

BBC

By Joseph Timmins

Edmunds Middle School, Grade 8

(Note: This was submitted last spring. Full poem at youngwritersproject.org)

... Violence is everywhere
 An evil tear in the fabric of society
 The Dalai Lama just adds to the drama
 He's talking
 But no one is listening
 And there are people dying everyday
 In Africa
 As politicians rig elections
 Around the globe
 Third terms
 And opposition arrests
 We're just doing the best we can to get by
 Protests turn into riots
 And mob takes on mob
 Then someone lands the clean-up job...
 ... We have the UN
 But genocide keeps going on
 Unseen or unremedied
 And we don't know who's our ally
 Or enemy
 There are human rights
 But no one to enforce them
 And an army sergeant feels
 Remorse for men he's killed
 They told him he was skilled,
 But now he is chilled
 From having looked death in the face
 And seeing it has no race...
 ... There's kids failing school
 More importantly there's
 Schools failin' kids
 This is our future, we need to protect it
 So a kid doesn't end up as another guy
 Decked in a bar
 My transistor radio is stuck
 On NPR
 And they say the economy is below par
 But there are still millionaire pop stars
 Where's equality?
 There are freezing children in
 Third world nations
 And starving Haitians
 But I can't remember the last time
 I saw a rich man in a police station
 Cops shoot kids
 And kids shoot heroin
 And the man on the corner says I
 Should be worrying about my original sin
 Somewhere a bartender pours a CEO a gin
 So he can forget his sins
 As a mugger tosses an empty wallet
 Into a trash bin.

2009-2010 prompts

Each week YWP offers students ideas to write about. Here are a few of the upcoming prompts. For the full list, go to youngwritersproject.org



2. Photo Prompt: Write a story about this photo, taken by Dorothea Lange in California, March 1937, "Toward Los Angeles." (See full photo at youngwritersproject.org.) Alternate: **Back.** "Oh gosh, they're back..." Write a story based on or using that phrase. *Deadline: Sept. 18.*

3. Headline. Write an attention-grabbing news headline and then create a story about it. Alternate: **Listening in.** Take a moment to listen to conversations at school, home or in a public place such as the hallways, cafeteria, playing field, a restaurant or store. Take some of that dialogue and write a story or poem. Fill in the gaps. *Deadline: Sept. 25.*

4. General Submit best non-prompt general writing you have created. This call for general entries is repeated each month and you can use the same "general" term when submitting each time. *Deadline: Oct. 2.*

THROUGH THE EYES OF ...

YWP students jump into *The Lake Champlain Chamber Music Festival*

From time to time, YWP corrals a few good young writers and invites them to immerse themselves — and write about — events. In late August, more than a dozen students attended rehearsals, talks, meals and performances at the first Lake Champlain Chamber Music Festival led by the brilliant violinist Soovin Kim.

Read more student reflections of the festival at youngwritersproject.org.

In between

By Sossina Gutema

Essex High School, Grade 9

(Excerpt: Full poem at youngwritersproject.org)

Music is more beautiful
 when there are
 people
 to hear it. It's sweet-
 est when littered with the
 chatter of voices and
 the shuffling
 of young men clutching
 scores busy with
 pencil marks and red pen;
 the humming of girls with
 silver laptops.
 The footsteps of a
 crowd and
 their hushed voices. ...

Rehearsal practice

By Erin Maguire

Essex High School, Grade 11

"Rehearsal" is not
 "practice" this week;
 I am seeing
 the Real Deal
 just before it happens:
 they spend so much more time
 reading the notes
 in another's eyes,
 than following what is written
 before them — it works.

Gone

By Amira Silverman

Charlotte Central School, Grade 5

The music ends
 Silence fills the room
 The kind of silence that is
 So loud that it is frightening
 I miss the music that once sang so
 Sweetly to my ears
 The music that is gone

In a sea of geometry

By Sasha Duchac

Renaissance School, Grade 4

The teacher
 Stands by the white board
 Teaching about concave and
 Convex figures.
 The sun, glinting off her glasses,
 Is making patterns that dance on the wall;
 They mirror the diagrams
 The teacher is drawing.
 I feel as if I am underwater . . .
 The sun's beams, penetrating
 Deep into the depths,
 Move in perfect harmony.
 "Sasha!"
 I snap out of my daze.

Touching a shark

By Leah Berger

Shelburne Community School, Grade 4

(Excerpt: Full story at youngwritersproject.org)

I walk up to the shallow tank. The water
 is clear. I take a deep breath and look down
 at the small sharks swimming below. My
 hands reach out but my fears hold them
 back. My friend touches the largest one.
 "What does it feel like?" I asked.
 "Sandpaper" she answered.
 "I will touch one," I tell her.
 "Go ahead it's fun," she replied.
 My hand reaches down once again into the
 icy water. I see the small shadow of a shark
 swimming in my direction. I reach my hand
 even farther into the tank until my hand is a cen-
 timeter above the shark. I force my hand even
 farther into the tank until I feel a sandpaper feel-
 ing as the shark swims under my hands ...

Nature

By Murphy Baker

Rice Memorial High School, Grade 9

Leaves fall from trees above,
 as they sway back and forth in the wind.
 Birds chirp overhead, as leaves rustle
 and grass moves in the breeze.
 The cool air crisp and refreshing,
 and the wet grass glittering in the sun.
 The ground covered with all kinds of life,
 as caterpillars inch along
 and dandelions grow.
 Life is beginning to return
 after the long winter,
 and everything returns
 to its former beauty.

Ready, set, WRITE!

Welcome to a new year of the Young Writers Project, an independent nonprofit dedicated to encouraging student writing. Each week YWP and this newspaper will feature some of the best student writing in the state. Support the newspaper; and be sure to give the students feedback — it means a lot to them.



Today we release the first few suggested prompts for the year; for a complete list, visit youngwritersproject.org.

Young Writers Project reaches as many students as possible, engages them to write, helps them get better at it and finds audiences for their best work.

YWP runs a safe Web community at youngwritersproject.org where students share writing, post audio and images, exchange feedback and receive critique from top students at University of Vermont and Castleton State College.

YWP creates Digital Writing Classrooms for teachers to integrate into their curriculum. This year, YWP will maintain over 30 such sites. Go to ywpschools.net for more.

YWP received its founding support from the Vermont Business Roundtable. Major contributors now include FairPoint Communications; A.D. Henderson Foundation; Amy E. Tarrant Foundation; Bay and Paul Foundations; Northfield Savings Bank; Oakland Foundation; Physician's Computer Company; Queen City Printers; Small Dog Electronics; Vermont Humanities

Council; Windham Foundation; and Metz Family Foundation.

This year's prompts came from hundreds of ideas suggested by teachers and students. They are posted on youngwritersproject.org and include a special partnership with the Vermont Stage Company. More partnerships will be announced during the year.

Submit work at youngwritersproject.org by each Friday afternoon.

— Geoffrey Gevalt
 Young Writers Project Director