

# CANDACE GAY MEMORIAL ESSAY CONTEST

**Candace Gay Memorial Awards, established in 1978 by Professors Thomas and Carol Gay in memory of their thirteen-year-old daughter, Candace McIntyre Gay, are given to junior and senior high school students who exhibit distinctive essay writing ability. More than \$2,000 in prizes is distributed each year in this contest.**



**Candace McIntyre Gay**  
Mike Stoffa. Oil on canvas, 1978.  
Rockport, Massachusetts

**Prompt:** In 750-1000 total words, respond to the following:

*In many literary works, characters who are perceived as different often face isolation and exclusion. In an essay, analyze how the theme of being left behind due to perceived differences is portrayed in at least two of the 2025 English Festival books.*

You need not register for or participate in the English Festival to participate in the Candace Gay Memorial Essay Contest, nor do you have to submit an entry to participate in the Festival.

Electronic submission information will appear later on our website. <ysuenglishfestival.org>

**Your entry will be judged by how well you**

- ◆ Establish a purpose for your entry.
- ◆ Organize and develop your ideas.
- ◆ Support your discussion with accurate and appropriate details from the book.
- ◆ Use language, including conventional grammar and spelling.

**Your entry will not be considered unless you**

- ◆ Submit only one entry.
- ◆ Type your paper, double-spaced on unlined white paper, or handwrite your paper in ink on only one side of lined 8 1/2 x 11" white paper. Leave 1" margins on all sides, and number the pages.
- ◆ Write your paper with no help from your teacher, parents, or anyone else. Use only your own ideas about the book and put those ideas in your own words. The use of generative AI, such as ChatGPT, is prohibited.
- ◆ Enclose all direct quotations in quotation marks and cite page numbers in your text for those quotations.
- ◆ Limit your entry to 750-1000 words. (Papers that are significantly shorter or longer are disqualified).
- ◆ Create a title page that includes the following information (Do not provide any of this information anywhere else in your essay):
  - The title of your entry. Title may also appear on essay.
  - Your name (no nicknames or shortened forms of first names)
  - Your full address
  - Your email address
  - Your age and grade
  - Your teacher's first and last name
  - Your principal's first and last name
  - The full name of your school
- ◆ At the bottom of the title page, write the following statement and sign your name beneath it: **I have received no direct help on this paper from my teachers, parents, or anyone else.**
- ◆ Below the statement printed above on your title page write the following statement and have your teacher sign beneath: **This essay was not written as a class assignment, and I have not directly helped the student with this essay in any way.**

Entries cannot be returned. All entries become the property of YSU. The University reserves the right to publish any of the entries submitted, with credit given to authors.

# GRAPHIC ESSAY CONTEST

**Prompt:** This year's YSU English Festival books include harrowing events. In a graphic essay, illustrate and narrate either your survival or a character's survival of an outbreak, invasion, or other challenging scenario.

Entries should contain panels (in comic book style), which may further be arranged into tiers (rows of panels like a page from a graphic novel) and may contain both "dialogue or thought bubbles" and captions (commentary by a narrator or other non-dialogue text). Use up to sixteen pages no larger than 8 1/2 x 11 inches.

- ◆ Use original art in your entry, either hand drawn or computer generated.
- ◆ Use writing that complements the art and expresses the idea you are trying to convey.
- ◆ Students may collaborate (e.g., if one student is a writer and one student is an illustrator); however, any monetary prizes will be split among the collaborators.

Your entry will be judged by the following criteria:

- ◆ Originality and idea expressed
- ◆ Effectiveness of writing and illustrations
- ◆ Ability to express an idea pertaining to the topic.

Each entry must be accompanied by a cover sheet indicating student's name (or any other student collaborators), home address, student email address, grade, and school.

You may only submit one entry.

We reserve the right to reproduce entries for display on our web page and in our publication with credit to the creator(s).

**Possible tools for use:**

- ◆ <https://www.makebeliefscomix.com/>
- ◆ <https://www.storyboardthat.com/comic-maker>
- ◆ <https://www.canva.com/create/comic-strips/>

# FESTIVAL ART CONTEST

All students at schools eligible for the English Festival are invited to enter the Festival Art Contest by submitting two-dimensional artwork.

**The submission may be no larger than 14 inches x 18 inches. Any submission of a 3-dimensional object will be disqualified. Students may submit only one entry.**

The entry must be the student's original work, an artistic response to one of the current Festival books, which could be used by the publisher as a book cover or as promotional art. The student may not submit a piece of art that was created prior to reading the book named as inspiration from the current festival's book list.

Each entry must be an original drawing, painting, or photograph, in any style, and may be vertical or horizontal in format. The entry cannot be copied from other artwork or photographs unless the photograph is one taken by the student (please tape to back of entry).

Entries will be judged on:

- ◆ Originality
- ◆ Artistic merit
- ◆ Appropriateness to the book being illustrated.

If the intent is to produce a book cover, the student may preserve the original image by placing the book's title and author's name on an overlay.

Entry must be accompanied by a separate sheet attached to the back of the artwork that states the student's name, home address, email address, grade, school, and book being illustrated. Additionally, each student must attach an artist statement of no more than 250 words that explains how the artwork is inspired by (or reflective of) characters, settings, events, situations, themes, and/or moods of a book on this year's English Festival reading list. **The statement should explain stylistic intentions, compositional elements, and chosen media.**

We reserve the right to copy artwork for display on our web page or in our publications, with credit to the artist.

# JEREMY SALVNER MEMORIAL MUSIC AWARD

**The Jeremy Salvner Memorial Music Award, established by Gary, Kathy, and Matthew Salvner in memory of their late son and brother Jeremy, invites students to create original musical compositions (vocal or instrumental) inspired by books on the current English Festival list. No professional musicians, including music teachers, may participate in the creation or production of a composition, including its musical accompaniment.**

Original musical compositions may be submitted by individuals or by groups of no more than five (who will then share in any prize awarded to the group). Compositions may be either vocal or instrumental and must be no more than ten minutes long.



**Jeremy Salvner  
(1976–2005)**

Vocal compositions must be recorded (accompanied by any instrumentation) and submitted with written lyrics of the composition. While notated chord progressions in the lyrics and sheet music are optional, they are useful for the judges who evaluate your work.

Instrumental works may be

either live-produced or electronic (DAW-based) compositions. For live-produced compositions, provide a recording as well as a notated score or a chord progression sheet. You may use live musicians, electronic instruments, or a piece recorded into a DAW (Digital Audio Workstation).

For electronic compositions, provide a recording and a written commentary describing the parameters used for each instrumental voicing track. This commentary should explain, for

example, if your composition was created from your own melodies or sounds or whether they were manipulations of parameters from a VST.

1. Submit your composition as an mp3, ACC, or WAV/AIFF audio file. (Noteflight or Make Music score files are not allowed.)
2. Include a title for your composition, the book(s) that inspired it, and the names, grades, email addresses, and schools of composers/performers, as well as their home mailing addresses (for possible prize distribution).
3. Also include a statement of no more than 250 words that explains how the composition is inspired by (or reflective of) characters, settings, events, situations, themes, and/or moods of a particular book or books on this year's English Festival reading list.

Entries will be judged by a committee of YSU Dana School of Music faculty, other music professionals, and at least one member of the English Festival Committee. Separate prizes are given at the junior-high and senior-high levels.

**Entries will be judged according to the following criteria:**

- ◆ Musicality of the composition
- ◆ Originality of the composition
- ◆ Effectiveness of the lyrics (if applicable)
- ◆ Clarity of the commentary explaining your work's link to a Festival book(s).
- ◆ Effectiveness in capturing events, situations, characters, themes, or moods in a Festival book(s).

Entries to the Jeremy Salvner Memorial Music Awards may not be returned. We reserve the right to use excerpts of winning compositions on our website and in other English Festival publicity, with credit given to the artist(s).

**\* Visit our website <[ysuenglishfestival.org](http://ysuenglishfestival.org)> for electronic submission information and to view the 2025 English Festival booklist.**

Youngstown State University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and/or expression, disability, age, religion or veteran/military status in its programs or activities. Please visit [www.ysu.edu/ada-accessibility](http://www.ysu.edu/ada-accessibility) for contact information for persons designated to handle questions about this policy.

## PRE-FESTIVAL CONTESTS



The Candace Gay Memorial Essay Contest, English Festival Art Contest, Graphic Essay Contest, and Jeremy Salvner Memorial Music Award are pre-Festival competitions.

Students read the books and write essays, create wonderful art works, or stirring musical pieces. These are submitted by the deadline below and judged before the Festival.

You'll see that you have to know the books to do well, but you need not attend the Festival to be part of these competitions.

We hope you'll come to the Festival, however, so you can be part of the best student activity in the area.

## WHERE AND WHEN?

*Submit by February 18, 2025, to*

**English Festival  
Department of English and  
World Languages  
Youngstown State University  
1 Tressel Way  
Youngstown, Ohio 44555**

## QUESTIONS?

*E-mail us at:*  
**[info@ysuenglishfestival.org](mailto:info@ysuenglishfestival.org)**

*Or check our website at:*  
**<http://www.ysuenglishfestival.org>**

# 47<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL YSU ENGLISH FESTIVAL PRE-FESTIVAL ACTIVITIES

**YSU  
ENGLISH  
FESTIVAL**  
*founded in 1978* **2025**

**Candace Gay  
Memorial Essay Contest**

**English Festival  
Graphic Essay Contest**

**English Festival  
Art Contest**

**Jeremy Salvner  
Memorial Music Award**

