

# The Write Challenge

## Anthology

2020



Lakota★LEADS

Lakota's Enrichment and Academic  
Development of Students

# THE 2020 WRITE CHALLENGE ANTHOLOGY

## Progress

The word PROGRESS has many meanings. It is commonly used in expressions like “a work in progress.” What do you think of when you hear the word progress?

1. a movement toward a goal or to a further or higher stage
2. developmental activity in science, technology, etc.
3. advancement in general
4. growth or development; continuous improvement
5. to go forward or onward in space or time
6. to grow or develop, as in complexity, scope, or severity; advance

Thank you to all of this year’s entrants. Here are the top three students in every category and their wonderful literary works...all interpreting this year’s theme of PROGRESS!

Hosted by:



Lakota★LEADS  
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## Essay K-2: 1st Place

### What is Progress?

By Maya Camacho

What does progress mean to you and me? In my short 7 1/2 years, I have learned that some very important people invented and manufactured things that have made a big difference in how we live today. For example, people like Alexander Graham Bell, Benjamin Franklin, George Washington Carver, Henry Ford, and Tomas Alva Edison all made or discovered things that have impacted our world and made progress.

The question I ask, is what have these people done to make progress for our world? To start, Alexander Graham Bell invented the telephone. Without him making the first telephone, we would not have technology like cell phones today. Benjamin Franklin is known for discovering electricity, inventing the lightening rod, bifocal glasses, and creating a phonetic alphabet. Because of his inventions and discoveries, we have modern day appliances, tools, computers and homes that are powered by electricity, buildings that are safer because of lightening rods, people that can see better because of the bifocal glasses and we can read words and know how to say them better because of his phonetic alphabet. George Washington Carver is known as the original "Mr. Peanut." This is because he manufactured peanut butter in large amounts for people everywhere to eat and as a result today people everywhere in the world can enjoy peanut butter and jelly sandwiches. Henry Ford created the Model T car and more importantly one of the first assembly lines so that he could make many cars for lots of people. Today, many companies use this very same idea in their manufacturing processes to make large amounts of toys, food, office supplies, furniture, and so many other things. Last, Thomas Alva Edison invented the light bulb. Many things made today use lightbulbs. These include, cars, computer screens, street lights, nightlights and so many other things. Without this invention we may all still be sitting in the dark today.

In conclusion, progress is moving forward with new inventions and ideas that makes or lives a lot easier and help to make the world a better place.

## Essay K-2: 2nd Place

### Progress

By Caleb Joseph

My progress is in my basketball. I joined basketball in 2018 and my first season was very hard. I couldn't dribble properly. When I dribbled, the ball didn't bounce and went to the ground. I didn't know how to defend and shoot. I learned that when you are trying hard, you are winning. I also learned that you must take the players out. In my first game, I shot in the opposite team's basket. Oops! I made a mistake. But I was having a lot of fun at my practices and games. At my next games, I tried harder and made some baskets for my team. After basketball season was over, I decided to play another season so I could get better.

In the spring, summer and fall I learned about great players like Michael Jordan, Stephen Curry, LeBron James, James Harden and Anthony Davis. I practiced with my dad. Some days, I played with older kids who were my neighbors. I also kept practicing at home. The next season, I still double dribbled. So, when my uncle visited me, we practiced dribbling. I also played the video games NBA2K20. I watched the way the players dribbled and shot baskets. I also watched basketball games to learn more such as the Lakers and the Bucks. This season I was on fire. On the first game, I scored six baskets and a buzzer beater. Even the best shooter on the team couldn't make that many. I tricked people out and I even blocked a pass. I worked so hard that I had to sit on the bench in one game as I hurt my hand. Though I was little sad, but I cheered for my teammates. The fun part was I played people in my class and school. I had two great seasons and now I am going to play basketball for the Lakota East Hawks. I hope to make more progress with every season and one day play in the NBA.



## **Essay K-2: 3rd Place**

### **Little by Little**

By Annabel Kipp

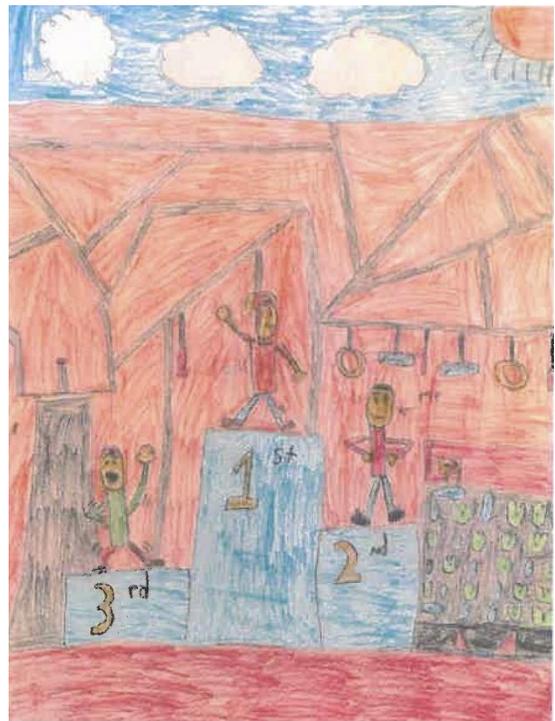
To me progress means having hope and the courage to accomplish big things little by little. A year ago I was writing a book, and it was scary for me at first but, I believed in myself and I finished it. And this is how it goes. When I was on my first page it was hard but, I persevered myself and got it done. (but it was still very hard.) On my second page it was a little bit easier , but when I realised what I was really doing I had no hope in myself. I thought that I couldn't do it. Because I didn't think that it was good. But believed in myself and kepted on going. And sooner or later I finished and I knew I could do it because I didn't give up, and I believed in myself. I felt so good, amazing, and I was really happy about that. (A little bit later.) When my teacher sent in my writing I was really happy of what I had done. And a few days later I found out that I had won 3rd place for the competition, I was so happy. And that was all because I had to believe in myself and have hope and stay positive. That is why progress means so much to me.

# Narrative K-2: 1st Place

## NINJA

By Jackson Dearnell

Let me tell you about the time I came from couldn't to could. One time, I saw a show called: American Ninja Warrior. I thought that the show looked really cool! But the people who ran the course were really strong. So I decided that I needed to train if I could even get on that show. Because chances like that did not show up every day. So, I asked my mom and dad if we could find a close place where I could train. And guess what?! They did! And that place is called: Gym Nation! It has a Go Play Cafe! (Whatever that is.) It teaches gymnastics, karte, and best of all: ninja! And that's when I met my teacher: Brice. And that's when class started. (At exactly 6:15.) There were a lot of things I could not do. Like, climbing the rope. Or doing the rock wall. Or 15 pull - ups. Well, you get it. But Brice helped me through the class. At the end of class, Brice asked if I wanted to come again, and my response was: "yes!!" And I was in an age group, not a star group. And then, from then on, week after week, month after month, I kept going to ninja, until I was old enough to move on to the next group. (And this was the star group.) So the next week I came. I was ready for whatever Brice threw at me. But I was confused, because everybody was constantly asking about their stars. And when I finally asked Brice what was going on, he said to me that the stars were like parts of levels, that there were 6 levels, and that each level was a shirt and that the shirts were colors to! (The colors go in order like this: yellow, orange, red, green, blue, and purple.) And after he told me that, I worked really hard to get my yellow shirt. For my yellow shirt I had to do a series of obstacles that were hard, and it took me about 3 months to get. For my orange shirt, it was a harder series of obstacles, and took me about 9 months to get. And then, I got to move up to a more advanced class. And for my red shirt, it was a really hard series of obstacles, and took me about a year to do! Now I'm on my third level trying to get to the forth. (Only 3 stars away!) Now I'm really, really, strong!! So strong, that I qualified for nationals this year! I had to travel to Columbus! And I made it after all those obstacles! But I can not go there because it's too expensive. But my dad put a little ninja course in my basement so I can keep working out in my house and my mom and dad said that if I keep progressing I might be able to go ( if I can do it again ) when I'm older! The End.



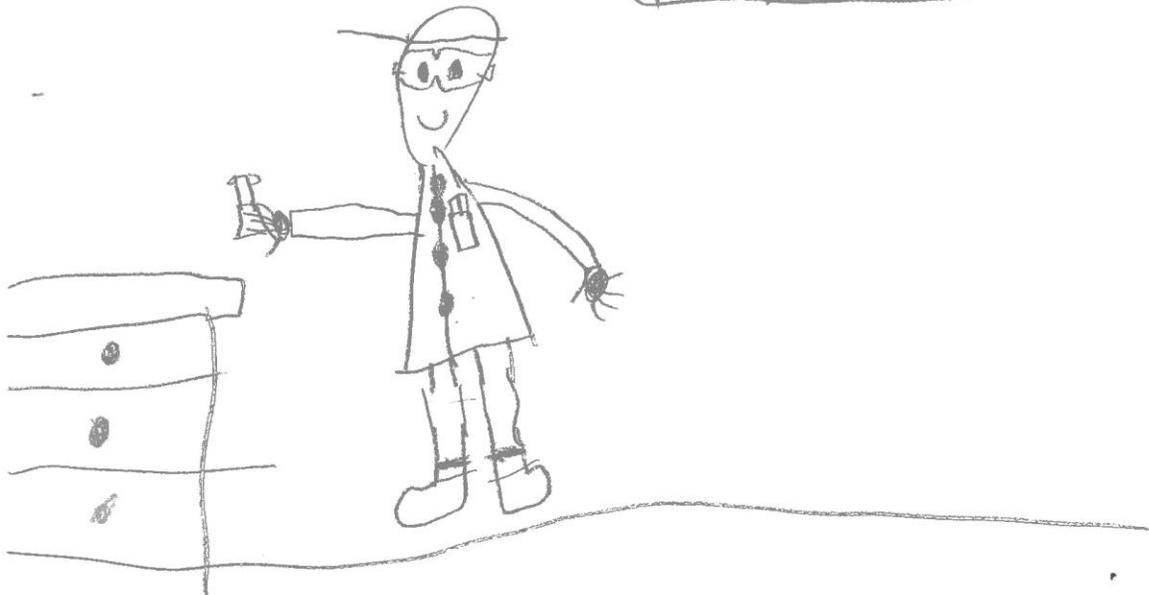
# Narrative K-2: 2nd Place

Science Boy  
By Carson Ratliff

Science

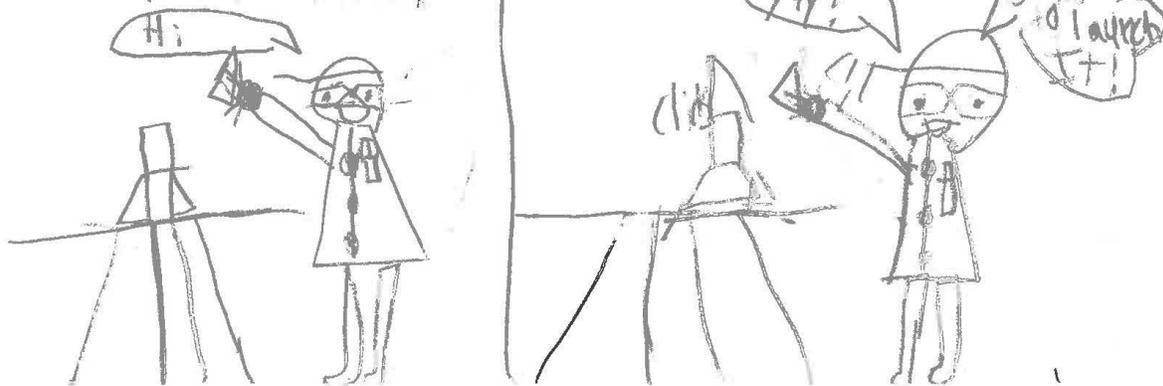
Boy

By Carson  
Ratliff





One hour later





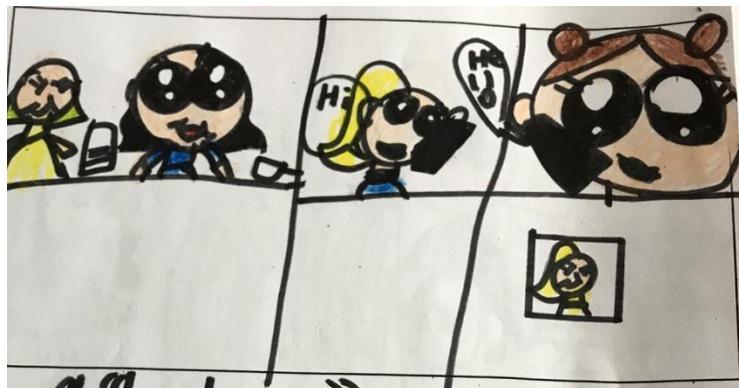
## Narrative K-2: 3rd Place

### Then and Now

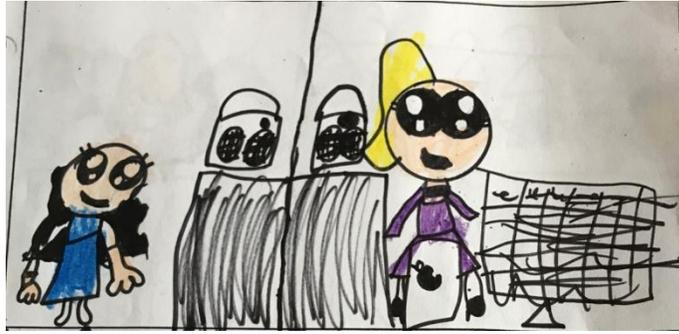
By Ellison Vance



“You are 9” said my great (8 great) Grandma. “I was 9 in this photo.” “Cool” says Ella.  
“What was it like then?”



“Let’s see” says Grandma. “My mother stayed at home. She let me help bake.” “My mom goes to the office. She lets me call her.” Says Ella



“We had no TV or computer. Just a radio” says Grandma. “We have a TV and a computer and a radio too” says Ella.



“My mother made my clothes. She let me help” says Grandma. “My mom buys me clothes” says Ella.



“Sundays markets were closed. My mother and I picked vegetables from the garden.” “I go shopping on weekends” says Ella”

“Even though technology has changed our lives” said Grandma “I still have you.” “Me too” said Ella.

## Poetry K-2: 1st Place

### I am a Work in Progress

By Nicci Back

I missed my family while in preschool,  
But learning shapes, numbers and the ABC's was really cool.

Playing with new friends was fun,  
Especially blowing bubbles out in the sun.

Kindergarten was scary and new for me,  
With Mrs. Elam's help, she made me the very best I can be.

I learned snap words, writing stories and basic math,  
Improved self-confidence I knew I was on the right path.

Learning new words in first grade was tricky,  
But Mrs. Church said, "You can do it Nicci".

She taught me the magic E that really helped in second grade,  
It is the long vowel sound like shade, made and fade.

This year reading was my best subject I would have to admit,  
Because my teacher Mrs. Riehle pushed me to my upper limit.

Being at school I have learned a lot,  
With many great teachers at Wyandot.

## Poetry K-2: 2nd Place

### Never Give Up

By Hamidu Berete

I want to make some progress  
I don't know how I can be  
I will be passionate  
Work very hard  
That's how I will be!

I want to make some progress  
How hard can it be?  
I realize it's harder than I thought  
I will never give up  
Hard worker I will be  
Perseverance is the key!

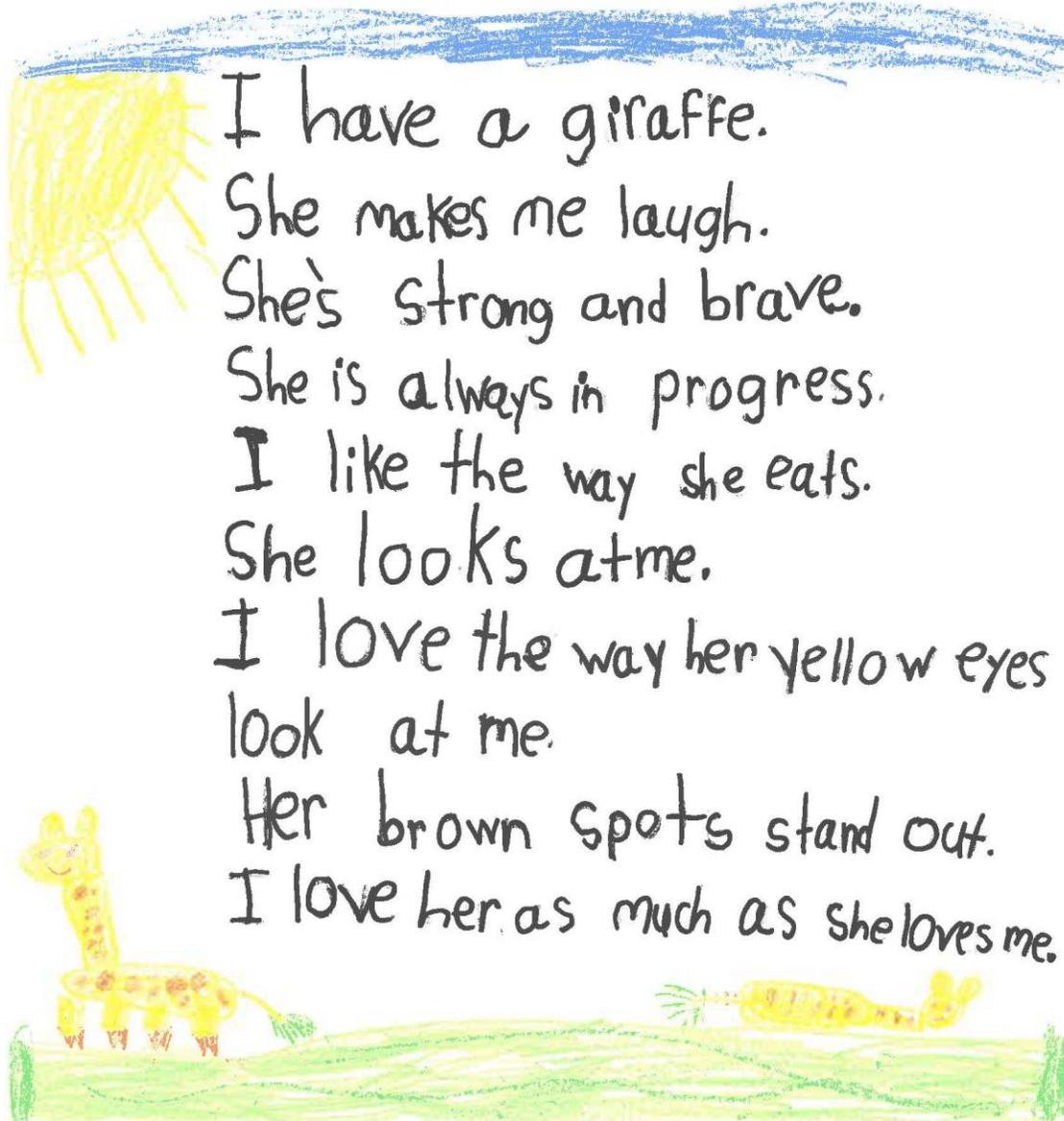


## Poetry K-2: 3rd Place

### I Have a Giraffe

By Melanie Howard

## I Have a Giraffe By Melanie Howard



I have a giraffe.

She makes me laugh.

She's strong and brave.

She is always in progress.

I like the way she eats.

She looks at me.

I love the way her yellow eyes  
look at me.

Her brown spots stand out.

I love her as much as she loves me.

## Essay 3-4: 1st Place

### Progress is Meaningful

By Keira Burmeister

I am in progress. I want to be an engineer. I am moving toward my goal. I have a long way to go. I want to create places like Kings Island and Disney World. I am in progress of being an engineer.

I have progress in my grades. I have had continuous improvement. I started at a new school. I went from a B+ to an A+.

Progress has a lot of different meanings. It could mean moving toward a goal or having continuous improvement. It could also mean to develop. There are other meanings for progress that some of us don't even know.

We are all in progress. Some of us don't even know it. Some people are in progress in reading ghost stories. Others are in progress in a science test. Some are in progress of building a house, playing video games, or telling a joke and many other things you cannot even imagine.

Progress also means present in time. Everybody in progress is now or present. I cannot even imagine anybody in progress that is not in the present.

An example of progress is: The boy made good progress in reading. Another example is: I have made good progress in spelling since I was a baby.

Progress is a strong word. Like I already mentioned, it has a lot of different meanings. Progress is kind of hard to understand in a lot of different ways. Like you might not understand moving toward a goal is related to progress, or why can progress mean growth or development.

Progress is progress, and you are in progress.

## Essay 3-4: 2nd Place

### Progress

By Landon Pratt

When someone mentions progress, the first thought that I have is doing it a little bit better than the first time, and then a little bit better the next time, and a little bit better again. For example, here is a time that progress happened in my life.

When I first tried out for a soccer team for CU (Cincinnati United) when I was in first grade, I made the C team which is the third team. I kept practicing and practicing with my soccer ball at home because I wanted to make the B team.

Then the next time, for second grade, I tried out and I made the B team, which is the second team. I felt happy, I had worked hard, but I wanted to be on an even better team. I wanted to be on the A team, which is the first team. I practiced with my ball every night doing Dribble Up and did extra work at home.

I kept practicing and practicing and then the next time I tried out, for third grade, I made the A team! I was very happy that I had made lots of progress to be on an A team.

I am on the A team right now, but I am still trying to make more progress to try out for CUP (Cincinnati United Premier) for next year. I am doing Dribble Up at home, running on a treadmill, doing strength training, doing extra practices with Top Notch on the weekends, going to Speed and Agility, and practicing my juggles so that I can make more progress and hopefully make a CUP team for next year.

That is what progress means to me.



## Essay 3-4: 3rd Place

### Progress

By Annabelle Baur

When I was in a school play “Matilda” we worked, and we moved forward throughout the time. We made progress. We had 3 songs and dances we had to learn every time we did it, we moved forward, we progressed. It took tears, hard work, yelling, excitement, and time all things I had experienced and felt. We had to learn line after line, scene after scene, run through after run through. But in the end, it was worth it. I progressed in my acting skills, we all did. We had to do two performances when the first one was over a HUGE relief was lifted from my shoulders, we all went around hugging each other with excitement and relief. By the second one it was no big deal! As I once was told “if it doesn't challenge you it doesn't change you.” At first, I really wanted to be Matilda [she was the main character] but I ended up playing a different part. I was very disappointed when I found out but eventually, I did not care I was happy for the person who got it. At first it was hard to remember the lines and the songs and dances, but I progressed. It soon became easy and I got used to it so when we did our last performance, I know I was going to miss doing this. Every day we went to the school stage and practiced, every day! It became routine to me, but I know, and I think everyone know that we all progressed. We all felt so good at the end of the performance, like a huge weight has been lifted from our sholders. So, in conclusion throughout the process of making the play Matilda I have definitely progressed in my acting skills.

## **Narrative 3-4: 1st Place**

### **Missi's Wings**

By Cameron Fancher

On a bright sunny evening when the sun was smiling down at the earth, Missi the dragon was born. She was a small baby girl. Missi slowly started growing but she was still much smaller than the other baby dragons. She eventually developed her claws and soon her teeth, but the place where her wings were supposed to be were still just little stubs.

Because she didn't have wings yet, her mother and father started to become worried. They were concerned because she wasn't learning anything without her wings; like how to catch food and how to fly!

Missi soon had no friends and was always being forgotten. She often stayed home to avoid being left out. One moonlit night she realized that her wings were a tiny bit bigger and a tiny bit longer and she once again had hope. She decided she would never give up on herself again. She kept trying and worked hard every day. She learned from the dragons that had already sprouted their wings and she started to fit in for the first time in her life. The other dragons didn't mind her and they enjoyed her company while doing their work!

Overnight, Missi's wings started to bloom and they slowly grew and grew. One morning she woke up to the surprise of two beautiful, long, velvet wings. She was a proud little dragon. They were bright violet wings that were as long as her ma's were. They swayed in the wind as she took off into the air with her long fragile wings at last. "Be careful," called her mother!

The next day, the dragons were going about their normal day when a strange noise drifted through the air. No one seemed to notice it except Missi. Later on that day, everyone could clearly see a round object heading straight towards their island. She began to get nervous, but she had to trust herself. She warned everyone, but it was too late. The rocky object thrashed through the air and Missi had to take charge. She needed all the help she could get. The other dragons grabbed supplies and used their strengths to work as one and with teamwork, they turned that space rock right around.

A few mornings later, when the clouds were faded and the sun forgot to get up, the king wished to talk to Missi. She gladly flew down to the kingdom to meet the king. He was delighted to see her and had heard the news about her new wings and how she had led her fellow dragons to save their island. He told her how much the story inspired other dragons and kids all over the universe. She was shocked and happy all at the same time and was left dumbfounded. "So," the king said, "I and my royal subjects have decided to name you the ruler of The Dragonverse!"

The End

## **Narrative 3-4: 2nd Place**

### **Space Quest**

By Aarnav Reddy Kokkonda

Hello, I am going to tell you about an adventure, not just an adventure a space adventure. Hello, my name is Aarnav, I am at a Nasa laboratory. I am trying to help people finally get to the mysterious planet, Mars. We are even hoping to find alien life. Well, wish us luck because we are going on the spacecraft, WONDER, tomorrow and I will be in it. That is the spacecraft that will get us to Mars. I hope we will get more progress throughout the journey because we have only a little experience because everyone is trying to cure the corona virus, so we are on our own.

#### ***Mission to Mars***

Today is the day, Today is the day that we finally make it to Mars. It will be a giant leap for mankind. I admit, I am very scared, but the one thing that stops me from bailing out is all the curiosity that I have about going on the adventure to Mars and exploring it. Oh! They're calling us. Well, wish me luck on the journey. I will update what's going on in the ship once or twice. Okay, **5, 4, 3, 2, 1 BLAST OFF!!!!!!!**

#### ***Life in the WONDER***

Do things have to go wrong all the time? We didn't even know the correct time to go to Mars. Now we must take the longer route to Mars. 'Sigh'. I don't know how we are going to complete this mission.

#### ***Mars Ahoy!***

We're finally close enough to Mars to enter it! Oh no. We must figure out how to land and we don't even know when to launch the spaceship. "Sadie, try to land the rocket ship we'll try to help as much as we can." "Quick! We're entering the atmosphere, and let's just hope the WONDER can withstand the pressure". "Sure, she can withstand all the pressure." Yelled Jack in all the noise from the WONDER crashing through the atmosphere of Mars.

#### ***The Bloody Planet***

No wonder they call it the bloody planet. It is so red. We started getting out the rover to scout the area. I can't believe we landed without any major damage being done. We are progressing through this mission without getting seriously hurt. "Let's go we have to come back to the WONDER before the storage fuel for the journey back runs out."

### ***Aliens!***

As we were scouting the area, we saw something red. Well, yeah everything here is red, but this was moving. Breathing. It was also, waving a flag at us? I was very confused. Then I realized it was a Martian. I also realized it was trying to communicate with us. I was prepared for this. "Guys turn on your communicator" I said. With the communicator we could understand what the Martian was saying.

### ***Home sweet home***

Well, our mission was a success. We brought the Martian back and we became known as the best astronauts in history.



## **Narrative 3-4: 3rd Place**

### **Charli's Progress**

By Jaclyn Kettelaar

Not long ago, there was a girl named Charli. Charli loved math, science, and reading, but she couldn't read very well. This story will tell about Charli's progress and how she got better with reading.

On the 1<sup>st</sup> day of her new school, Charli was excited. She skipped her way to school. When she got to her classroom, Mrs. Brown gave her a book and said, "Why hello, Charli. Read page 12, will you?" "OK, page 12?" Charli asked, nervously. She began to read. "H-ha-have-have yo-you e-ev-ever won-wonder-wondered wh-what t-ta-tax-taxes a-are? T-tax-taxes I-is mo-mon-money you p-pay to the g-go-ver-me-government--" "OK, Charli, that's enough, Zoe, continue for Charli, please," Mrs. Brown interrupted. Charli felt embarrassed. She couldn't read, and everybody knew. After class, Mrs. Brown made her stay. "I see you have trouble reading. I held you back so we can practice," Mrs. Brown said. "I mean, you're in third grade. If this is a problem, you need to improve." "OK," Charli agreed.

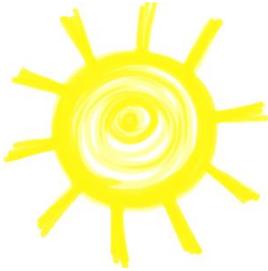
By the next quarter, Charli visited Mrs. Brown after school about 70 times. Charli felt better about her reading issues. When it was her turn to read, Charli felt pleased. "In con-conclus-conclusion, taxes are very important to our government," she read. Mrs. Brown had a wide grin underneath her book. After a couple more 'private lessons,' is what they called it, Charli could read very well. "I knew you could do it," Mrs. Brown said. Charli smiled widely.

Charli made progress by practicing every day after school. Remember, practice can't make perfect, but it can make progress.

## Poetry 3-4: 1st Place

### Sun and Moon

By Nathan Lee



A ball moves in sky,  
while time flies by.  
It's yellow and bright,  
shining with light,  
wherever you go.

What can it be?  
It is the sun,  
of course.  
That progress,  
through the sky.

When the sun is tired,  
the moon rises up.  
It's time for the moon,  
to progress its way up.

The sun and moon,  
progress every day,  
turn by turn.  
But the moon progress,  
in a different way.

From a new moon,  
to a full moon,  
from night,  
to night,  
the moon is glowing,  
to waning and waxing.

Over the window,  
where soft breeze blow,  
the moon watch kids sleep,  
dreaming very deep.

The sun rise again,  
for a new day to begin.  
The sun watch us,  
in every school bus.

The sun and moon,  
work together,  
progressing the world,  
lighting the world.



## Poetry 3-4: 2nd Place

### What is Progress

By Vincent Covell

Progress,

Is moving forward in space or time.

Progress,

Is getting closer and closer to your goal.

Progress,

Is getting stronger, smarter, faster.

Progress,

Is not giving up with what you are trying to do.

Progress,

Is growing up in life and getting over things.

Progress,

Is getting closer to who you are meant to be.

Progress,

Is getting good grades in school.

Progress,

Is trying again and again at your goal.

Progress

Is your everyday life.

This is progress.

## Poetry 3-4: 3rd Place

### Try

By Cameron Fancher

If you practice, if you

Try

It will strengthen your mind

You will grow with everything you know

You will make mistakes along the way

It might take you many days, but you will reach your goal eventually

You can reflect on it and do it better, because all you have to do is

Try

## Essay 5-6: 1st Place

### Progress

By Sophie Hard

Progress is a powerful word, it can mean something as small as turning a messy room into a clean one or as big as changing the world. What progress means to me is to move ahead and make things better just like the courageous women did before me. The progress they made gave me the amazing rights that I have today.

Progress is when you stand up for what is right. Susan B. Anthony did that. She was a women's rights activist and she wanted gender equality for everyone. Susan B. Anthony fought for the right for women to vote. She kept on fighting for that right until she made progress. That's why Women have the right to vote now, because of her. Susan B. Anthony is a role model for me because she showed me that I can stand up for what I believe in and what's right.

Progress is when something bad that is happening is changed. Rosa Parks did that, she never gave up her seat on that Alabama bus and she changed history for girls around the world. She made the progress that America needed. She is a role model for so many people including me. I admire her because she never gave up and she fought for what was right. I don't know if I would have enough courage to not give up my seat.

Progress is when someone accomplishes something that hasn't been accomplished before. Amelia Earhart was the first woman to fly. She knew it had never been done before and it was scary, but she took the risk. Amelia Earhart is a role model for me because she showed me that I can be the first at something too. Because of Amelia Earhart I know I can do anything that I practice at and put my mind to.

Progress is trying to make a difference. Just like these courageous women before me, I am trying to make a change and stand up for what I believe is right too. I asked my fellow 6th graders to sign a request to have our lunch groups combined into one large group. I took it to my principal and it was approved! Now all I have left to do is make sure that my parents can see the floor in my room. That would be progress.

## Essay 5-6: 2nd Place

### Living a Longer Life

By Pari Patel

Medicine has progressed dramatically in the last two hundred years. Healing in the 1800's was a family affair. Women took care of family illnesses with home remedies and basic skills. "Bone-setters" were called in only for life and death cases. Today there are many kinds of doctors with different specialties. People regularly see different doctors to make sure they are well and if there is a problem they go to a doctor immediately. Medical progress has changed the quality of life for countless people.

Medicine has advanced from herbal remedies to Penicillin and vaccines to today, where stem cell therapy and organ transplants renew lives. It has grown from fighting illnesses and disease to now preventing illnesses, replacing organs and renewing cells and even our youth. Vaccines stop diseases that have a massive effect on human life. Long ago diseases like Tetanus, Diphtheria, Typhus and Polio killed millions of people, until vaccines came out and made it easier to avoid these diseases. Right now Coronavirus is a deadly virus without a vaccine, thousands of people are dying. Doctors are using technology to find vaccines and medicine to battle it.

Technology assists doctors in keeping patients' data in front of them and finding new vaccines and medicines. Doctors have their patients' entire medical history, including allergies, at their fingertips (on their computer screen). Advanced treatments have been developed through research and technology that fight horrible debilitating diseases like cancer, diabetes, and heart disease. Technology is a big part of healthcare today, but two hundred years ago, without it, cures were not found. Doctors use genetic testing, MRI's and CAT scans to prevent and diagnose health problems quickly. Research and technology work together to find new ways to make life better. Learning new technology has become a huge part of doctor's knowledge.

In the early 1800's, formally trained physicians began stressing the idea of germs spreading diseases, and the need to clean unsanitary living conditions. Along with this, they began giving medicine to the poor and free physician services, especially in the cities. As research and medication have progressed so has doctoral training. Physicians are now much more specialized and have much greater knowledge and experience within their own specialty. They have many years of training in Pediatrics, Orthopedics, Dermatology, Cardiology, Neurology, Endocrinology, Rheumatology, Immunology, and many other specialties. Doctors have progressed from bone-setters in the 1800's to more than 23 types of specialists. The 1800's bone-setters had no formal training, but specialists today have eleven to fifteen year of training!

Life has changed dramatically over the last two hundred years due to medical advancements. Medicine, technology and doctor knowledge have led to happier, healthier lives. The average person lived to be 45 years old in the 1800's, now the average American lives to be 79. That is progress!

## Essay 5-6: 3rd Place

### My Progress in Basketball

By Shayla McKay

Progress; to move forward or toward a destination or goal. My dad always told me “It’s not a goal until you write it down, before then it’s just a vision.” Every year since I started basketball I would write down a certain amount of points that I wanted to get that season. I have progressed in basketball from when I started in 3-4th grade, then 5th grade, and now, 6th grade.

I started basketball in 3-4th grade. That year I wrote that I wanted to score 8 points. At Lakota schools in March there is a mini March Madness between all the elementary schools. This program that I entered in third grade really inspired me to play on a real basketball team. That same year was when I joined my first team, 40:31 Eagles. I was still learning how to catch the ball, dribble, and have the correct shooting form. It was a fun year and I made a lot of friends and memories.



Then there was 5th grade year, I wanted to score 12 points total. When Winter came around I was so excited to start the season. That season we would work on defense and how to help your teammates when they couldn’t keep up with who they were guarding. We all individually worked on shooting and ball handling, which are things you can continually get better at. I kept on working toward my point goal and it pushed me to take a lot more shots. I started to dribble a lot stronger and I also started to trust my dribble a lot more. I got more than enough points to reach my goal so that next year I knew I wanted to set my goal even higher.

6th grade year started with a bang, I wanted to score 20 points and my hopes of getting there were starting to get lower and lower. We could not make the space to get shots off or go to the rim. We would dribble into double teams and pass it to the other team and get a big number of turnovers each game. By our 10th game was when I finally scored a point putting me at 18 points to go. We were finally starting to make space and take shots or go to the rim and get fouled. We played an undefeated team one weekend and at half we were only down by 2! We started to gain confidence in ourselves and in our teammates. This year was a tough year but it definitely taught us how to overcome adversity.

In conclusion, I have progressed in basketball from when I started in 3-4th grade, then 5th grade, and now, 6th grade. This year so far I have scored 10 points. I still have March Madness and my 7th grade year to score 20 points but it will be a challenge. Although how can you progress without a challenge?

# Narrative 5-6: 1st Place

## Progress Narrative

By Arshya Maricar

Ever wanted to be in a gifted class? Well, I have. I'm a "regular" 10-year-old girl whose name is Amelia.

I learned about "gifted" classes since I was in 2nd grade. "I'm smarter than you because I'm in gifted", kids would say. It annoyed me so much. My only wish at the time was to be in a gifted class but I didn't know-how.

One day, I met this girl named Victoria, one of the gifted students and didn't brag about being smart. I was talking to her, and I asked, "How did you get into gifted classes?" She told me, that she got into gifted classes by doing extra work at home. Then, she performed well on her standardized tests, which got her into gifted classes and everyone else too. I was so astonished by her answer. All these years, I thought they were born smart but clearly, I was wrong. I have a chance of going to gifted classes! All I had to do was work my butt off. I have a long road of progress ahead of me.

From then on, I've been working on extra work daily. I had 4 months until state testing. It was very hard to stay on track. I had to compromise my screen time, time to play and time with friends. But I saw a huge difference in my grades and school became easier for me. If I compared myself to me one month ago, I have come a long way. Now, I was always the first kid to raise my hand in class or get the best score on a test. Sometimes kids would say, "I wish I was smart like you, Amelia." I was proud of myself; I've come a long way.

There was only a week until testing. I was working consistently. Every now and then, my parents would say, "Take a break, Amelia. You've been working for so long." But I still persevered through my work. I was pushing myself to train on difficult parts of each subject.

Finally, the day came, it was time to test. While I am taking my tests, the questions were so easy to answer. I was the first kid in class to finish. After testing, I was checking with some other kids in my grade, I got the highest scores in both reading and math. I was so proud of myself. But I didn't rub it in, in other kids' faces.

A few months, later I got a letter that said that I would be in gifted classes in 5th grade. I was so thrilled. After, all that hard work I finally accomplished what I dreamed of. I felt like I was on cloud 9. I did so much work and it paid off. After sacrificing my screen time and playtime, I felt like this was worth it. I finally realized that I was already gifted, I didn't need to prove anyone, but myself.

## **Narrative 5-6: 2nd Place**

### **The Volleyball Tournament**

By Lexy Dreher

It was their first tournament and the score was 10-24 in the 2nd set. They were down by 14 points. The other team served the ball and it missed the score was now 11-24. "We could still win, right?" Lilly thought as she stepped to the serving position. She served and she missed.

She could not believe she missed her serve. The team was really sad but, the coach was saying that they played great for their first tournament. "I could not be more proud of how you girls played in the tournament. We will make progress throughout the season," the coach says.

That night as Lilly went home she had one word stuck in her head, progress. She sat in her room and thought about it a little bit. Then she went downstairs and asked her mom, "What does progress mean?"

Her mom responded, "Progress means that you keep getting better and better at something." Lilly went to bed still thinking about what her coach said, "We will make progress throughout the season." How will her and her team make progress she thought.

Then in the morning she knew how her team was going to make progress. She went to school and then went to volleyball practice every Tuesday and Thursday. She worked really hard through the practices. In the last practice before the next tournament, she made all her serves over and did amazing at her practice. Then the coach said, "You guys have made huge progress throughout all our practices. You girls are going to do great in the tournament"

It was the day of the tournament. Everyone was excited and a little scared. They won their first two games and got into the golden bracket. But, in the finals in gold the same thing happened in the first tournament, except this time the score was 23-23 and it was Lilly's turn to serve. She stepped onto the serving position and wham, the ball went flying over the net and they scored a point. Now Lilly just needed to score one more point. She served and just like the last one the ball went flying over the net. They have won. The coach was so happy and they got medals and trophies.

That night when Lilly was walking home and her coach asked her, "What does progress mean to you?" "Progress means that you keep trying as you do that you get better and better," Lilly responded. The coach smiled and hugged Lilly.

## Narrative 5-6: 3rd Place

### Cancer Progress

By Meckenzie Anane

Cancer. The word that scares most kids. My name is Emily and I had cancer. This is my life journey of progress to overcoming cancer.

**Six years old:** The days of when I was younger are faint. Mostly because I blocked out any memory of when I was first diagnosed with Leukemia. Leukemia is cancer that is in someone's blood, that forms tissues. One day I'm in kindergarten trying to learn how to add, the next day I'm feeling dizzy or bleeding randomly. The day it got really bad is when I started coughing up blood extremely, and my mother Sharon took me straight to the emergency room. All that my brain will let me remember of when I was six years old, was the day when the doctor diagnosed me, Emily with leukemia. My very strong mother broke down in tears when the news was delivered. On the other hand, I was just in a state of shock.

**Eight years old:** I have been in the hospital for 2 years. I've made some friends who are in the hospital with me, and the nurses are enjoyable. The only thing is I miss my strong mother, and my charismatic father. The thought of my parents a 2 hour drive from me is unbearable. The thing that keeps me going is what my mother said. My mother Sharon said to me, "No matter what, you can never stop fighting." When my mother had first told me that I hadn't fully taken it in, but now that I've been in the hospital for 2 years. I'm going to try to fight Leukemia.

**Ten years old:** I have been on chemotherapy for 2 months. A sign that the chemo is working, is my hair falling out. Some people when they lose their hair are sad, but for me I was delighted because losing hair meant my chemo was working. I was making progress. If I'm Leukemia free that means I can go to school, hang out with my friends, and get to see my parents everyday.

**2 months later:** How could this happen? I say to myself. It's all my fault, I'm the reason my Leukemia is coming back. I thought I was making progress? I say to the doctor. Whatever the doctor said I wasn't listening to.

**Twelve years old:** I'm still in the hospital. Now that my Leukemia is back, I am not the same hopeful girl I was when I was 8. In fact, the old Emily who was making progress is gone too. The new me, is a girl who disappointed people for not getting better.

**Fourteen years old:** My parents came to visit. I didn't want them to know that I'm "different" than I was. So, I put on a smile and acted like I was okay. The only person who could see through my act was my mom. Once my dad left to go to the cafeteria my mom had said, "Remember Emily what I had said to you when you were 8?" "No," I said. My mom finishes her words and says, "I said No matter what, you can never stop

fighting. So, keep on fighting. The leukemia that came back when you were making progress is just a bump in the road. So, you need to overcome Leukemia. Do you understand?" "Yes," I replied.

**Fifteen years old:** The words of my mother always surprise me, and I love her for those speeches she gives me. Leukemia is just a battle that I can overcome. I started to feel like the old Emily. I started to be social again. I was changing my perspective on things. A miracle happened in September of 2019, I was starting Chemotherapy. I was making progress!

**2 months later:** My Chemotherapy worked! I have no more Leukemia in me. I survived! I even got to ring the bell in front of all my friends and family! I'm Leukemia free because of all the progress I made. Progress is a valuable thing to have.

## Poetry 5-6: 1st Place

### Progress is Everywhere

By a Galactic Scientist (Romare Stokes)

Progress

It's a thing that gives you grit  
It's a fire driving forward  
If you stop it, then that's it.

Progress

It's something everyone can make  
When working step by step,  
Never stop but take a break.

Progress

It takes determination  
To enter this contest  
To be in a compilation

Progress

Could be as easy as cake,  
Or in some situations  
Much harder to create

For people, places, and things  
When they're put to the test  
They can reach their objective  
If they just try their best

When a turtle is born  
He has to make it to sea  
You don't think that's much?  
Well, just wait and see.

He has to find his own way  
Avoiding hawks in the sky  
Little fins on hot sand  
If he fails, he will die.

In school, our brains grow  
From ABCs to essays on war  
Through science, math, and art  
Social studies, music and more.

Progress in math is easy to spot  
Starting with adding 2 plus 2  
Then subtracting, multiplying,  
Then solving algebra equations too.

Social studies hits American history  
Colonies to states to a free country.  
Music class blends notes with rhythm  
Instruments and voices, from smooth to funky.

Artists work with color, shade, and light  
From sketching, to painting, to animations  
You add contrast, depth and dimension  
Pull it together; there's your creation.

Growing up hits on making skills  
First you start learning manners,  
Picking up trash, keeping the earth clean.  
Being on time, putting events in planners.

Progress is more than doing  
Work and school  
Let's enter my thoughts  
Let's see how progress is cool

I see work as a big mountain  
Me climbing it is my progress on it  
When I make it to the top, that's my success!  
I climb down, savoring my hardworking Vic-

Tory  
That's my story

Progress is more than you think.  
It's moving forward in life, doing work in time.  
Most people thought that making progress was easy,  
But it's not always as cheap as a dime.

Fredrick Douglass knows a lot about progress,  
He made a quote about it, listen to this!  
*If there is no struggle, there is no progress.*  
It's not the best but it's something you can't miss.

## Poetry 5-6: 2nd Place

### Progress Is

By Erin Simpkinson

Progress is progress  
Progress is grit  
Progress is growing bit by bit  
Progress can be big  
Progress can be small  
Progress can be anything, anything at all  
Even something as simple as learning basketball  
Progress is life  
As you can see  
Progress comes to you and me

I could defend  
I could shoot  
And I watched as the ball swished through the hoop  
I wasn't here  
A few years ago  
I could barely even throw  
And now I'm in the championships  
Because of my special relationships  
Progress as a team  
Progress, a big dream

Progress is progress  
Progress is grit  
Progress is growing bit by bit  
Progress in the world  
A rover on Mars  
Too big to hold  
Far, far, far  
A cure to disease  
Right at ease  
A device to call  
Pretty small

Progress is progress  
Progress is grit  
Progress is growth  
Using your wit



Progress is good  
If you do what you should  
Breaking bad habits  
Recovering from a fall  
With progress, you get it all

Progress can be as a team  
Progress between you and me  
Progress can be a big dream  
Progress, a glowing beam

## Poetry 5-6: 3rd Place

### She'll Get Better

By Annabelle Hammerly

In 2008 a girl was born  
9 years later her family was torn  
She has bright blue eyes  
But all they do is cry

She has the brightest smile that can light up the day  
But it's to make sure other people stay  
All of her beauty is for everyone else to see  
But inside she's crying a plea

Her eyes slowly change to a darker blue  
But she's really changing into something new  
Her smile gets smaller and there is less shine  
But now there is less pain she's trying to hide

Every day there is less tears that fall  
And over time she begins to stand tall  
Her beauty was covering her pain  
And over time her beauty started to drain

Even though her beauty is not quite as strong  
Her happiness is coming along  
She knows she is not as beautiful as before  
But now her heart is no longer sore

She now has learned to love herself  
Her beauty now sits on shelf  
Now she knows she will not break  
And if she does, she can remake

## Essay 7-8: 1st Place

### What is Progress

By Ishanvi Karthikeyan

Progress represents many things. Scientific and technological growth over time, our development, movement to higher stages, and so many more possibilities. When I think of progress, I think of it as achievement and improvement. I think of it as not only the makeup of science or technology, but our own changes and improvements throughout time. It is, in fact, a recurring theme within our own selves.

Progress can be taken in a scientific or technological way, when scientists create new foundations for research and medicine, or influential programs that could help people's lives. This comes down to the fact that one keeps developing over time. Like in the scientific and design methods, we ourselves go through different stages. What is developing is not technology itself, but the ideas and brains behind it. Our minds are steppingstones for evolution rather than technology and science. Many people have pointed out that without the brains to use it, technology, like money, is useless. Without people that are the reason for a device to be created, the device would be of no use. I at least think that progression would refer to the minds behind an idea instead of the idea itself. Without our thoughts becoming more refined towards our purpose, would an idea change civilization? We come up with many versions of a certain idea before it is officially incorporated into the world. This is what represents progress in the field of science. Not improving devices and procedures, but the constant improvement of the brains used to create them. Why else would so many versions of iPhones be released if not for innovators to be coming up with better ideas?

Progress is, essentially, our own evolution over time. It can happen without us even knowing. When we receive awards, we feel progress in the form of our improvement over time. When we take the stage and perform, announcing ourselves to the world, that is another form of progress. We feel progress when we accomplish something big as well, reaching new levels. It proves how our confidence and conscientiousness has evolved over time. Progress can also be our satisfaction and enjoyment when we look back upon the outcome of how hard we worked to fulfill our goals. If we gain a higher score on the MAP test than when we took it before, that is progress. When it is versus creators and innovators improving their ideals and thoughts, progress is the same. Progress for us is just more related to stabilizing our foundations and showing our growth over time rather than using our foundations to help the world.



Progress is a deep, channeled idea that philosophers and children can go talking about for hours. It is, in fact, a universal theme that defines our choices and actions. Progress is, itself, deeply connected to our goals, our achievements, and our thoughts, even if we may not notice it. It constantly influences us and what we create. The world would surely be different without progress.

## Essay 7-8: 2nd Place

By Tram Cao

What is progress? Dictionary.com says, when used as a noun, progress is “forward or onward movement toward a destination.” As a verb, it is defined as “to move forward or onward in space or time.” But that is only the dictionary definition. It doesn’t include mental, emotional, and social growth. It doesn’t include any of the risks either. It doesn’t include the healing after a tragedy or learning in any form. It should be given a new definition. The concept of progress includes ideas, not just physical movement.

Even if people usually think of mental progression when the word “progress” is mentioned, physical progress can be connected. Physical progression can mean in a race, driving, or even just walking along. But when progressing physically, there is usually a destination, but progressing with a skill doesn’t necessarily have an endpoint. A person might have no idea what their goals and dreams are, but that isn’t a reason to give up on progressing. Also, a goal isn’t a synonym for a finishing line. There is always still a possibility to keep striving to do better, to always improve. Nonetheless, sometimes it’s okay to stop. Rest, gather thoughts, prepare for life’s obstacles. It’s okay to not always be the best. There is never a bad time for self-care. Just move eventually. Trying to keep going without stopping refuel is not ever going to result in something positive. It is impossible to pour in a gallon of gas and try to drive from Alaska to Brazil without stopping. That’s not how it works. Taking breaks does not make someone lazy, it is healthy. A person can’t function properly if their needs aren’t taken care of. Just keep moving eventually. Improvement is draining, both physically and mentally.

Mental progression is the type that everyone usually thinks about first, even if it isn’t in the technical definition. Mental and emotional progression ranges from just learning a new skill to growing a whole personality. Either way, it’s still growth, learning and creating the best person you can become. Sometimes people change to fit only what others want. If they continue this, all they become is a combination of other people’s expectations with no real free will of their own. If everyone constantly pushes to improve to other’s standards, eventually, nobody will be themselves anymore, everybody would only be a shadow of what others want. At some point, the standards become too much, too contradictory with each other, too high, and it gets no one anywhere. It’s good to be pushed to the limits, but not when it makes just shells of people, condemned to not having independent thoughts. But how much progress is needed to be counted as progress?

People will always push others to do better. That is a given. But the important factor is deciding which critiques are true with good intention and which will bring us down. Another segment is the pacing of progression. People are always told to improve as much as they can, but the desire to do better can sometimes blind them to what they have accomplished so far. This is called Imposter Syndrome. It is the belief that you still aren’t good enough, even after numerous examples where you have proved yourself to be more than adequate. It is okay to stay within the comfort level but is also important to keep pushing the boundary forward, even if it is just a little. Well, people shouldn’t be

accomplishing a day's worth of work in a few days, which is just lazy and procrastination. But don't also go to a point where the feeling of having to always be strong and perfect is present. Nobody must be always anything. Don't make yourself feel that way, but it is also important to not make others feel that way. Always being yourself isn't even the most important, no matter how much everyone makes it seem. It's usually better to stop, relax and adjust. Experiment to find the best way to do something and take care of yourself plus others. Spend some time to feel proud.

So, what is the real definition of progress? As a noun, it means "an improvement to a skill, mental health, self-control, etc." As a verb, it could be defined as "to change, grow, develop while balancing pushing one's self but still taking care of one's self." However, progress requires work and challenging yourself. "If there is no struggle, there is no progress." That is a pretty common quote, and it is most definitely true. Struggle is proof of confronting obstacles. Confronting obstacles is how you improve. Dictionaries may define progress as simply moving forward in space or time, but it includes much more than that. It includes the struggles, the risks, and the rewarding feeling at the end.

## Essay 7-8: 3rd Place

### My Progress

By Saketh Kalikiri

What is the first thing you think of when someone mentions the word progress? For me, it's school. For someone else, it could mean a sport. The word progress can be perceived in so many different ways but I am going to tell you how this relates to me. My mentality is to get smart, not smarter. What this means is, don't try to push yourself just to be smarter than somebody but rather set a goal to your expectations. I measure my progress on first where I was when I first started, where I am right now, and more importantly how much time and effort I put between the starting point and present.

At a young age, I found myself intrigued by math, chess, and soccer. In school and my society, I was always known for being good at math because it was something that came naturally to me. Chess, on the other hand, is something that takes years of dedication to master. I've been playing since 2nd grade and have constantly been progressing from there. From public lessons to private classes and from local tournaments to nationals, I still am moving forward. I still play chess today and plan at least until my senior year. Soccer was more a recreational interest, though I didn't spend as much time on soccer as I did with chess, I became very good at it and still am currently.

All of those activities made me the person I am today. My early interests in soccer have made me maintain a healthy, fit lifestyle which is very important. Chess has taught me patience, focus, discipline, analytical thinking skills, and much more. Chess is more a life coach than a game to me because it teaches so many core values that you won't get from an average game. Math has guided into the various fields of science which is why I want to be a doctor when I grow up.



For me, good isn't good enough because if you are okay with where you are right now, that means you aren't going to get anywhere else. The main difference in this is the mentality if you want to always strive to get better and more efficient, that's a growth mentality which is what you want to have. Realistically, I want to finish high school with at least a 4.5 GPA, make a good college, and retire as a pediatrician. It is obviously easier to say than get done but if I can make this progress than that'll satisfy me.

This essay has taught you about my early progress and development of interests, my current stage, and how much more progress I want to make. Again, progress as different views on what this means to a person. In my case, it's real life, for someone else, it could be a mental obstacle. Either way, it means something to someone and I hope that I can accomplish these goals.

## Narrative 7-8: 1st Place

### My Direction

By Calleigh Ethier

Her soft and luminous sapphire eyes were like bottomless pools of tenderness and desire. Though the delicate orbs of blue were sweet and angelic, what lay beneath was full of chaos and tension. On the outside, Sophie was perfect. Her looks and pageant ways were just what society admired. Her life was a dream. Everything, but nothing at the same time. Sophie walked around as if she was on top of the world. The confidence that beamed off her was almost as fake as the smile she plastered across her face. Everyone adored her, but it was all an act. None of it was real.

On the inside -the part of her that no one could see- was the real Sophie. The Sophie that wanted to be an artist. Even though it seemed she was living a fantasy, the creative and spontaneous side to Sophie was what she coveted. Each day as she looked in the mirror, she couldn't help but be devoured by shameful thoughts in her mind. Trying to convince herself otherwise, Sophie would tell herself things like, "you look stunning," "What you feel inside is unimportant," and "Everyone Likes you." The last statement was the hardest to say. Many people smiled when they looked at her, but the unfortunate thing was that Sophie didn't like what she saw as she looked deeply into her reflection.

Hopeless, Sophie looked at herself and immediately felt afraid that there was nothing left for her to show, and the real side of her could never be embraced. Suddenly, Sophie's shameful thoughts were interrupted by a ferocious knocking on her door. "Come on Sophie. It's time for the interview! This is a big turning point in your career." Her dad barged in and announced. His face then got intense as he added, "Don't mess this up." Then he was gone.

It was true. This was a big step in her life. Pageantry Magazine wanted *her* on their cover page. Second place in M.A.A.I. (Modeling Association of America International) wasn't bad, but it wasn't what Sophie wanted. As she stepped onto the stage with the critical interview moments ahead of her, Sophie had one thought on her mind. "Everyone is going to see this interview." The concept ran around her head as her heart started to beat faster and faster. "I have to make progress... In the right direction. *My direction*". Faintly, Sophie heard her name announced. She came up to the reporter as a small audience erupted. "Thank you so much for coming," the reporter began. She just smiled as her heartbeat was surely being picked up by the microphone. "Now tell me Sophie," the enthusiastic woman sitting across from her started. "What does it mean to be one of the finalists in the *Miss America* pageant? Is it a dream come true?" This was it. The moment that she had to change her story. A moment that nobody would be expecting. "Progress, progress." The thoughts had replayed in her mind. "Um..." Sophie stuttered. She took a deep breath as her intimidating surroundings became a whole second dimension. "No," she finally answered as the world unfroze. Gasps and

murmurs traveled through the crowd like a contagious virus. “This isn’t what I want. None of it is.” Sophie could sense her parents’ anger and disappointment as she continued. “I’m not a pageant girl. I never was. I want to create art, like expressive art that embraces whatever I am feeling”, Sophie said with a grin. The reporter was speechless. The crowd was booing. “Progress” ran back through her head as Sophie dashed off stage. She took a deep breath as she passed her parents in the hallway without a second glance. She was free!

Sophie found a mirror just as she was exiting the life that wasn’t hers and entering a new beginning. She wasn’t to her full potential yet, but she knew that this was the start of something new. She stared into those sapphire eyes and said merely three things. “I am creative.” “I am who I am,” and finally, “I love myself.”

# **Narrative 7-8: 2nd Place**

## **2019-2020 Progress Report**

By Sara Sparling

2019-2020 Progress Report

Elmwood Middle School  
2019-2020 8th-Grade Student progress Report

Dear Parents/Guardians of 8th grade students:  
Your student(s) have been showing tremendous growth since the beginning of the school year! We would like to share their progress since the first semester of their 8th grade career!

Samantha Young  
GPA: 3.5524

Per 1 - Automation & Robotics - Elliot Harrison - A+  
Per 2 - Band - Abigail White - A-  
Per 3 - Science - Charles Sanders - B  
Per 4 - CP World Studies - Ryan Cooperton - A  
Per 5 - Math - Kristopher Creen - C+  
Per 6 - Advanced Language Arts - Amy Brown - B-

We appreciate the students' effort to put forth their best work. We're looking forward to another great semester!

Sincerely,

G. Westenstone  
Principal

Dear Teachers,

Thank you for evaluating my academic progress so far this year. However, I don't believe academics is the only thing that needs to be evaluated. I would like to take a minute to evaluate my personal progress report with you.

In the beginning of the school year, my confidence was a C-. I didn't know anyone and thought I was going to be alone for the rest of the year. No one seemed to acknowledge my existence. I didn't know anyone on my new team. Now my confidence is an A. I know my classmates, I have friends and I have teachers willing to help me. Now it doesn't seem so horrible to be a "transfer student". I can breathe at night now, knowing that I won't be alone forever.

Advocacy. Have you ever wondered how many students actually remember information that was taught last school year? Students from the same team would. That wasn't my case. I was on a completely different team. I was lost. At the beginning of the school year I would give myself an F. But now, I will give myself a B- since I don't know anything previously taught last year on this team, but I'm okay with it now. I have learned to ask for help. I go to my teachers during free time, and after school. I had to learn to find my voice.

In the beginning of this year, I was a D+ in security. I felt like an outcast, and I didn't know where I belonged. I pictured it as I was a Fruit Loop in a Cheerio world. I wasn't comfortable sitting in a classroom for more than five minutes. I wasn't a part of the team. Today I am an A-. I have new friends, I laugh, I smile. I feel comfortable in my own skin.

I appreciate your grades on my schoolwork, and I will continue to take them into consideration and grow academically, but I also hope you take my own personal progress report into consideration. Ultimately, it doesn't matter what your GPA is, but how you grade yourself on your own personal progress report.

Thank you.  
-Samantha



## Narrative 7-8: 3rd Place

### A Time of Progress

By Ishanvi Karthikeyan

Progress. A broad understanding one can find within oneself. No matter the meaning, we have all come across and felt it in our lives. Progress is deeply connected to life itself. This story is about Vanessa and her progress when she gets what she deeply wishes for.

Vanessa was a hopeful child who always wished to be a strong, confident young woman. She enjoyed nature, a quiet, reserved person, and a brilliant mind. At the time of this story, it was May 20th, and Vanessa and her siblings were off to school when their mother told the children to wait for a moment. She handed Vanessa a package. "These packages were sent to us from the school. Do not peer at the contents until you are told to". She smiled and added "Best wishes! I am sure it'll be you, Vanessa!"

"What is it?" questioned her brother.

"I obviously do not know," replied Vanessa.

The children headed for the bus and waved goodbye to their mother as they departed. The day was an important one, for Vanessa and her classmates would finally know who the valedictorian and salutatorian were. Vanessa was anticipating the announcement just as much as her younger siblings, who looked up to their sister and were eager to know the results.

As the bell rang and AP Statistics began, the teacher, Ms. Angevin, congratulated the class, since they had all placed very well among the senior year students in the district. She was in the middle of her sentence when the loudspeaker turned on and the secretary announced the order in which the students were dismissed to the assembly in which the winner would be declared. The pupils lined up and walked towards the gym.

As the bustling energy began to settle down, the principal, Mrs. Canmoore, began to speak. "I am honored to be the one to be creating change in children's lives. I know that you are eagerly anticipating who earned the highest GPA, but before that, we must thank all those who made this possible".

And so, Mr. Hanover, the superintendent spoke, giving the microphone back to Ms. Canmoore. "And now the salutatorian, a bright pupil, indeed. Congratulations Abigail Rodelle!" She thanked them, received her award, and gave her speech. "Now for the valedictorian!" There was utmost silence. "Congratulations Vanessa Ikomen!"

It was there that she felt it. Progress. The years' worth of effort paying off. Her family waved from the crowd. The principal told her to open the package and there it was. A special trophy just for her; polished brass, with the district emblem on it. There was also a letter bearing her name along with it.

As she embraced her family and gave her speech, Vanessa knew that she had done it. She had been accepted into a good college and become the district topper. She finally knew what progress truly was, not just technological advancement, but one's evolution over time. And she smiled in knowingness and recognition among her peers.

## Poetry 7-8: 1st Place

### Life's Progress

By Calleigh Ethier

First glimpse a blur of the life ahead of me, entering life's uncertain race

Confused as my first thoughts swirl in a frenzy around me as I explore such a curious place

Only the unadmirable traits are expressed and the lighter side to me is never embraced

All that anyone sees is the darkness inside me that I try to hide and not show on my face

The reason I've ended up such a shameful person could be anyone's fault

But I trap myself inside of my own feelings as if to lock myself inside of an emotional vault

Ashamed of myself, I fear I was only given this perplexing life by default

The unknown frightens me with so much more ahead I wish that I could intensely bring it all to a halt

Blowing out the birthday candles as the years go by, I continue anxious of what I still don't know

Afraid that I will never progress as my improvement moves ever so slow

Trapped in a prison that refuses my development, I am nervous that I have nothing left to show

I convince myself as my self-confidence becomes toxic that maybe I will never grow

The doubt and negativity that circle in my mind create a tension that exposes my truth

The desire of my reflection deteriorates along with the inspiration and ambition of my youth

I wonder if letting go of my past of spontaneity could allow me to create a new beginning that I choose

An improved and desired chapter of my life of importance that I could never afford to lose

I persist my newfound optimistic lifestyle as the days turn into months and years

Suddenly I begin to see a distorted image as a mysterious character appears

My delicate vulnerability allows me to see the vision as the figure becomes more clear  
I recognize the image as the person I used to be as I begin to wipe away my  
unexpected tears

I remember the person that I once was and the person that I have matured to be  
I have finally found myself and I now somehow understand my true destiny  
In the end, it was never about who I became but the progress that created my story  
What mattered was my progression and the realization that all I was meant to be is me

## Poetry 7-8: 2nd Place

### Progress

By Sunitvir Taunque

Life is a journey, not a destination  
Some full of happiness, some of dejection  
Such a journey requires progress to be made  
To feel at peace and not betrayed

Progress is always moving north  
Our true potential it brings forth  
Such a sense of direction is required  
To achieve the outcome that is desired

Progress is the process of improving our skills  
Learning from mistakes like simple spills  
Such improvements are the key  
To become the one we want to be

Progress is a test of persistency  
Testing our ability for consistency  
Such a test, we must pass  
To be able to cross any impasse

Progress is holding ourselves accountable  
Making sure every action is justifiable  
Such integrity is crucial indeed  
To be able to stop ourselves from misdeed

Progress is a journey, not a destination  
Some full of happiness, some of dejection  
Such a journey reveals our fullest potential  
Pushing our limits towards what is essential



## Poetry 7-8: 3rd Place

### Progress

By Ishanvi Karthikeyan

As a time of accomplishment approaches,  
Everyone eager to grow,  
Time goes by as the coaches,  
Start to let them freely go,

When one's knowledge increases,  
There is much involved wonder,  
There are many involved paces,  
And races to ponder,

As technology develops,  
Science does too,  
An invitational envelope,  
A new breakthrough,

As brains contemplate vast concepts,  
The universe can agree,  
Time holds novelties,  
For the world to see,

When goals are accomplished,  
Joy is aplenty,  
Struggles are finished,  
Secondary school is scarcely any,

For Progress is not just a breakthrough,  
But advancement and expansion,  
And for the ones proving participation,  
There are occupations to be leaders in the nation

## Essay 9-12: 1st Place

### What is Progress?

By Allison Reed

Progress is not a straight line, oftentimes it's not even a winding path or small bumps in the road. More often than not, progress is a muddy dark path, with dead ends that make you have to retrace your steps. Progress is the sun setting and a night of wandering alone with only the bright stars in the sky to guide you. Progress is hard and will be a different path for everyone.

I know progress has been an upwards climb for me with many dead ends. An upwards climb to get out of bed in the morning, to study for tests, to train, and to go out with friends. Progress is meeting the wrong people and making mistakes. Progress is the nights where you cannot sleep because all you can do is worry. It's waking up and brewing a cup of coffee to focus on first bell. Progress is pain, suffering, and sometimes doing it alone.

Progress is the moments with your shoulders hunch inwards and a bright metallic reflection stares back at you. It is asking yourself, *what motivates you*, and not liking the answer that pops into your head. Progress is your eyes turning emerald green from the tears that drip down your face in hot flames. Progress is the hard self-reflection and internal turmoil.

Progress is also meeting the right people. People that make you feel alive and grab your hand and walk along the hard path with you, even though they don't have to. Progress is watching the bright oranges, purples, and yellows, rise with the sun on top of a mountain; watching the world wake up and thinking *I climbed another mountain, I beat another battle*. You know there will be more battles, maybe more wars, but for now take this victory. Bathe in it because progress is the victories just as much as the failures and relapses.

Progress is standing in front of a mirror with a wide smile on your face and deep dimples imprinted on your cheeks. Progress is realizing your *happier*, and your eyes shine just a little bit brighter, if just for a moment.

Progress is something each and every one of us should strive for. For some of us it is a small fitness goal, or educational goal, for others it is recovery, a new degree, or a change in a way of life. No matter what you are progressing towards, know that your path will be different from the person beside you, and that is okay. Keep climbing those mountains; I will be climbing my own path right beside you.



## Essay 9-12: 2nd Place

By Joud Kiwan

Many people can give a handful of definitions to the word “progress”. But what does it really mean? In my experience as a teenager progress means getting forward in my life no matter what form that would be. A lot of other teenagers would agree to say that progress means to do good in school but it means much more than that. It can mean mentally physically or maybe even socially. Everybody on Earth experiences this and that’s how we grow as humans. Progress is important and therefore a part of life.

From childhood, we experience progress from the simplest things. We start off being very dependent on our guardians then eventually grow. From coloring inside the lines to learning the abc’s and counting up to 10. We are affected by this type of positive progress from the start and we start to grow and learn from it. Our brains grow and grow until we are eventually challenged by newer and more, in a way, grown up things.

In the early growing stages we start advancing more in school. We start middle school and eventually high school. In those stages we develop long term relationships aside from our families. We talk to people and make friends, we interact with others on the daily and see the world around us until we eventually make it to adulthood. There we are challenged with even more real world problems. We have to do things like go to college, find a permanent job(s), move out and live alone, pay taxes and even start a family. Constantly until the day we are longer on this Earth. Life is always throwing obstacles at us and we are to do nothing but get over them. No matter how we do that, we get over them and we positively grow as humans.

In conclusion, no matter what age or stage we are in life, we are experiencing a change and an undying progression until we are no longer physically on the earth. Whether you are a child learning the abc’s, highschooler taking their first AP class or an adult moving into their first apartment.

## Essay 9-12: 3rd Place

### What is Progress?

By Erica Cox

We have heard the word 'progress' throughout our lives, in our 'progress reports' when we are in elementary all the way to high school where we learn about 'the progressive movement'. The word progress is used in so many ways, terms, and meanings. Society sees this word in different ways with their own different opinions about what it means as well as how it is achieved. So, the question becomes, 'what is progress according to you'?

According to me, progress has a few different meanings in different situations. There is progress towards something, such as a goal or accomplishment, or even the completion of something. There is also progress in the general form of life, to me this means the progression throughout your life moving in a positive, negative, or neutral direction. The type of progress that I speak of is undefined. It does not have an endpoint, nor does it have a path, each individual paves their own path. The path is always being paved, that may be forward, backward, or in a sideways direction that does not have a huge impact. Either way, every decision, action, and response pave a path in the direction that you set it up to go in.

There is a phrase, "be the best you, that you are able to be". However, no one can reach this point, but we can get close! So, who was the best? Who was able to get the closest to be the best that they could have ever been? These questions don't have an answer, everybody goes through life in a different direction of progression. No one goes in the exact same direction, the person who has gotten the 'furthest' is irrelevant. As a society, we must focus on becoming better every day and making hard decisions that may not seem to have a huge impact. This is how we will achieve the best versions of ourselves.

This form of progression can be referred to as the growth or development, continuous improvement. This distinguishes individuals from the whole, not just those who reach their goal and then put on the breaks. I have made goals throughout my life, such as in second grade, when I made the goal to make all A's, I accomplished this goal, but I didn't stop there. I didn't stop trying to make good grades just because I already had done so. Which brings me to once again say that I consider progress as continuous improvement that never stops.

## Narrative 9-12: 1st Place

By Mackenzie Sexton

*Thwack* went the arrow. It hit near the center of the target. The best I've gotten in months. My steps echoed in the empty room; the light filtering in through the windows from the pale moon outside was almost ghostly. One lone arrow in the center of a target on the bale. All alone and silent in the shooting range. I walked up to the arrow and tried to pull it out, it wouldn't budge. I tried pulling harder, but still nothing happened. I stepped back and assessed what was going on.

"That should've been easy. . ." I murmured.

I tried pulling again, nothing happened. I pulled the silver grip off my belt and wrapped it around the arrows shaft, and yanked with all the strength my arm had. Finally, it came out of the padded bale. But to my surprise, numbers shot up next to me and hung in mid air, which made me let out a yelp. I looked at them in confusion. They were the type of numbers you would see in the corner of an old video game as your score, but they were big and floating right in front of my face. Like it was taunting me, whispering,

"You didn't get an X. You didn't get a perfect score, and you never will,"

"Archery's hard. . ." I mumbled in reply.

I turned away and walked back down to the empty line. My arrows and bow glinted in the soft light as I walked. I turned and got into my shooting stance; feet shoulders width apart, the end of the bottom limb of my bow resting on my shoe and my shoulders relaxed. I took a deep breath and nocked the arrow. I looked straight in front of me, then towards the lone target down twenty yards away. I drew my bow and let out a breath; the world seemed to stop and go silent. I released the arrow. *Thwack* against the target.

"8," responded the numbers, "you'll never get an X, never have and never will."

I growled in frustration, I stomped back over to the bale and pulled out the arrow.

"Much easier that time, huh?" I hissed.

Back at the line, breath in, draw, breath out, release.

"5," the numbers laughed.

I glared and walked back down, pulled out the arrow, walked back, repeated.

"6,"

"4,"

"1,"

"9,"

"8,"

"Miss."

I yelled and looked away, trying to keep my temper under control, but the tears welled up behind my eyes and I couldn't stop myself from looking back down the range at the numbers. All in red, all still there. Then it dawned on me, I had shot a nine, and an eight before I missed, and I missed because I didn't string walk the right way. I knew what I did wrong. . . that was more important than getting an X. I took a deep breath and wiped the tears off my cheeks and from my eyes. I walked down to the bale, ignoring the numbers and grabbed the arrow. I spun back around and walked back to the line. I drew back the arrow, another deep breath in, draw back, breath out, release. *Thwack*. I looked down at the bale, and a big, red, pixelated letter hovered next to the target. X



## Narrative 9-12: 2nd Place

### “Can We Talk”

By Allison Reed

Sweat dripped down my back as the eyes of the crowd stared up at me from the medal stand. I should have a smile beaming on my face, but my eyes vigorously scanned the crowd, looking for my coach, who should be there to support me. Instead, I found her in the dark corner of the venue next to my teammate, who lost her match. I could feel the wide smile on my face falter as my stomach turned into a familiar knot. I asked myself, why must she mourn her loss and is unable to celebrate my victory?

Once I exited from the medal stand, I ran to the restroom. I stripped my punching gloves off and threw my mouth guard on the table. I looked up into the mirror, my reflection glared right back at me. Slowly, I walked up to the sink and laid my hands flat on the counter and just looked at myself. A river of tears ran down my strawberry red face; emerald green eyes rimmed with red stared back at me. At that moment, completely broken and sweaty, I think it finally hit me that this isn't healthy, it's time to make a change.

Over the next several weeks I couldn't get the encounter out of my head. I obsessively replayed the memory and everything that had come before it. Finally, I pulled out my phone and began tapping the keyboard to form the dreaded sentence: “can we talk”.

The day had finally come, the short distance to my coach's office had never felt so long; the comfortable dojo has never felt more like a stranger. I sat down in the chair next to her desk with clammy hands, and a heart that was leaping out of my chest. I drew in a breath and finally said the words I had been thinking for so long, “I feel second best.”

Her lips made an “O” and I could see the white rimming her eyes.

She politely asked me, “Could you give me examples of me putting you second best?”

The long list I had made flashes in my mind and I know I can recall its contents.

“I didn't know you felt this way. I will try to make more changes” was her response.

Eventually I made the same walk out the dojo and to my car. My knees were still quaking beneath me, but a huge weight had been lifted from my chest.

I'd be lying if I said everything was perfect now; that there was an equal responsibility between me and my teammate. However, here's what is true. I advocated for myself regardless of the outcome. I know longer tell myself *I need to say something* because I did. And at the end of the day, that is all I can do. It's not perfect, but progress has been made and progress is just that: progress, not an immediate change.

## Narrative 9-12: 3rd Place

### Junior Year

By Emily Taylor

*Ring! Ring!* The bell screeches, dismissing us. I grab my bulky chemistry book and race to my locker.

I shuffle past the packed hallway and try not to bump into anyone else. This new school is much bigger than my last one. It is at least double the size. In my few short months here, I have learned a few things. The main one being everyone already has their friends figured out. Being new my junior year is harder than I thought it would be. My mom is a traveling nurse for the elderly, which forces us to move about every three years. As the years have gone by, making friends has become harder. By my age, most people have already found their group of friends, which makes my situation worse. I have been going to Redwood for about three months and haven't had luck making friends. All I want is to go back home. Wherever that is.

I quickly get to AP drawing class and take my seat alone in the back of the class like always. The bell rings and class begins. We are finally getting our graded self-portraits back.

"Alright class," Mrs. Dankworth begins, "I hope you are all excited for today!" She quickly begins to pass back all of the amazing works of art. A paper lands in front that is almost my reflection with a cherry red A+ in the top right corner. The people at my table groan when they see my grade. Most students get B's or lower due to how hard this class is. To get anything above a ninety percent, let alone a 100, is unheard of. A quick, small smile flashes across my face, but quickly fades so no one sees me.

After a long class discussing how we can improve our work for our next project, the bell gives its last ring. I gather my things and turn to leave.

"Lleyton!" Mrs. Dankworth says, as I'm about to walk out the door. I turn around and walk over to his desk. "I wanted to talk to you about joining a club!" She hands me a pastel purple paper with the words "Art Club" at the top of the paper.

"Art club?" I read aloud, "I don't know about this Mrs. Dankworth."

"Oh come on! Just give it a shot!" The next day comes and with it comes my first art club. I walk into my first club and am met with stares and warm smiles.

"Hi! Welcome to art club!" someone says.

"Hi," I reply.

"My name is Oakley! Mrs. Dankworth came by earlier and showed me your projects. They're amazing! I think we are all going to be really good friends!"

"Friends?" I repeat.

“Friends!” Oakley says with a smile. Even though it took way longer than I would’ve liked it to, I finally found where I belonged. It’s nice to know all the progress I have made here at Redwood.



## Poetry 9-12: 1st Place

### Progression

By Anitvir Taunque

Life is about moving forward  
Learning from every mistake  
Trying to move onward  
Through the challenges we undertake

This is progression  
Striving to be the best we can  
Not being afraid of rejection  
Doing everything we possibly can

Venturing out of our comfort zone  
In an attempt to ameliorate  
Even if we are all alone  
Never do we hesitate

Aiming for the impossible  
Setting the highest of goals  
Truthfully overcoming every obstacle  
Not relying on any loopholes

This is progression  
Pushing ourselves as hard as we can  
Striving for perfection  
In every way we possibly can

Falling down again and again  
With no source of protection  
Having the courage to get up again

## Poetry 9-12: 2nd Place

### Stages of Progress and Test Scores

By Kaitlin Dwomoh

I am a creek  
I am a creek  
I start off small, tumbling on my little toddler feet, my test scores low.  
45, 47, 55  
Crude and inexperienced in life

I am a stream  
I am a stream  
Reading has taken me to the next phase.  
Coherent thoughts form and take shape  
My character and development growing like the sapling I water  
My scores are now in the low hundreds  
107, 202, 221  
What's next now?

I am a river  
I am a river  
The growing pains have filled me  
Being a river is a lot different than being a stream  
Questions now float through my mind,  
"Am I better? Will I grow? When will I change?"  
Different types of stream flow through me now.  
I hope I didn't get the stream of toxicity

My test scores are better now  
245, 254, 783, 796, 817

I'm going to be an ocean  
I'm going to be an ocean  
Soon I will be fully grown  
What will it be like to be an ocean?  
Will I be bogged down by trash like the North Pacific?  
Or will I be clear like the Indian?  
Will my test scores be high enough?

I think so.  
I'm no longer a tiny stream,  
I will soon be an ocean  
The tree I water is now a big oak  
I'm glad I will get better.



## Poetry 9-12: 3rd Place

### Progress

By Luis Duartenavarro

As one day I reflect on myself  
I think, how can I grow?  
How can I improve my wealth?  
How can I become a pro?

I think, how can progress?  
can I crank?  
can I be the best?  
How can I surpass the greatest

I get home and I crank in creative  
I box fight players  
I hit my shots on native.

I grind arena and get some points  
But I think have I progressed?  
I don't know,  
Though I'm not who I once was  
I only hit for two hundred with my spaz.

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- 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](http://www.lakotaleads.org)



**Lakota★LEADS**

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Development of Students