



THE YSU ENGLISH FESTIVAL

has a long history in the Valley, and we invite you to become part of its ongoing history.

The English Festival is a unique annual program reaching out to approximately 3,000 junior and senior high school students from primarily Mahoning, Trumbull, and Columbiana counties in Ohio, as well as Mercer and Lawrence counties in Pennsylvania.

Though the English Festival occurs in the spring, its effects are felt throughout the year. Each fall, nearly 200 middle and high schools in the greater Youngstown area and Western Pennsylvania receive invitations to bring students to the YSU English Festival.

If you decide to attend, you agree to do some work:

To be invited (or to be an alternate), you make a commitment to read the seven Festival books for your grade level by late February. The list is available on the English Festival website. Your teacher will quiz you to be sure that you've read the books.

Registration for each day of the Festival is limited to approximately 1,000 students. There is a non-refundable school registration fee of \$10 per student.

When you register, you will be expected to sign a statement that you have read the Festival books, that you will conform to the Festival's policy on acceptable behavior, and that you will attend all your scheduled sessions.

Any infractions of these rules will be reported to your principal.

Visiting Lecturers. Faculty or administrators from other universities often lead special sessions at the Festival on topics dealing with concerns about writing or reading or on topics deriving from the Festival Booklist. Some of these sessions are intended for faculty, teachers, librarians, and parents.

FESTIVAL ACTIVITIES

At the Festival, you will follow a prearranged schedule called a "track." Please read the descriptions of the various Festival activities. Along with all other participants, you will hear at least one of the featured author-lecturers and have a break for lunch. You will need to bring your lunch or money to purchase lunch on campus.

Most of the activities test your knowledge about the books, so it's vital that you read all of them thoroughly and well. Competitive entries are judged anonymously. At the concluding awards ceremony, award winners from some Festival contests and Pre-Festival contests are greeted on stage by English Festival committee members and the featured guests. Prizes include books, t-shirts, pins, or monetary awards. Visit the EF website to learn more about the Pre-Festival contests, which are due in February.

Impromptu Writing Contests. For this individual writing contest, you are limited not only in time but also in how much you can write. You are allowed fifty minutes to deal with a topic that is given to you at the beginning of the session. You are allowed to write only on the front and back of one sheet of paper.

Topics may require you to explain, criticize, compare, contrast, or argue points of plot, characterization, theme, setting, etc., in various Festival books, or they may require you to describe situations beyond the stories - for example, to create a conversation between two characters from different Festival books.



Writing Games. In Writing Games, you work with other students on a task that necessitates pooling your understanding of a book or books on the Festival Booklist and responding imaginatively, according to rules given to you at the beginning of the contest.

Writing Games reward not only reading and writing skills but also ingenuity and the ability to cooperate. For example, one Writing Game might ask teams to develop promotional campaigns for books they have read. To do that, each team would have to prepare a brief news release to booksellers, describing its book, a marketing slogan, a newspaper ad for it, etc. The results are judged on the basis of how imaginative the projects are and how skillfully the teams followed instructions while working within a time limit.

Journalism Workshop. Journalism Workshop introduces you to journalistic interviewing techniques. You participate in a "press conference" with the Thomas and Carol Gay Memorial Lecturer, the James A. Houck Memorial Lecturer, or another noted guest, and then you compose the interview which will be judged.

For the following contests, prizes are distributed immediately, and winners are announced at the Awards Ceremony.

Not-So-Trivial Pursuit. Teams of students compete in an exciting, challenging game that tests your memory and attention to detail by requiring you to answer extremely specific questions about characters, events, locations, names, and who-knows-what in Festival books.

I ♥ Limericks. In these sessions, you will learn what makes a poem a limerick and try to write limericks inspired by the Festival books. After you practice writing limericks individually, you will work in teams to create limericks to be judged and evaluated by others.

All entries in Festival competitions except art and graphic essay competitions become the property of YSU. None can be returned. The University reserves the right to publish any of the entries submitted, with credit given to their authors.

Writing Labs. Festival Writing Labs encourage learning about writing through a group writing task based on the Festival Booklist. The labs are conducted by university and high school faculty working together and are noncompetitive.

Poetry Workshops. Poetry Workshops encourage creative responses through varied innovative activities.

Prose Workshops. Prose Workshops, concerned with generating ideas and using creativity, engage you in exercises that tap into your imagination and critical abilities.

Insights. Insights sessions give you the opportunity to discuss and ask questions about selected books on the Festival Booklist. From these sessions, you might gain insights into the creative process, background material on the books, or provocative critical approaches to the books.

Literature into Art. These sessions use selected winners of the Festival Art Contest to explore what makes good art and how books can inspire a variety of artistic forms.

Musical Inspiration from Literature. These sessions use selected winners of the Jeremy Salvner Memorial Music Awards contest to explore what makes good music and how stories can inspire a variety of musical forms.

Performances. Reading poems and plays provides a special enjoyment, but hearing them read or performed by accomplished performers heightens enjoyment. Theatrical and musical performances expand the appreciation of art.

During the Festival

You will need reliable pens or pencils. You will not need paper since it will be supplied to you when necessary. Do not bring any books, notes, or dictionaries.

Expect to shut down and put away your cell phones during sessions.

If you attend all your scheduled sessions, you will receive an English Festival attendance certificate signed by your teacher.

QUESTIONS?

E-mail us at: info@ysuenglishfestival.org
Check our website at: <http://www.ysuenglishfestival.org>

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 for contact information for persons designated to handle questions about this policy.

THOMAS & CAROL GAY MEMORIAL LECTURER

Alan Gratz

JAMES A. HOUCK MEMORIAL LECTURER

Quartez Harris

BOOKLIST

7th-9th Grades

Aru Shah and the End of Time
Roshani Chokshi

*The Brooklyn Nine**
Alan Gratz

*Refugee**
Alan Gratz

When Stars are Scattered
Victoria Jamieson and Omar Mohamed

Freewater
Amina Luqman-Dawson

Louder Than Hunger
John Schu

*This Side of Home**
Renée Watson

10th-12th Grades

*The Brooklyn Nine**
Alan Gratz

*Refugee**
Alan Gratz

Every Falling Star
Sungju Lee and Susan McClelland

The Grace Year
Kim Liggett

Swarm
Jennifer D. Lyle

Me (Moth)
Amber McBride

*This Side of Home**
Renée Watson

* Indicates a title common to both lists

47th ANNUAL YSU ENGLISH FESTIVAL

INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS

YSU
ENGLISH
FESTIVAL
founded in 1978 2025

Featuring
THOMAS AND CAROL GAY MEMORIAL LECTURER
Alan Gratz

JAMES A. HOUCK MEMORIAL LECTURER
Quartez Harris

10th-12th Grades
Wednesday, April 9, 2025

7th-9th Grades
Thursday, April 10, 2025, or
Friday, April 11, 2025

9:00 a.m.-3:45 p.m.
Kilcawley Center



YOUNGSTOWN
STATE
UNIVERSITY