

Stressed

BY KIRA WOLLENSAK
Crossett Brook Middle School, Grade 8

Stress
Maybe I can't fit in that dress.
Stress
Look at my room, what a mess!
Stress
Why can't that just cost less?
Stress
With all the work, it's quite a process.
Stressed
I got a what on that test?
Stressed
I don't even have time to rest.
Stressed
School is such a pest.
Stressed
Well, at least I'm not depressed.

School stress

BY CONNER RENEE LAFROMBOISE
Chelsea Public School, Grade 10

School is stressful
From boatloads of homework
To the never-ending, high school drama.
The stress builds and builds.
It clouds your head and invades your mind.
It nags at you and you feel like there's never enough time.
You want to revel in your teen years but they fly by.
So when life gets crazy, relax and try to enjoy all the madness.

Homework stress

BY DARCY FRANKLIN
Crossett Brook Middle School, Grade 7

First school,
Then sports,
No pool,
Just shorts.
No time,
No energy,
Just stress,
And boredom.
I have homework to do,
No ambition to do it.
I'm tired, too.
Until I finish I sit.
When I'm finally finished,
I can sleep 'til morning.
I'll still be tired,
And I'll still be stressed.
When I'm done with one day,
I'll do it again.
Always the same way,
That's how it's been.
(whisper) And always will be...always.



THIS WEEK: "Stress" & "My Story"

Each week students respond to prompts provided by Young Writers Project. Best work is submitted to youngwritersproject.org by students and teachers from Vermont and New Hampshire. A team of students help select work. To read more student writing go to youngwritersproject.org. Students are welcome to join and share additional work on the site.

ABOUT THE PROJECT

YWP is an independent nonprofit that engages students to write, helps them improve and connects them with authentic audiences for their best work.

YWP runs youngwritersproject.org — a supportive online community for students; trains college mentors to provide students with feedback and builds Digital Writing Classrooms for schools. For more go to ywpschools.net.

YWP NEWS

YWP has received a generous grant from the **Vermont Humanities Council** to hold in-person and online workshops with Vermont authors.

Please check in at youngwritersproject.org for details of the upcoming forums that begin in March.

The sessions are free.

A JOURNEY TO RWANDA

A group of 14 students from Harwood Union High School is in Rwanda as part of a service learning project. To prepare for their trip, several took part in a course on Rwanda at the school. Here is a poem inspired by a survivors of the 1994 genocide.

To see what the students write from Rwanda, including images and podcasts, go to rwanda.ywpschools.net.

Odette's story | BY MEGHAN COSTELLO, Grade 11

Fear is the sound
coming from that crackly radio.
Somewhere,
Beyond the static,
is blood.

Fear is the bodies,
Family, neighbors, friends
Now floating statues
But what you don't see,
Can't harm you.

Fear is the helplessness
Of passing by people
without a second glance,

as if they were begging for spare
change,
instead of their lives. Fear is being over-
come,

Stopped at a roadblock,
Guards with machetes drawn
Lies overlooked by one kind soul,
who is tired of the pointless killing.

Hope is in the children,
Hope is in the friends,
Hope is in humanity
Hope is in the hotel refugees sheltering
everyone.

Hope is overcoming fear.

NEXT PROMPT

Elevator. You are in an elevator. The door opens and in walks an annoying type of person. Suddenly the elevator stops between floors...tell us what happens. (No real names, please!) *Alternate: Peeves.* What is your number one pet peeve? **Deadline Feb. 26.**

Submit at:

youngwritersproject.org

Pressure

BY EGBER SEHOVIC
Spaulding High School, Grade 10

Stress to me is when someone is on your back about everything and the pressure starts to build. It gets annoying and you lose your cool and flip on the person. Then afterward you start to feel bad!

Upward descent

BY JULIA BARSTOW
U-32 High School, Grade 12

He had the foresight to retie his swimming trunk drawstring one last time before jumping off the miniscule platform that held his fate. To him, she was a severe speck daring him to go for it, betting he would turn around and scurry back down in petrified terror. To her, he was an insignificant pinpoint with no clout in this world, not to mention the guts necessary for the task at hand.

She had dared him to jump off the highest part of the Olympic-sized high dive into the awaiting water meters below. He imagined her smirk of doubt. He turned. The smirk became a full-out, evil-genius grin. He jumped.

He had developed a ritual. Every day, directly after waking up, he went to the swimming pool, climbed to the top and pictured himself falling through the air. There were judges on the sidelines. They would be judging his form, allotting points for style. She would judge him. She knew he'd never do it. Not him. He would probably make it to the top — anyone can climb a ladder — make like he'd go for it and turn right back around, crying for his nanny. She'd go up, come down swan diving like no other. She'd win. She always won. Whether it was the time she climbed the highest tree in a thunderstorm — even if they did call her insane, she had made fifty bucks on that one — or something as mundane as eating a whole worm made fat after the rain on the primary school play ground. She always won. She never lost.

He came up from the still-rippling water, grabbed hold of her uniform toes. Smiled. Grinned. Not an evil-genius grin, a triumphant grin. She gaped. Shot her toes out towards his winning nose, his stupid eyeballs. Ran up the ladder. Anger propelling her muscles forward. Reached the top. Looked down. You never look down. She looked up. Back down. Toes curled around the edge of the platform, her life line. They released their death grip. Didn't return forward. Stepped back in preparation. In preparation for descent. Descent back down the ladder. His triumphant grin became a full-out, evil-genius grin. He was there to offer his hand at the last bottom step. She dismissed it. Walked by her heap of a towel. Threw it at his winning head. The money fell, wet, at his feet. He always won. Never lost.

Later ... The high dive was closed the following week due to a reckless woman jumping off the top into the water with bad form and breaking her leg in seven places. He visited her at the hospital. Grinned the whole time.