



EDUCATOR PACKET

DO THE WRITE THING 2025-2026

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Do the Write Thing 2025-2026

DEAR PARTICIPATING MIDDLE SCHOOL EDUCATORS:

Thank you for involving your students in Do the Write Thing (DtWT). You will join hundreds of educators nationwide in a collective effort to provide students with the opportunity to share their experiences and insights on the impact of youth violence and to make personal commitments to reducing it.

DtWT can make a positive difference in your relationship with your students and help reduce the level of violence in your school. An educator from Chicago shared, "The Do the Write Thing program has been one of the most impactful experiences in my classroom throughout my years as an educator. After students had the chance to write about the issue of violence, the discussions that followed were both open and profoundly emotional. The outcome was far more positive than I could have ever imagined."

In July of 2026, if your student is selected as a National Ambassador, you will be invited to attend DtWT's National Recognition Summit in Washington, D.C. (travel and accommodations included).

During the National Recognition Summit, DtWT Student National Ambassadors meet with Members of Congress and other prominent leaders to discuss the problems of youth violence. In addition, the students are honored at an embassy reception hosted by the Ambassador of Kuwait to the United States. A highlight of the summit is that their published writing will be officially included in the Library of Congress.

Enclosed is a packet titled Educator Handbook, which explains DtWT in more detail and includes further information on how to proceed. All of this information can also be downloaded from our website at dtwt.org.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us by phone or email. Thank you again for participating in this year's program. We wish your students success and hope to see you and one of your students in Washington, D.C. next July.



AMBER MOYER
DtWT PROGRAM DIRECTOR



DO THE WRITE THING



HELP STOP THE VIOLENCE

1-800-256-0235
info@DtWT.org
www.DtWT.org

EDUCATOR HANDBOOK

DO THE WRITE THING 2025-2026

A CAMPAIGN TO STOP VIOLENCE



Overview



At the beginning of an academic year, educators facilitate discussions in their classrooms with three impactful questions. Middle school students are encouraged to talk about the impact of violence in their lives by writing a song, poem, or story while offering solutions to reduce violence. **DtWT provides a better understanding for adults about youth violence and how it affects young people.** DtWT amplifies student voices and makes for safer communities.

Personal responsibility is emphasized. Through their writing and discussions, you will deepen your understanding of your students' lived realities, helping you to facilitate empathetic communication, and foster a positive and impactful learning environment. Your involvement and support are crucial to the success of DtWT in your school.

Please review the following materials concerning rules, entry deadlines, selection criteria, classroom discussion, and student recognition before presenting DtWT to your students.

Primary Contacts

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DtWT Program Director

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Local Coordinator

DtWT Volunteer

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DtWT Rules

Entry Format

- Written in English only
 - Approximately 500-1000 words
 - Poetry entries may be shorter
 - Typed (preferred) or hand-written in black ink
 - 8 1/2" x 11" paper
 - Single-sided pages
 - Numbered pages
-

Entry Content

- Any form of written expression (e.g. essays, poems, plays, songs)
- Must address the following questions:
 - **How has violence affected my life?**
 - **What are the causes of youth violence?**
 - **What can I do to reduce youth violence?**
- Positive and non-derogatory language
- Fictional writings must be identified as such
 - Strong preference will be given to non-fiction writings
- Credit must be given to outside sources
 - Writings based upon plagiarism will not be considered

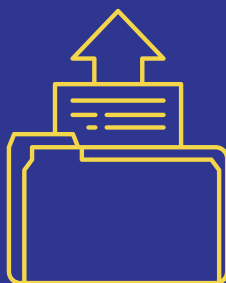


DtWT Rules

Entry Submission

- Entries must be written by only one student
- "Cover Sheet" with signed consent statement (by student and a guardian) must be included
 - See the attached Cover Sheet at the end of this packet
 - Entries without a signed Cover Sheet will not be considered
- No personal contact information should appear on the body of the written entry
- Entries must be submitted in the form they are received
 - Editing by someone other than the student is not permitted

Please send us the writings of ALL the students who submit an entry. In DtWT, everybody who makes a good-faith effort to participate deserves to be recognized and have their work considered in the selection process.



Submission Deadline

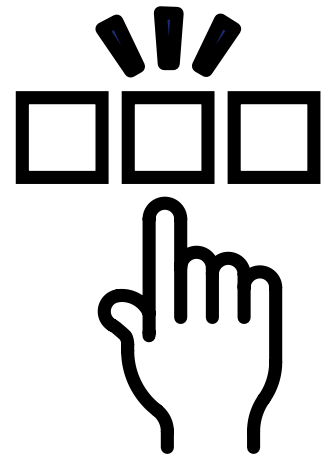
May 1, 2026 to National D.C. Office

All entries must be submitted with a
Signed Cover Sheet to your **local
coordinator** prior to May 1st.



Find your local DtWT coordinator for submission deadlines:
www.dtwt.org/resources

Selection Criteria



1

JUDGING:

Entries will be reviewed by your jurisdiction's DtWT Committee, the coalition of business, community and governmental leaders that oversees and administers DtWT in your area. Entries will be selected on the basis of content, originality and responsiveness to the three questions:

- **How has violence affected my life?**
- **What are the causes of youth violence?**
- **What can I do to reduce youth violence?**

Grammar and spelling will not be used as criteria for selection.

2

WRITINGS EMPHASIS:

In student writings, they should be encouraged to describe what they feel are the causes of youth violence and to offer specific suggestions about what they as individuals can do to reduce violence in their homes, schools and neighborhoods. Personal responsibility for responding to the problem of youth violence should be emphasized. Students should be encouraged to share personal experiences about the impact of violence on their lives and the lives of their peers. The panel of judges in your area will be looking at how well your students present their views on these matters.

Classroom Discussion

QUESTIONS DESIGNED TO GENERATE DISCUSSION

- How does violence affect your daily lives?
- Where are you confronted by violence? Your home? Your school? Your neighborhood?
- What are some of the causes of youth violence in your community?
- What can you, as an individual, do to reduce youth violence in your community?



For lesson plans or other teaching ideas,
visit: www.dtwvt.org

Common Core Standards

DtWT has been reviewed by a panel of highly qualified public school educators for compliance with Common Core Standards. DtWT meets all of the English Language Arts Standards in Writing for Grades 6, 7 and 8 (Standards W.7.1 through W.7.10 and W.8.1 through W.8.10). Please note that we have determined Standards W.7.2 and W.8.2 to only be applicable to nonfiction submissions. Please see attached schedule for more details on DtWT fulfilling Common Core Standards.

Writing is the core component of DtWT. After classroom discussions about youth violence, participating middle school students are asked by their educators to make a commitment not to be involved in violence and provide written answers to the three question prompts listed under Program Rules.

The DtWT experience is flexible, allowing for adaptation as needed by school districts and individual classrooms. Thus, the writing component of DtWT can cover significant portions of the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts.

WRITING

Essays that address the first question can fulfill 3.A-E for grades 6, 7, and 8.

Essays that address the second two questions can fulfill 1.A-E, 2.A-F, 7, 8, and 9 for grades 6, 7, and 8. All essays can be used to fulfill 4 for grades 6, 7, and 8.

Depending on the level of educator involvement in students' writing for DtWT, the program can be used to fulfill 5 (peer review), 6 (technology), and 10 (writing over a range of time and revision) for grades 6, 7, and 8.

SPEAKING & LISTENING

Classroom discussions, before and after presenting DtWT, can be used to fulfill 1.B-D for grades 6, 7, and 8.

6th Grade	7th Grade	8th Grade
Writing		
6.1.A-E	7.1.A-E	7.1.A-E
6.2.A-F	6.2.A-F	6.2.A-F
6.3.A-E	7.3.A-E	8.3.A-E
6.4	7.4	8.4
6.5	7.5	8.5
6.6	7.6	8.6
6.7	7.7	8.7
6.8	7.8	8.8
6.9	7.9	8.9
6.10	7.10	8.10
Speaking & Listening		
6.1.B-D	7.1.B-D	8.1.B-D

Student Recognition

LOCAL LEVEL

Each jurisdiction participating in DtWT has established a DtWT Committee to coordinate writing submissions. A jurisdiction may be a city, a county, a city-county combination or even an entire state. A complete listing of participating localities can be found on our website.

Most DtWT Committees will organize a recognition ceremony to honor one student from each participating middle school who is selected as a National Student Ambassador¹. In addition to the Student Ambassador from each school, you, along with the students' parents and your principal, will be invited to attend the recognition ceremony. Most DtWT Committees will also publish the writings of all their School Student Ambassadors and distribute the publication to area community, business and governmental leaders².



¹ Schools with fewer than twenty-five entries will be grouped together for review and School Ambassador selection purposes.

² While all DtWT Committees are encouraged to hold local recognition ceremonies and publish books of student writings, and while most local DtWT Committees do undertake these activities, the responsibility for organizing and funding these functions rests with each local Committee. Some start-up Committees do not initiate these functions during the early years of operation.

Student Recognition



NATIONAL LEVEL

Each DtWT Committee will designate one National Student Ambassador. The National Student Ambassador along with the student's educator and one guardian will be invited to attend the Do the Write Thing National Recognition Week activities in Washington, D.C. in July of 2026³.

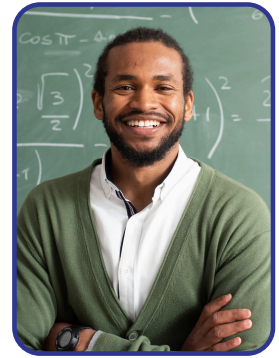
The majority of the costs for the National Recognition Summit activities will be paid for by our primary sponsor, the Kuwait-America Foundation. The people of Kuwait have donated money to the DtWT for the past 34 years. This has been done to thank the American people for the liberation of Kuwait in 1991.

During past National Recognition Summits, National Student Ambassadors have met with a United States Supreme Court Justice, the United States Secretary of Education, the Attorney General of the United States, the United States Secretary of Interior, Members of Congress and many notable celebrities to discuss the problem of youth violence. **A highlight of National Recognition Summit is placing a book of writings of the 2025-2026 National Student Ambassadors in the Library of Congress. This ensures that Student Ambassadors' words are preserved for future generations.** In addition, National Student Ambassadors have been honored at embassy receptions hosted by the State of Kuwait.

³Jurisdictions must have at least 500 student writings to qualify for participation in the National Recognition Week activities in Washington, D.C.

Benefits

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EDUCATORS

- Facilitates discussions that result in greater tolerance and compassion
- Establishes mutually trusted relationships with students
- Heightens awareness of healing and bonding between students and their families
- Increases knowledge about students leading to:
 - attitudinal changes
 - adapting their instruction

STUDENTS

- Creates greater empathy and understanding for victims of violence
- Encourages more positive behaviors and attitudes toward peers and educators
- Creates a belief that their positive actions can make a difference
- Increases tolerance and reduces judgment regarding differences among peers
- Increases communication with peers and family members, rather than resorting to violence

PARENTS/GUARDIANS

- Initiates a better understanding of the impact of violence on their children
- Fosters an understanding of their child's concerns
- Improves communication at home with children and spouse
- Creates a greater awareness of violence in the school and community

DtWT Changes Minds

The **Changing Minds** campaign is sponsored by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. Based on a study from Harvard, research reveals that a child's positive and negative experiences shape and reshape the brain. The more a child witnesses violence, the more neural connections are created in the regions of the brain that involve fear, anxiety and impulsiveness, while fewer are created in regions that involve reasoning, planning and behavior control. This increased stress can lead to "long-term behavioral and physiological disorders" including depression, drug abuse, diabetes, stroke, and inflammation patterns.

However, the young brain is malleable. Fostering stable, supportive relationships can prevent or help reverse this damage, resulting in lifelong benefits for the child's learning, behavior, and overall health.

DtWT is a proven program that can mitigate the negative impact of violence on a child when educators and volunteers open pathways using the "Five Gestures" suggested by OJJDP to help heal a child.

5 GESTURES TO HEAL A CHILD:



1

CELEBRATE

- Publicly recognize and praise children
- Encourage children to try new things and teach them about being kind and helpful to others
- Engage children in open-ended thinking
- Encourage positive interactions between children and their peers and educators

COMFORT

- Offer children safe ways to express their feelings and ideas
- Help children empathize and take others' perspectives
- Expand children's network of consistently caring adults

2



3

LISTEN

- Encourage children to express their feelings and thoughts
- Be open to their ideas and opinions
- Help children to express their experiences and make sense of them
- Allow them to share their story without interruptions
- Create processes that allow students a chance to share and be heard

COLLABORATE

- Encourage children to think ahead by discussing challenges they would face in carrying out their plans and help them consider how they can prevent or solve them
- Guide students to first identify and understand their obstacles, communicate how they are feeling and describe the problems in their own words
- Acknowledge children's problem solving attempts whether or not the attempts are successful

4



5

INSPIRE

- Encourage children to spend time with other caring adults who can act as role models
- Help children develop strategies to bring them closer to short and long term goal success
- Support children's abilities to speak up when things go wrong or when they are victimized
- Help them become advocates for change

DO THE WRITE THING COVER SHEET

Student and Guardian Consent Form

INSTRUCTIONS

Thank you for participating in Do the Write Thing 2025-2026. To have your entry considered for selection as a National Student Ambassador, you and a guardian must complete this Cover Sheet and sign the Student and Guardian Consent Statement below.

Please print legibly in black or blue ink.

PERSONAL INFORMATION

STUDENT'S FIRST NAME: _____ STUDENT'S LAST NAME: _____

STUDENT'S GRADE: 6 7 8

STUDENT'S GENDER: _____

STUDENT'S ADDRESS: _____
Street

City State Zip Code

STUDENT'S EMAIL ADDRESS: _____

SCHOOL NAME: _____ SCHOOL PHONE : _____

GUARDIAN'S NAME: _____

GUARDIAN'S CELL NUMBER: _____

GUARDIAN'S EMAIL ADDRESS: _____

EDUCATOR'S NAME: _____

EDUCATOR'S EMAIL ADDRESS: _____

STUDENT AND GUARDIAN CONSENT STATEMENT

Do the Write Thing will publish selected students' writings and quotations in a book and in a discussion paper on youth violence. Before publishing your writing, the DtWT requires your written consent and the written consent of a parent or guardian. If you and your parent or guardian agree to permit the DtWT to publish your writing, please sign the following statement:

We agree to give ownership of the attached student writing to the DtWT so that it can be considered for recognition and be published. DtWT may further disclose the writing to the media and other parties as part of their national program.

STUDENT SIGNATURE

DD/MM/YY

GUARDIAN SIGNATURE

DD/MM/YY



@DtWTOfficial



/DtWTChallenge



Do the Write Thing

DO
THE
WRITE
THING



HELP STOP THE VIOLENCE

CONTACT US

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