



WHY “DO THE WRITE THING” CHALLENGE?

Research shows students are adversely influenced by what they see on social media, in the news, movies, and television. Violence, bullying, drug use is experience in many different levels. They need an outlet to express their concerns and anxieties.

The *Do the Write Thing* Texas writing challenge is designed to be compatible with a teacher's curriculum requirements. Do the Write Thing satisfies a number of objectives from the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) curriculum in English/Language Arts and Social Studies, and complements character building, anti-bullying/anti-domestic violence and drug abuse prevention programs.

Many teachers have found Do the Write Thing useful as a stand-alone writing assignment in addition to being a learning tool.



Why Do More and More People Support Do The Write Thing?

"In my years on this earth I've learned so many things but what I've understood for a long time is that violence is hurting people the ones you love and the ones you don't care to know about. It's a terrible thing to do. Violence comes in a whole different kind of packages, but they all have one thing in common. Pain being endured."

- **Bryanna Silva** 2019-2020, Student Representative – San Antonio, Texas Herff Academy

"It's not really what can I do, it's what WE can do as a community or even a nation because, as it is violence is all around us. We need to look out for those who have experienced violence in the past or currently. I believe what we can do is treat people better and with more respect because we can't comprehend what they think. As a community, we should look out for those signs that are given so we can prevent youth violence. For example, when I was going through a rough time, chess helped me. Violence has, unfortunately, took lives, yes, but we have been able to set precautions so the loss of life is less. Laws including David's law try to stop bullying so self-harm on students/kids (and people in general) will be less. Youth violence is and will always be a tough topic to talk about because it affects a lot of people in negative ways and we as a community should respect that because it can happen to the best of us"

- **Joshua Gomez** 2019-2020 DTWT Student Representative – San Antonio, Texas Mission Academy



DO THE WRITE THING *...in brief*

Youth violence and other anti-social behaviors are major public safety and public health problems in Texas and throughout our nation. The effects of exposure to violence or crime either as a victim, perpetrator or witness adversely impact education, family and the community. Negative consequences for individuals include depression, poor self-image, truancy, academic failure, alienation, substance abuse, violent acting out, delinquency and other self-destructive conduct, which forecast a dysfunctional adulthood.

The Texas Do the Write Thing Challenge is a multi-faceted program, focusing on middle school children, which science says is the age group most vulnerable to anti-social influences. It is an academic program that meets several state educational mandates and is implemented in public (including alternative schools.) Our educator developed lesson plan is administered which involves classroom discussions, research and composition. The student writers respond to three questions: How violence has affected them; what in their opinion are the causes; and what are their solutions. Every student who submits a writing, receives a certificate of recognition presented by the teachers. All papers are read by volunteer readers, who select a boy and girl as School Finalists. There are nine programs in Texas and each publishes, with written parental consent, a book of the Finalist writings and holds a ceremony for these Finalists.

The goal of Texas Do the Write Thing Challenge is to prevent bullying, violence and juvenile delinquency. The program develops student empathy and problem solving, coping, social, leadership and academic skills; which are imperatives for a productive adulthood and maintaining a robust civil society. The students feel valued because their thoughts, analysis and solutions are solicited...they are given a voice. They shoulder personal responsibility which creates a healthy learning environment. Family involvement evolves from student participation.

A Lamar University study of over 1,000 Do the Write Thing Challenge papers found the program to be one of the few in the nation to elicit youngsters' cognitive processes and emotional responses in dealing with violence. Understanding their perspective on the violence they experience in their lives is vital; in other words gathering information and data from the source. This provides the basis for designing prevention and intervention initiatives. The study further found, "Research examining the children's writing on the topic of violence is particularly needed". The Challenge has been the genesis of projects and initiatives; it has identified specific problems in specific locations, (please see website for more information), and makes a positive difference in the lives of Texas young people and their families.



Entries will be judged on the basis of content, originality, and the most thought provoking and responsiveness to these three questions:

1. **HOW HAS VIOLENCE AFFECTED MY LIFE?**
2. **WHAT ARE THE CAUSES OF VIOLENCE?**
3. **WHAT CAN I DO ABOUT VIOLENCE?**

STUDENTS WANTING TO QUALIFY AS SCHOOL FINALISTS MUST SUBMIT THEIR WRITING ALONG WITH THE SIGNED STUDENT/PARENT CONSENT FORM.

- Please submit **ALL** your 7th and 8th grade student writings so a certificate of recognition may be sent to the student to acknowledge their participation.
- **Your school must submit a minimum of 100** papers with parental consent forms to qualify for having school finalists. Schools submitting fewer than 100 essays will be combined with other schools for the purpose of selecting finalists. Entries that do not include a student or parental signature will still receive a certificate of recognition, however, they will not be advanced in the judging process.
- Student name on essay is acceptable, but no school name please.
- Entries should be submitted in the form that they are received from the student writer. Editing for content, grammar, or spelling by someone other than the student is not permitted. **Essays are judged on content alone.**
- No fictional writing in essays.
- Essays can be either handwritten or typed.
- However, your school may also participate using the Do the Write Thing Challenge as a writing assignment and each student submitting an essay will still receive a Certificate of Recognition.

Essays May Be Submitted By Mail or In Person

November 1, 2020 – JANUARY 31, 2021

(offices closed November 26, 27 ; December 24, 25, 31; January 1)

301 E. Mitchell SA, TX 78210

210-335-8540

Melissa Ayala

2020-2021 TEACHER SURVEY

PLEASE ATTACH COMPLETED SURVEY WITH YOUR ESSAY SUBMISSIONS

Dr. _ Mr. _ Ms. _ TEACHER'S FIRST NAME: (please print) LAST NAME: (please print)

School Email Address: _____ School Phone Number: _____

Name of School: _____

Address of School: _____

City: _____ Zip _____

Dr. _ Mr. _ Ms. _ PRINCIPAL'S FIRST NAME: (please print) LAST NAME: (please print)

Teacher's Phone: _____ Teacher's Email: _____

Questions 1 and 2 (required)

1. Approximate number of your students submitting writings for the Challenge. _____
2. Did you have a classroom discussion about violence before your students prepared their writings for the Challenge?
3. (yes) (no)

Number of your students who participated (were present) for the discussion.

1-50 51-100 101-150 151-200 201-250 251-300 301-350 over 351

3. Did you use any of the TEKS correlated scenarios provided with the teacher packet? (yes) (no)

4. **Comments**

Optional questions:

5. What (in your opinion) were the **top three causes of violence** identified by your students?

6. What (in your opinion) were the **top three solutions for violence** identified by your students?



Thank you for participating in the 2020– 2021 “Do the Write Thing Challenge.”

To have your entry considered for selection as a Student National Ambassador, you and a parent or guardian must complete this Cover Sheet and sign the Student and Parent/Guardian Consent Statement below.

STUDENT INFORMATION - Please PRINT Legibly in Black/Blue Ink

First Name: _____ Last Name: _____

School _____

District _____

Student/Parent phone number: () _____ - _____ Grade _____ Male _____ Female _____

Home Address: _____

Student’s Teacher’s Full Name: _____

Student’s Teacher’s Phone Number: () _____ - _____

STUDENT AND PARENT/GUARDIAN CONSENT STATEMENT

“Do the Write Thing Challenge- San Antonio/Bexar County” will publish selected students writings and quotations in a book and in a discussion paper on youth violence. Before publishing your writing, DtWtx requires your written consent and the written consent of a parent or guardian. If you and your parent or guardian agree to permit the DtWtx to publish your writing, please sign the following statement: We agree to give ownership of the attached student writing to Do the Write Thing Texas so that it can be considered for recognition and published. Do the Write Thing Texas may further disclose the writing to the media and other parties as part of their national program.

Student’s Signature

Parent’s Signature

Student’s Email Address

Parent’s Email Address

visit us online
www.dtwtx.org

IT'S TIME TO TAKE *THE CHALLENGE!*



**IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER FOR THE
DO THE WRITE THING CHALLENGE**

● **NOVEMBER 1, 2020 – JANUARY 31, 2021 – ESSAY SUBMISSIONS**

Essays May Be Submitted By Mail Or In Person (offices closed November 26,27, December 25, 26, 31, January 1st) or by scan and email (including consent form) or Written in an Email
PLEASE USE THE DEDICATED EMAIL FOR ESSAY SUBMISSION: melissa.ayala@bexar.org

301 E. Mitchell

San Antonio TX 78210

Melissa Ayala 210-335-8540

● **MARCH 2021 – School Finalists Announced**

● **APRIL 2021 – National Finalists Announced**

● **JULY 2021 – National Recognition Ceremony, Washington D.C.**

OCTOBER IS NATIONAL BULLYING/VIOLENCE PREVENTION MONTH
