all seen it
with our own eyes, yet what do we do about it? nothing at all

and yet, life goes on;

it is our achilles' heel, the weakness of the human race. we
claim to be superior, but it is ourselves that create our
disgrace

the clothes you wear

 the music you listen to

 the color of your skin

 the religion you practice

the differences between you, me, and seven billion make us
unique; but the subtle nuances, scrutinized

imagine a world of seven billion copies

 seven billion of all the same

 seven billion unfeeling hearts and minds

 seven billion names in flame

society is cruel and society is unforgiving, but there is a war:
seven billion against one

your difference is your power, your gift, so use it and roar

we live on the same planet, we are all related, yet we are filled
with so much hatred

so raise the call, burn the mind, start the revolution for
mankind

dance faster, smile brighter, laugh harder—make them cower

do not let the distinction of seven billion, be our extinction

contrast is beauty, the genius of outcast

so really what is the difference between you and seven
billion?

you're one of a kind, but the seven billion are blind

POETRY 7-8: 2nd PLACE

The Ice Girl

By Tyson Jung, Grade 7

She stood in the distance
With the mist enveloping her.
Her dress swayed and danced
With the wind which chilled me.
She scared me
Not because she was far away
Or because she was partly shrouded,
But because she was beautiful.
Her delicacy enticed me
And her delicate hands
Brushed the brown strands
From her delicate face.
And with those
Delicate hands of hers
She waved across the mist
And smiled so beautifully
I almost forgot how to breathe.
I longed to touch her
So I advanced to her with ignorance
Of the mist creeping up to my thighs.
The chill matched the breeze
But I persisted to struggle
Through the mist
To touch the delicate girl.
She became closer and closer
And I soon stood a footstep away.
The mist covered her legs

But her dress was so beautiful.
Her eyes were as cold as the mist
Piercing blue which stole my breath.
She smiled at me, absent of identity
Absent of unnecessary words
Absent of meaningless things
Aside from a beautiful dress
Beautiful eyes and a
Beautiful smile.
I asked for her name
And she just smiled with grace.
I complimented her dress
With again an absence of words.
I wondered if she was deaf
Until she lifted up her hand.
She reached out with her hand,
And rested it on my cheek.
Her touch was impossibly cold,
Matching her eyes
And matching the mist swirling around us.
She laughed silently and stepped forward
So that we were face to face.
I asked her again what her name was,
But she just directed my eyes
To her wrists.
The scars weren't blue
Nor were they cold.
They weren't delicate.
They weren't anything she seemed to be.
I glanced at her once again,
But her eyes were filled with tears
And as the tears fell,
I tried to wipe them from her icy cheeks

But they kept falling
And I couldn't keep up
And she uttered the first words of hers
She said, "Even cold hearts can crack."
And with that, her icy cheeks
Escaped from my trembling hands
As I watched her escape into the mist.
I screamed after her
After the girl made of ice
But she just cried harder,
And her delicate hands wiped her eyes
Again and again
And as she drifted away,
I glanced her wrists once more.
The scars told me her identity
Without a single word said.
They weren't delicate.
But they were beautiful.
The girl made of ice
Escaped me.
Soon I was alone in the icy mist
And I, too,
Escaped myself.
I slowly drifted out of the mist,
Eyes becoming hazy.
Soon I was conscious again
Lying in my bed.
The ice girl lived in my dreams.
"She never left me."
I told myself,
While looking down at my own wrists
Scarred ever so beautifully.



POETRY 7-8: 3rd PLACE

Blizzard and Inferno

By Julia LeFevers, Grade 8

You are winter.
I am summer.
You are
cold, calculating.
I am
hot, harsh.

But
people pray
for summer
and relinquish winter,
till
the heat
steals
the lung's breath,
then they hope for
a cold spell
till
deathly ice hits.

Your wind whips
the snow and bare branches
beautifully but your endless chatter
becomes just another noise,
and
will not uplift the temperature.
My breeze is cool and inviting
till
it becomes hot and uncomfortable
with honesty.

So
I guess
we
are not so
different
for
people long and love
us
till
they see our
true nature.

ESSAY 7-8: 1st PLACE

Difference

By Leah Gutzwiller, Grade 7

When most people think of the word difference they think about differences in living things, like humans. They think about the differences that everybody has and how everyone has traits that set them apart from everyone else. To me when I hear the word difference, I think more of making a difference in the world around us. Changing the world to me is very important. I have often thought to myself, "I want to have my name written in history books for kids to one day read, and they will learn about what I did to change the world and what they can do to change their world." Wouldn't the world be a better place if we all wanted that goal for ourselves? Wouldn't the world be happier if everybody had in their minds that they wanted to make a difference, for the better, on our planet?

In our society today, there are wars going on. People die every day from disease, from murders, from suicide. When you are young, parents don't tell you what is going on in the world, afraid that you won't understand. As you grow up, you slowly learn what is truly going on and that society is a dangerous, somewhat scary and unpredictable place. Now imagine what the world would be like if all that stopped. The world would be very tranquil and at peace. You would be free and at ease. The question is, could we even stop the violence in our world to get to that happy place, and if so how? It seems literally impossible to stop. I believe that if we could teach everybody in the world to have a goal that involved making a

difference on society then we could get the violence and pain to decrease. Think about if you were told continuously that you could change the world when you grew up, that you could do whatever you wanted, do you think that if you had that thought embedded in your brain it would be more likely to happen?

Some people grow up and do bad things with their power, such as dictators. For example, the dictator of Syria, Bashar al-Assad, has tortured and killed many people. He also lies about what he is doing in Syria, such as when he said they don't keep political prisoners, yet we have found thirty political prisoners in Syrian prisons. You would think that we could not stop people like Bashar al-Assad from coming into our world, but I believe we can. If kids were taught at a young age that using torture and weapons against innocent people was wrong, then I believe that we could lower the number of terrorists and just plain evil people.

We all have the opportunity to change our society and make the planet we live on a better place. If we were reminded of that every day of our lives everybody would make a difference and this messed-up world would become a better place.

ESSAY 7-8: 2nd PLACE

2

Computer vs. Typewriter By Gil Hankinson, Grade 7

See the page number at the top right corner of this paper? It's called a header, and I made it with only a few clicks of my computer's mouse. It took me about 5 seconds on a computer to go to Microsoft Word, press insert, and select header. Page numbering is not quite as simple on a typewriter. Typewriters cannot automatically center or align things. People cannot watch videos, email friends, and play games on typewriters. However, people can do all those things on a computer.

In the 1867, a "fully functional" typewriter was finally made. A typewriter has a keyboard like computers and the keys are connected to bars that hit the paper when you strike the key. All typewriters also have a platen, which holds the paper in place and rolls it up when you reach the end of a line. Eventually, the shift key was invented, which switches the letters from lowercase to uppercase.

The evolution of the typewriter did not stop at the shift key. In the 1920s, an electric typewriter was invented. Instead of making a loud clicking noise, it made a tapping noise like modern computers. It even slightly resembled a computer. The keyboard was no longer spread apart and connected to bars. And, in the 1980s, typewriters with memories were invented so they could correct mistakes before you printed words on the

paper. That eventually led to the invention of the computer. My great-grandmother typed wills for a lawyer. Too many mistakes meant retyping the entire multipage document. Today, editing is quickly completed on computers.

Although the first mechanical computer was invented in 1833, it was the size of a room and barely functional. It was worse than a typewriter! The computer went through many changes until the first consumer computers were available in the 1970s and 1980s. Unlike typewriters, all the words were made on a paperless screen. Most computers could only do word processing, but by the 1980s, computers were used to play games, do research, and communicate. That led to the computer becoming a common household item.

Today, computers allow users to play games, browse the internet, word process, email friends, record voices, video chat, and so much more. The computer is a necessity for many people. It allows people to keep in touch and interact with one another. I use a computer many times during the school year and at home.

The typewriter is now nearly obsolete. Today we have computers that do many more tasks than word processing. I would not choose typewriters over computers. This essay would have taken so much longer if I had to write it with a typewriter. My computer kept a word count for me. It also allowed me to check my document's spelling and grammar. Incorrect words had a jagged line under them. With a computer, I edited my drafts with a few simple swipes of the keyboard, and my essay was ready to print and submit electronically.

ESSAY 7-8: 3rd PLACE

How My Life Turned Upside Down

By Isabella Roberts, Grade 8

A noticeable change in my life was my Aunt Carrie. She was the most beautiful and nicest person ever. She never cared what anyone said about her and she was so funny I would laugh at every joke she said, but that all changed. On Monday August 5, 2013 she passed away surrounded by friends and family. I was devastated I was so upset and angry and a bunch of mixed emotions. What effect happened to me every day beyond that day changed my life. We had our cousins live with us and my dad had to go to trial a lot to have custody over them. My dad got angry that week and yelled; he apologized and he started crying. I felt so bad because if my sister died I would be so upset. I would do the same thing my dad did but now he is doing pretty well but I hope he will be ok.

I thought my cousins living with us would be like a sleepover party every day but I was wrong. My cousin Ethan picks on me and wrestles me all the time and my cousin Maddie always spends the night with my grandparents because she isn't use to living with us. Also I had a room to myself and now I have another bed in my room so now my room is cramped and Maddie doesn't even spend the night. Now I have two beds in my room and it's always empty and no

reason to have that bed if she isn't living with us on a daily basis.

In conclusion I have a life so crazy ever since my Aunt passed away. Holidays and parties don't feel the same anymore but I know I will get over everything but it will take time.



NARRATIVE 7-8: 1st PLACE

Pink and Blue

By Tyson Jung, Grade 7

School is such a battleground. It seems just because you aren't in a clique of your own, or because you aren't NBA's next all-star, that you're irrelevant. Just because you're different, it means that you don't belong? Just because you're *different*.

I was strolling through the halls, the school noise impossible to block. I tended to keep to myself, my books and pens and folders neatly pressed against my body; a cage of my arms, as if I could protect the artificial objects.

The laughing and pushing and nudging delayed my class arrival, and those laughers and pushers and nudgers didn't just threaten me with tardies. They picked out the different ones. They couldn't seem to go a day without pronouncing and punishing the differences in people.

And as I glanced my peers, amidst the noise rendering my ears useless, I noticed the non-pushers and shovers and laughers. They'd turn their head away at the approach of the difference-pickers, fearing something they should never have to fear.

I saw a girl with pink and blue hair with jewelry as vibrant as the stars. She was surrounded by three guys who seemed to have today's style. I stopped walking, for she was at her locker and I couldn't help but notice that the three guys didn't seem welcome. They picked apart her individuality like starving birds upon seed. They laughed and pushed and shoved, but it

was a different kind of laugh. A scornful laugh, a laugh rendering the girl's ears useless.

I stood in the hallway, debilitating my next actions. No, this isn't a tale of the superhero saving the day. I was never the superhero. It wasn't before long that I was run into, told, "What the hell are you doing?" and pushed aside.

I crossed the drowning sea of kids with foul tongues and got a little closer to the cotton-candy-colored-hair girl. "You're a waste," one boy told her. She looked away, as a man looks away from the beating light of the sun; painfully. She planted her eyesight on the ground, as she got the remnants of her books and pens and folder; perhaps pressed closer to herself than mine were, and she started off to her class. The three boys, outsizing her, blocked her path. Her sullen face was masked by pink and blue.

"Where're you running to?"

"God, I hate emos."

"You're revolting."

I watched her get bombarded again and again as she clung on, releasing all her heavy emotions into her books by pressing it closer, so close that it could feel her quickening heartbeat. I told them to stop, with a whisper that cracked and almost grew silent and submerged in the wall of noise.

They scoffed, and walked off, with their books loose and limp at their sides, shaking their heads and laughing and pushing and shoving each other in a different way than they did to her.

I tried to ask, "Are you okay?" but somehow all that came out was a cough and a strange smile. Her eyes twinkled like her jewelry, and she said, "Thank you. There aren't many like you. You're different."

I didn't know what to say, so I nodded and advanced to my next class. I wondered what she meant, until I realized that no one stood up for her. After my discovery, after the bell rang, I held my books tighter than before, so that they could feel my heartbeat. I wondered if she thought she was beautiful. Then I smiled weirdly, and wondered if I did too.



NARRATIVE 7-8: 2nd PLACE

My Ordinary Day at School

By Andrew Saka, Grade 8

Every day was a Boring day at Crockett Middle School. Nothing really interesting happens at our school, unless you consider fights, arguments, and the fashion drama. Well there were a few things that were interesting, that is if you consider the "good fries" they served for lunch today, which is usually what everybody looks forward to for lunch. There was this one time they ran out of fries and the kids threw a fit so crazy it was a zoo. It was like they forgot to feed the animals. Yeah, crazy, right? Other than that, every day was the usual same old same old. Except for today. Today there was a new kid at school, who some say transferred from Ohio. This is strange, since he was all the way in the east and came over here to the west, because sometimes things can be extremely different.

Today I ended up seeing the new kid in the hallway, but from the way I saw it he was being bullied BY FRANK! Yikes. Frank was the meanest and stupidest bully in our school. Some say he flunked twice, and he might also flunk this year too if he continues the way he acts. So today the new kid bumped into him and Frank got so mad he just started pounding him. The kid was screaming for mercy

but every time he did, Frank would just hit him harder. It was sad seeing this happening to a kid. I wanted to help, but the tardy bell was about to ring and I didn't want to be late. If I was late to Mrs. Nancy's class again she said she'd give me detention for a week, and if I got any more detentions from her, Coach said he'd take me off the team for missing too many practices. So I usually never messed with Frank at all because I was trying to be on good behavior, but that was about to change. When I saw the new kid about to get pounded even more, it didn't feel like a choice. I decided to make a difference and stop Frank

At that moment Frank looked so angry. He looked like a lion about to tear up a deer. So, I swooped in without hesitation and fear and said loudly, "Why don't you pick on someone your own size?" It was funny because I've heard that quote so many times at our school it was basically like remembering my combo number. At least I wasn't afraid of Frank, or his stupid gang that really don't do anything but back him up on what he can't think of saying. So I stood there waiting on him to make his move, but I was surprised when instead he just walked away angrily. Then the new kid spoke to me and said, "Thanks for having my back." "No problem," I said quietly. Then I put my hand over his shoulder and said come on, they are serving the "good fries" today, and you don't want to miss out.

NARRATIVE 7-8: 3rd PLACE

Difference

By Jeremiah Howard, Grade 8

Has someone ever been nice to you when you are alone, but then mean to you in front of other kids in school? When I was in 4th grade this exact thing happened to me. I got picked on my first day of school as a 4th grader because I wasn't the tallest, I wasn't the coolest, and because I wasn't the smartest kid. I can remember feeling confused when I was out of school and a particular person would say hi and talk to me, but when we got back in school they make fun of me. I even said hi first, and they just looked at me and look away, like I wasn't even there. Eventually I was partnered with that kid that always made fun of me, and when his friends would walk past he would call me names like stupid and retarded, and he would say I didn't know what I was doing, but when his friends walked away he would go back to being nice. You can imagine how I felt after he did treated me like crap.

I was pretty upset and felt down, and I thought I couldn't do anything and that I wouldn't have any friends. Finally one day his best friend was sick, and this kid came up to me and said I'm sorry for calling you names. He said he didn't mean it and just wanted to seem cool around his friends. My point is people act different around their friends so they can seem cool in school. So a few kind words of being sorry can make all the difference. Be the kid who makes a difference.

POETRY 9-12: 1st PLACE

Of Differing Perceptions

By Maggie Jones, Grade 11

Outlined are your calm
Endearing attributes
Caressed with porcelain
Stained by flecks of summer's kiss

Echoes of a wild dazzling sea
Pure and never at rest
Reveal more than you
Desire

Scarlet haunts you
Gold envelops you
Midnight betrays you

Obvious are the
Inklings of movement
Scrawled throughout

Hidden are the
Dainty evils
Never to be known

Protruding are your
Plain features
Covered by stark nothings
Spotted all over

Two pits of the icy
Winter sky
Tell of nothing but an
Iron gate

Blood seeps through you
Hazel hangs from you
Night ruins you

Unnoticed are the
Inklings of movement
Scrawled throughout

Unheard of are the
Dainty evils
Never to be known

And who am I
But reflected in your
Scattered glances
As the auburn sun
Sinks
Down

POETRY 9-12: 2nd PLACE

Walls, Rooms

By Michael Siegert Jr., Grade 11

A splotch of color,
a measured sketch,
single numbers printed on a plate,
these do a person create?

the mortal canvas,
on sandy walls,
echoing each brush stroke
as he paints

walls
not hollow then?
filled with secrets,
paints don't tell,
lines don't read,
numbers don't describe,

that empty space, filled,
with air,
with colored lace,
with pointed splinters,
of long broken supports,

all of which break upon,
the viewer, who with paint creates,
what lies on the page,
what we perceive, grainy sand,
steel, rock, dry wall, all.

then with paint he adds,
the essence from underneath,

are all paints
the same?

will light shine
through rough veil of chipping paint,
as off of diamond,

are
all Whites white,
all Blacks black?

or does some truth lie beneath?

dig there and find,
greatness, in a sea of many grays,
from hollow shadows, to
sun-filled light,

none inscribed, created,
the same, murals in and out;

and with each painted face he creates,
on hollow wall,
is cornered to another,

to make the borders, the room of life;

where floors are trodden underfoot,
ceilings stretch unreachable into the sky,
to each itself defines.

but then betwixt those intangible dimensions of our eyes
a melody is heard,

from each brick,
thought seamlessly molded, there escapes,
notes all their own

fills the vacant space, from floor to ceiling,
faceless wall to faceless wall,
with every feeling there,

bringing all elements, from all directions
in our small room of life,

melodies from all genres,
tether together all parts,

now walls begin to shake
dust fills our space,
our eyes sting,
as our ears perceive,
that new voice of
unity,

that fills the room with memories,
not our own,
of star's long lost space of true freedom;

the walls are now clear,
reflecting now what always lied beneath,
a new strange mural,
by him, that artist always there, ignored,

he fills the gaps with uniqueness,

tries, to show the beauty there,

but all our eyes see,
are the bare walls he painted on,
they can only hate the strange faces there,

could we come together?

the dark differences now
heartfelt harmony,

onward,
to infinite bounds of space,
each mural now a star,
free of his only brush,
to each now our own,
a paint of every shade,
on every parchment, every stone
apart, together
our true, original harmony.



POETRY 9-12: 3rd PLACE

Between a Sycamore Tree By Brian Fogel, Grade 11

Perplexing are those lenses through
Which human kind has peered.
Once of divine clarity,
Have ever been fogged and
Now have been clouded.
Global cataracts creeping in,
Transient may our sight be.

The soul within the tree
Says not, but a voice—
A voice is always heard.
For those souls who've not
Eyes for sight
Will obtain a higher focus.

Look to, or maybe, feel with
The creatures of the forest.
Their pain, their light.

How possible could it be
That with use of a human lens
One may not see,
But with no eyes at all
One can foresee a fall, an ending?

Does not a Mourning Dove
Seek wisdom from the mighty
Sycamore, or the Blackbird
From those Sugar Maples?

While the human see both as
Assets for his own, to possess.
The lumber—the only function to see—
But not a single use is known
While trees stand alone.

Homo—man; Sapien—wise and rational.

The rivers and the lakes
And the seas all beg anew,
That our definition be
Changed to fully construe.

Wisdom does not buy
Up treasures on an earth
Which has none left.
Ration does not say that
We'll find another home.
Humans are losing their Love,
Their origin.

The brook sings to reveal.
A lens into the future,
A mirror viewing through the past.
And when our love has—no more,
The river's throat dries,
Sore and cracked.

Vibration of another kind,
One that holds its ground
Is not that which
Our human spirit perceives.
Silence is within the forest
But—as with a lack of sight—
The sound is greater

Than a human's cry.

When we peer out of
Our broken eyes,
There's not a change
That can be seen.
And the fault lies
Within our focus.

Our cognition is above
All else. So where has
Our wisdom gone?

The sessile are a logical
Group, and uncover for us
Where to go. But we're too
Busy running o'er these souls
To feel their pain, and hear a plea.

To see between and through,
Has not one use of those shattered
Eyes, upon our rattled heads.



ESSAY 9-12: 1st PLACE

Call Me Different

By Meggie Zahneis, Grade 11

You could call me different.

Look up that word on Dictionary.com and the definition you'll find is "not ordinary; unusual".

It's true that from the get-go, my lifestyle was anything but typical – and not by choice. I was born with an extremely rare genetic neurological condition called HSAN II (Hereditary Sensory and Autonomic Neuropathy, type 2) that rendered me unable to feel pain, temperature and touch the way most others do. That in and of itself makes me different: if the fact that there are estimated to be only about 50 cases of HSAN II worldwide doesn't make me unique, I don't know what does.

So sure, I'm a bit different in that respect. There are things I have to do differently than most people, and some things I may not be able to do at all. Sure, there are plenty of obstacles I've run up against that most other 17-year-old high school juniors have probably never even dreamed of. Sure, I've had fifteen surgeries and more physical and emotional issues that I can begin to enumerate.

But to me, there's an important distinction to be made. Hitting the genetic "jackpot" – winning odds of one in 140 million – was not something I could control. But what I choose to do with my circumstances is. I do my best on a daily basis not just to flout convention, but to outright defy it.

I am not your typical girl. I wasn't at five, wasn't at fifteen, and I suspect I won't be at twenty-five, either. It's always been that way – from a young age, I showed more interest in baseball and books than ballet and Barbies. Yes, I buck traditional stereotypes. And yes, I am proud of it.

To me, definition is the enemy. I hate the words "conformity" and "normalcy". I dream of growing up and giving a voice to my fellow free spirits, to my fellow humans who can feel desolate and downtrodden – why? Because they're different. I want to show the world that sameness isn't all it's cracked up to be, that swimming against the current of conventionality is not a death sentence.

But more than that, I want to spread the word that it's okay to be different. That it's important to set aside the natural human tendency to pass judgment on everything – and everyone – we come across. That "different" doesn't always have to mean "bad" or "weird".

So, please, go ahead and call me different. It's a title I'll bear with pride.

ESSAY 9-12: 2nd PLACE

To Text or Not to Text: Texting Has the Potential to Harm America's Youth

By Erinn Aulfinger, Grade 9

Yes, I am about to commit social suicide by taking a controversial stance on a popular topic among my teenage peers: the power of texting. We all have smart phones these days, and I, like most, have it glued to my hand at almost every possible moment. But, deep inside, I think there might be warning signs we are missing.

As I look over my text message history, I notice that most of the text "conversations" go something like this:

My Friend: Hey!
Me: Hi
Friend: Wassup?
Me: NMU?
Friend: Not Much. C U l8r.

How about that for fostering deep, enduring relationships with your friends? You learned in five texts what could have been established in 3 seconds in real life. In fact, 94% of people report sending the stereotypical "LOL" when there is nothing else to say on their smartphone... which apparently means no one is REALLY laughing out loud in real life.

What? So I'm not as funny as I thought I was?

Texting gets in the way of fostering true friendships. Not only do we resort to meaningless conversations like the one above, but teens also get confused as to what a real conversation and connection feels like. They have to infer the person's body language and tone of voice in the text, and then they struggle when having to "read" a real person in everyday life. Texting doesn't teach teens how to make small talk and polite conversations. In fact, many young people say that if they are standing in a group of people and the conversation starts to lag, they resort to...texting to fill the empty silence.

Texting can also be taken out of context, with lots of room for misinterpretation:

Very Cute Guy: Hey ;)
Me: Hi!!!!!! :)
Very Cute Guy: Did you catch the homework in Math?
Me: Yes. Problems 2-10
Very Cute Guy: Thanks! You rock!
Me (texting my female best friend): OMG! He Likes me! I bet he's going to ask me out!

Of course you are soul mates! The very fact that he texted "hey" with a winky face surely implies you will be together forever.

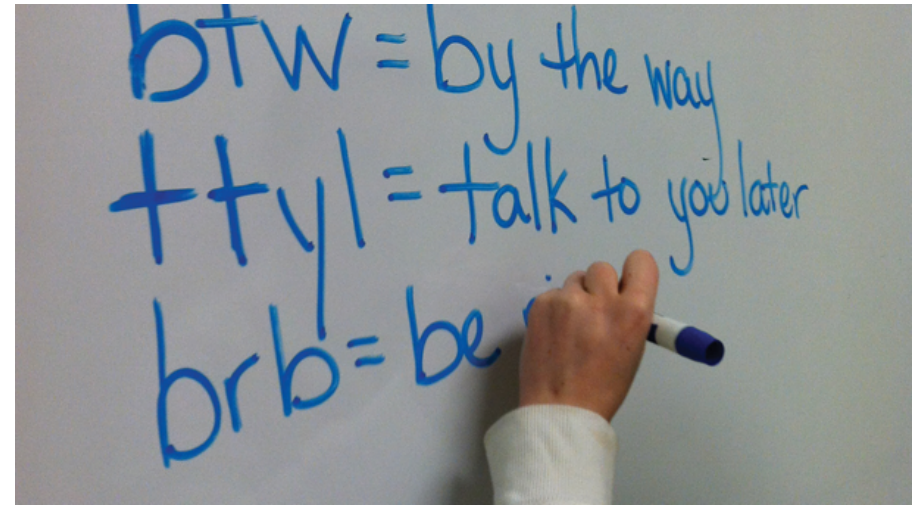
AWGHTGTGA? Wait you didn't get that? I obviously said 'Are we going to have to go through this again?' If you aren't up on your texting speak, you can look it up in the "official texting dictionary." Texting has lots of pointless and troublesome abbreviations, which are difficult to interpret. In the time it took you to come up with an acronym to fit your intent, you could have called the person, run to the store for a Starbucks, and written your 100 page History report. And imagine what impact all this faux language has on spelling. A

startling 64% of students confess to using texting shorthand when writing reports and tests. OMG, LOL, and GR8, used in English pieces describing the impact of the Civil War; symbols and shortened spellings such as @ and t-h-t for 'that' to "save time." Did one letter really save that much time? And will we all grow up and get jobs where we write memos to the CEO of our company saying things like: "The d&a isn't rite. We need to ck it asap. I will GB2U by COB"? The reply just might be "There goes your raise...or your job".

One of the worst parts of this illegible texting lingo is the impact it has on education and pupils. In the classroom, 80% of kids admit to texting during class. These back and forth conversations amount to 10 texts per hour on average, adding up to over 3,000 texts sent at school every month! Schools are no longer a place to learn the theorems, wars, and equations to get you through life, but a social center where the only thing heard in class is the 'silent' vibrations of cell phones spreading the word that Jenny is wearing a blue shirt with orange shoes, and that Jake must like her because he included that winky face in his text.

In short, texting has the potential to harm young people in various aspects of their life, from relationship-building to educational development to future career success. Maybe we should put the phones down once in a while and interact in the real worl....oh wait! Sorry, I've got to answer this text!

Really, Really, Really Cute Guy: Hey!.....



ESSAY 9-12: 3rd PLACE

Love

By Maggie Jones, Grade 11

It's like the swirl in the gully of the wind boundless, *free*, enticing. It's like a raging war of advances and setbacks but never a clear winner. Simple as the ongoing field of abundant wild flowers fresh from spring's downfall. Tiring as the clock that spins round marking the close to another day. Comforting like the familiar curves and bends of countless grazed lines in *one's* favorite book. Pointless like the sunbeams desperately trying to poke through the haze of clouds yet no *one's* outside. Refreshing quite like the serenity of a motionless sea awaking every pore and sense making hair stand on end. Timeless as an age-old fable with missing *words*, pages, chapters and not a single listening soul. Surprising in a way as the colors of day and night come together in an alliance instilling awe in every corner. Separate at times as the weak divergent limbs of a hundred year old tree. Promising as a glimpse of heaven flickered in summer's goodbye leaving tales of what's to come. Maddening as the Hatter ensuing a life

of normalcy. Infatuation of a city never traveled to keeping the dreamer sleepless. Frightening like the shock of lightening a smidge too close for comfort. It's happiness plain and simple. It's insanity plain and simple.

But what is it truly?

Why silly it's love and it's yours and yours and yours and yours and yours.

Thank you...

And hopefully we don't make a mistake and leave someone off of our THANK YOU list!

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- Lakota Classroom Teachers
- Lakota's Board and Administrators
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About LEADS

Lakota's Enrichment and Academic Development of Students (LEADS) is primarily aimed at the parents of children identified as gifted, but welcome ALL families in the Lakota School District.

LEADS mission is to identify, provide and/or sponsor enriching academic and social opportunities for students of the District.

www.lakotaleads.org

