

NATIONAL PTA® **REFLECTIONS®**



Explore the Arts and
EXPRESS yourself





2026-2027 REFLECTIONS[®]

Unleash Your Creativity!



2026-2027 THEME: *What My Culture Means to Me*

The National PTA Reflections program is a chance for students to be creative and express themselves through the arts. Students in Pre-K through Grade 12 are invited to explore this year's theme "What My Culture Means to Me" and share their unique perspectives.

STUDENTS MAY ENTER IN ONE OR MORE OF THE FOLLOWING ARTS CATEGORIES:



No previous artistic experience is required. Every student has a story to tell!

More information found at [PTA.org](https://www.pta.org)

Reflections provides an opportunity for students to convey their thoughts and feelings through artistic expression.





Reflections Prizes

Based on the award(s) earned, student artists receive the following prizes:

- **Merit Award:** Bronze Medal; Certificate of Merit; Work featured in the virtual exhibition
- **Award of Excellence:** \$200 Young Artist Scholarship; Silver Medal; Certificate of Excellence; Work featured in the virtual exhibition
- **Outstanding Interpretation Award:** \$800 Young Artist Scholarship; Gold Medal; Certificate of Outstanding Interpretation; Work featured in the virtual exhibition; \$200 Prize for Local PTA Unit

Reflections Review Criteria

Using the students artwork, title and artist statement, along with relevant details, Reflections judges will consider the following criteria during the evaluation process:

- **Creativity:** How creative and original the piece is in its conception of the theme and its presentation.
- **Technique:** The level of skill demonstrated in the basic principles/techniques of the arts area.
- **Interpretation of Theme:** How closely the piece relates to the theme, based on the work itself and the artist statement.

More information found at [PTA.org](https://www.pta.org/reflections)



Overall Entry Guidelines

These are basic guidelines that all Reflections entries must meet to be eligible on the national level. *Additional state and/or local program requirements may apply.*

Each entry must be new artwork inspired by the current year's theme are accepted.

- **Theme-Inspired:** Engage with the theme and create inspired artwork. This is critical to success in Reflections.
- **New Artwork:** Do not “recycle” artwork by submitting a piece created for other purposes (e.g., homework not related to Reflections; art used in another competition).

Each entry must be the original work of one student only.

- **Individual Originality:** Reflections is designed to encourage and recognize individual creativity, artistic assistance from friends, family and/or teachers is not allowed.
- **No Group Submissions:** Only one student will be awarded for each entry.
- **Artwork Details:** Titles or artist statements must be the student's own words and interpretations of the theme.
- **Creative Choices:** Decisions in the creative process must be made and/or directed by the student. If support is required, it should be limited and appropriate to the student's grade and needs.

Each entry must contain a title and an artist statement.

- **Word Count:** Artists statement must include at least 10 words and not exceed 100 words.
- **Be Creative and Unique:** Each entry submitted in Reflections must have a unique title and artist statement specific to that submission. Learn more about crafting a title and artist statement in the section below.

Each entry using digital technology/software in creation process must consider the following:

- **Original Use:** Technology/software *may not be used* to provide the primary design and/or concept.

More information found at [PTA.org](https://www.pta.org)



Enhance: Technology/software *may be used* to develop, enhance and/or present an entry.

Use Description: Entrants must use the “Additional Details” field on their entry form to briefly describe the tools and method used in the creation process, including any generative elements (10 to 50 words).

- **Graphic Design Platforms/Tools:** To ensure original artwork, platforms (like Canva) with materials, templates or generated graphics (even if copyright free) created by someone else, must be used sparingly—if at all. When used, unoriginal elements (e.g., graphics, icons, images, etc.), should be reconstructed/manipulated to create something new.

Here are a few specific ways a graphic design platform *may be* used:

- To edit original student photos or video footage (i.e., lighting, speed, filters, etc.)
- To resize/crop an original illustration, photo or video
- To overlay background music on original video footage

Here are a few ways a graphic design platform *may not be* used:

- Films created using templates/slides (Note: Film Production prohibits PowerPoint, which includes slide-based tools)
- To collage different unoriginal photos or graphics in Visual Arts
- To add graphics, text or icons to a Photography entry (Note: Photography entries cannot include added graphics)

More information found at [PTA.org](https://pta.org)

**Check out these brainstorming sheets
to get your ideas flowing!**

DIFFERENT CULTURES

What is a CULTURE?

Culture is the way people live.

Culture includes:

-  Traditions
-  Food
-  Customs
-  Clothes
-  Language
-  Festivals

People around the world have different cultures.



What are TRADITIONS?

Traditions are things people do again and again for a long time.

Examples of Traditions

-  Celebrating New Year
-  Festivals
-  Birthday parties
-  Family meals

Traditions help people remember their culture.

What are CUSTOMS?

Customs are the way people act or behave.

Examples of Customs

-  Saying "Hello"
-  Sharing food
-  Saying "Thank you"
-  Being polite

Customs show respect to others.

What is LANGUAGE?

Language is how people talk and communicate.

Examples of Languages

- English
- Chinese
- Thai
- Spanish



People use language to talk, listen, read, and write.



Different Cultures Around the World

- People may eat different food 
- People may wear different clothes 
- People may speak different languages 
- All cultures are important and special 





My CULTURE and TRADITIONS!



Use this worksheet to share more about your culture and the traditions of your family!

Holidays celebrated
in my culture!



Clothes worn in
my culture!

Languages spoken in
my culture!

Hello!

你好

¡Hola!

Types of music we
listen to!



My favorite tradition from
my culture!



Other interesting
facts!



Foods that we eat!



My Family Interview

My name is: _____



There are _____ in my family.



At home we speak these language(s): _____

Hello!

你好!

¡Hola!

An ancestor is a relative who lived before me. My ancestors came from (list one or more countries): _____



One important relative in my life who came from another country is _____. He/She came to this country because _____



A family tradition(s) that is special to me is _____



It is special to me because _____

