

Frequently Asked Questions



We are not HSLDA members. Can my children participate?

Yes! Our contests are open to all homeschooled students ages 7-19. If you are unsure whether your manner of schooling qualifies as homeschooling, please contact our Contest Coordinator at contests@hslida.ca with a description of your circumstances.

I've graduated high school but am still within the 7-19 years old age range. Can I participate?

Recent high school graduates may participate in our Contest until spring graduation, but may not participate in HSLDA contests after that. Instead, we encourage you to look for artistic opportunities in your community or at your college. HSLDA wishes you all the best as you launch into your future!

My child's birthday falls during a contest. What age category should my child participate in?

As a parent, you can determine which category works best for your child if their birthday falls during the contest. All other entrants must adhere to the age restrictions, based on birthdate rather than academic achievements.

My child is younger than 7 years old but is very gifted. May he or she participate?

We appreciate that many younger children are able to produce beautiful entries for the various arts in which we offer our contests, and we think it's wonderful for them to begin developing those talents early.

The goal of our contests is to offer an opportunity for homeschooled students to be recognized for the excellence of their work, so the contests are for homeschooled students in K-12th grade. Since most children age 4 and some children ages 5 and 6 are not yet in kindergarten, our contests are not the right forum for them to exhibit their gifts and talents at that time.

However, we would encourage younger children to pursue their interests by thinking about the contest theme prompts and preparing an entry. When the contest winners are posted online, they can view the winning entries and discuss them. What is good about the winning entries? What aspects do the younger children like that they could incorporate into their future entries? This allows the children to enjoy and benefit from the contests even before they are old enough to participate.

We live abroad. Can my child still participate?

Yes! Please note that we do not accept foreign cheques, and please consider mailing your entry well before the postmark deadline. Better yet, use our online entry form to eliminate delays!

My child is submitting two entries. Do I need to include two entry fees?

Yes, each entry requires an entry fee. Multiple entry fees may be combined on to one cheque or money order. For example, if two children are each submitting two entries, you may include one check for the total amount of the four entry fees. Better yet, use our online entry form to eliminate confusion!

If the postmark deadline falls on a Sunday, when do I need to mail my child's entry?

If mailing through Canada Post, please ensure that your child's entry reaches the post office with enough time to be postmarked on or before the contest deadline. Deadlines are always the last day of a month: if this falls on a Sunday and the post offices are closed, please be sure the entry is mailed on Saturday to meet the deadline. Again, our online entry form eliminates this challenge!

We missed the postmark deadline! Can my child still participate?

Please contact the Contest Coordinator at contests@hslida.ca

How much may I be involved in my child's entry?

The rich student-teacher interaction is one of the greatest benefits of homeschooling, so we encourage parents and co-op teachers to be involved but ask you to respect the following guidelines:

The "hands-on" work of each entry must be entirely done by the student. Students are encouraged to brainstorm and discuss with parents or co-op teachers but may not receive specific corrections to their work.

For the written contests, the grammatical construction and language of each entry should be entirely done by the student. No assistance in editing or proofreading is permissible.

My child has not yet learned how to type. May I type their poem for them?

For students ages 7-10, parents/friends may type the child's entry for them. However, the child must have written out the poem or essay and the typist must type exactly what is written, not correcting for errors in spelling or grammar. The child is welcome to sit with the typist and instruct him or her in any spelling or grammar corrections the word processor suggests.

My child has special learning needs. Do you have a designated category for these students?

Upon the advice of our Exceptional Needs Specialist, we do not offer a designated category for students with special learning needs but do allow certain accommodations.

Every homeschooled child of eligible age is welcome in HSLDA's contests!

Because the term special needs applies to students with a wide range of functioning abilities, HSLDA does not offer a contest or category specifically for children with special needs. We believe that rather than leveling the playing field for these students, this would segregate them and might actually do more harm than good by feeding feelings of inadequacy or confusion.

Instead, we invite all students of all talents and abilities to participate in one unified contest. Submissions are judged blindly; the judges know nothing about the entrants, giving all students the chance to have their entries measured without preconceptions about the quality of their work based on their learning challenges. Each student is treated equally with his or her peers.

Accommodations

However, we do recognize that students with special needs face a unique set of challenges. If you are homeschooling a child with special needs and would like to

request specific accommodations necessary to allow your child to participate in an HSLDA contest, please contact our contest coordinator at contests@hslida.ca.

We realize our contests will not meet the needs of every homeschooling family. But your feedback is important to us, so if you have specific questions or suggestions, please share them with our contest coordinator at contests@hslida.ca. If you are an HSLDA member, consider sharing your thoughts with our Exceptional Needs Specialist.