



## College Mentors Guide

This document is aimed at helping you visualize how to get onto the Young Writers Project site – [youngwritersproject.org](http://youngwritersproject.org) – and then give feedback on incoming submissions to the Young Writers Project Newspaper Series. As background, students and teachers register on the site, login and then create an “Entry” which is automatically stored on our database. While each entry is visible to all registered users, it can only be edited by the author, you mentors and YWP editors. Please be careful of that.

Your aim is to provide students independent feedback. Your thoughts are highly valued by these young authors. You should give them something on ONE thing you like and ONE thing you think they can do to improve the piece, and the latter may range from spelling and punctuation to sentence construction and grammar to tense consistency or to places you are confused. Keep in mind the age/grade of the author; you can see that in the keywords at the top of the story; a fifth grader should be viewed differently than a 10<sup>th</sup> grader.

With all recipients of your feedback keep in mind that emails and comments are ALWAYS seen as being more harsh than they are. You also don't have the advantage of seeing the student face-to-face and thus can't gauge how you are being received. A rule of thumb is to keep a calm, pleasant, respectful tone. You do not have to be too effusive; these kids do want constructive criticism.

One final point is that your suggestions should be made with consideration on how they will USE your comments. They may not feel the desire or they may not have the time to revise this particular piece. How can they use your advice in future writing? How can they see the general wisdom of your comment?

**New this year** is an option to occasionally write your own blog on the site for the young writers to read and offer their own comments. If anyone is interested, please drop me a line. I think this would be an interesting experiment. I'm going to do it as well.

As always, I greatly appreciate your participation. I also would love to have you email me at [ggevalt@youngwritersproject.org](mailto:ggevalt@youngwritersproject.org) with any questions, suggestions or problems. My phone is 482-5625 (home) or 860-0570 if you need to call.

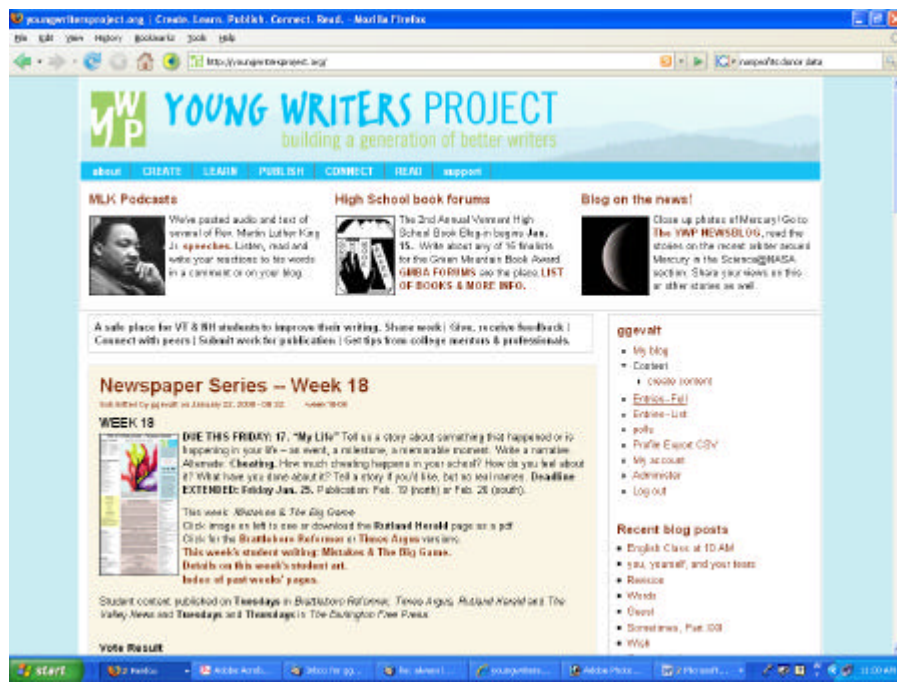
**Your first step** is to create an account. Please fill out all the info; all of it is ONLY accessible by me. I activate all accounts, so I'll activate it sometime on the day you register. If you want quicker response, feel free to email me that you've created the account.

As you wait, send me a one-paragraph bio of yourself – something for the students – and a picture of yourself (tight head shot we want to see your smiling or snarling or pensive face!) for posting on our Web site. This is optional, and as I've said, this is a guilt-free project. However, I think the young writers enjoy seeing who it is giving comments.

Finally, once I activate your account, you'll get an automated email with a one-time password; when you login the first time, you'll be taken to a spot (after agreeing to the terms and conditions) to change to a more memorable password. And then proceed as I've described in the next pages (with visual aids.)

Geoff Gevalt  
YWP Editor

1. After you log in, go to the home page (click on the logo). You'll see "Entries-Full" and "Entries-List" links on the right below your name. Entries-Full probably works best.



This is what "Entries-Full" looks like – story summaries.



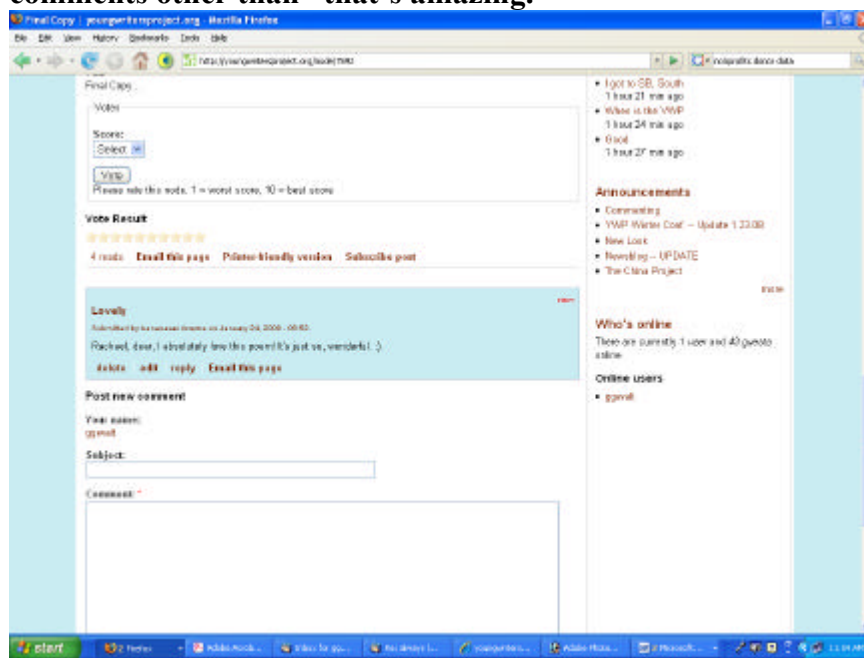
You'll notice a box on the top that lets you choose some filters. Choose "Submitted" and click "Submit" and this will give you a list (most recent first) of all entries that have NOT received feedback. (If you want to look at some of the comments of your colleagues, click "Feedback Submitted" and scroll through some of them.)



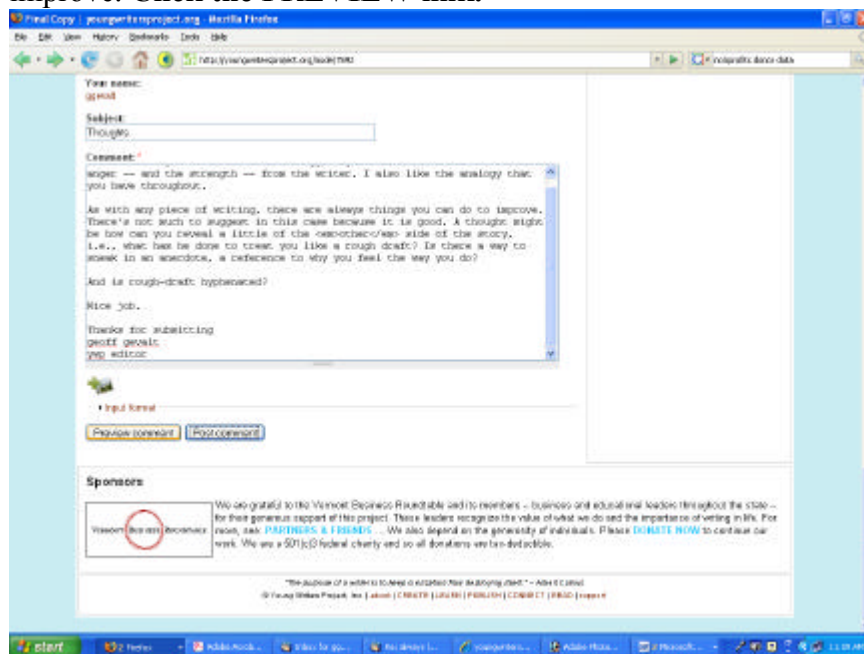
Now click on the title of the story...this is what it will look like. Read it and as you scroll down....



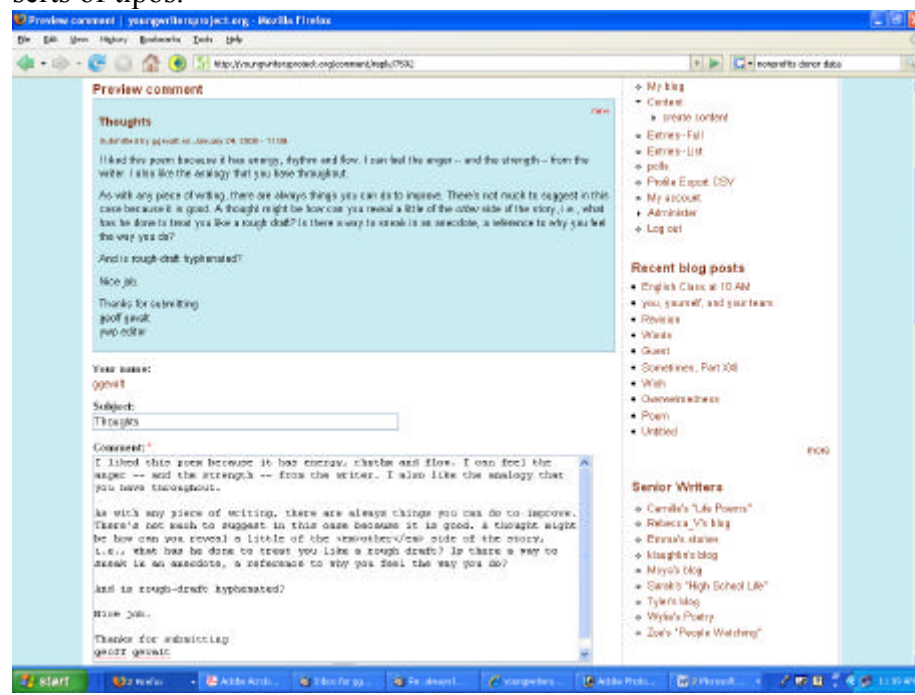
You'll see the comment box at the bottom. In this case there also is a comment put there by a fellow student. A lot of students know how to get to the Entries and have begun to comment on the work. Your unspoken goal, of course, is to help the students provide more **in-depth comments other than "that's amazing."**



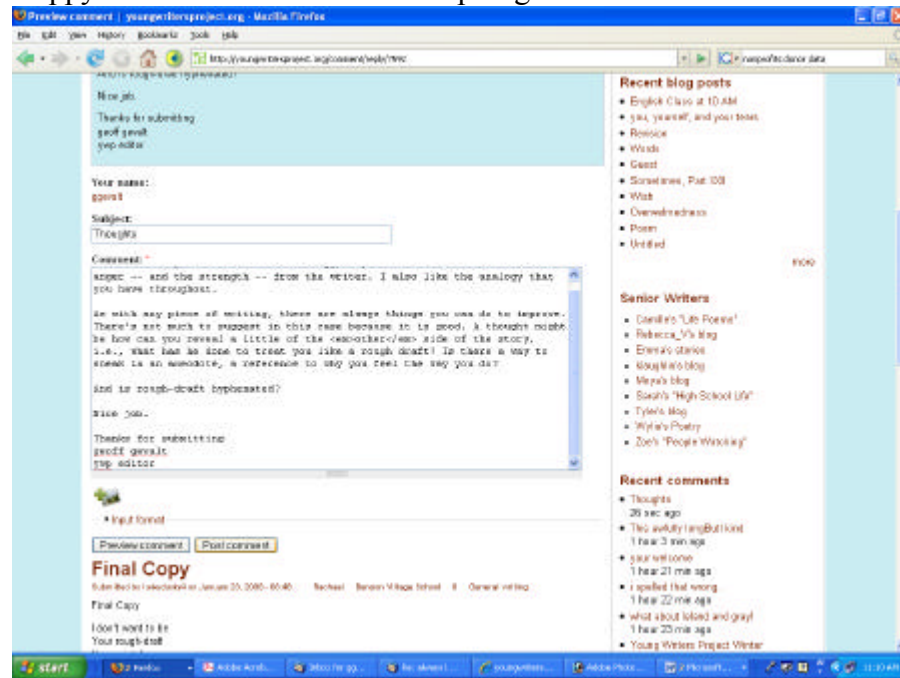
So write your thoughts about what you liked and what one thing the author could do to improve. **Click the PREVIEW link.**



Read over your comments. This is important because nothing can ruin our credibility more than a spelling error or an incredibly tortured sentence that runs on forever and contain all sorts of typos.



Happy? Click submit. One final step to go...



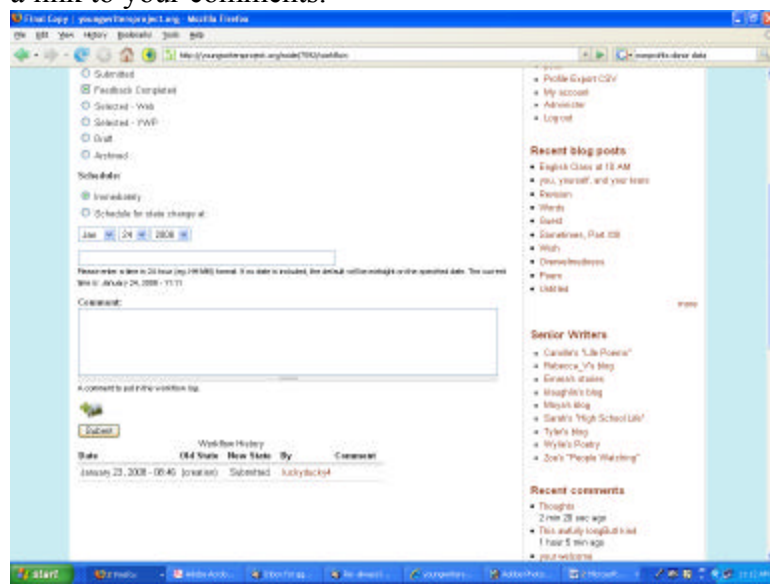
This is an **IMPORTANT** step. When you are done and your comment has been submitted (check the bottom to make sure it's there in blue.) then go to the “Workflow” tab in the upper right hand corner. Click it.



You will then see some options. You actually will see the “Submitted” button with a green dot. **CLICK Feedback Completed. ....**



And scroll to the bottom and click SUBMIT. This sends an automated email to the author telling him or her that “You’ve Got Feedback!” (don’t worry, nothing so hokey) and provides a link to your comments.



Now comes the slight pain in the neck part. I do not have “breadcrumbs” set up properly, meaning there’s no easy way to get back to the list you were just working on. Sooooo.... Here are some options.... Scroll backwards on your browser to get back to the list of “Submitted” you started with and REFRESH. .... In the right sidebar, click “Entries-List” and resort under “Submitted.” Or, the first time you visit the list of Submitted, put that url in your favorites tool bar and just click that and refresh when you’re done.



Try to do this for an hour or so at a time; that’ll help get you in a flow. If you want to do more and you find it kind of like eating popcorn, have at it. THANKS SO MUCH – Geoff Gevalt, ggevalt@youngwritersproject.org... 802-860-0570 or 482-5625