

This explanation of originality is taken from Scholastic Awards guideline. We adhere to the same policy concerning plagiarism.

How do I know if my work is original?

An **original work** is one that is new and different from what others have created. This means that you are the author of the work, and the work is not copied from someone else's original work.

If a classroom assignment involves any copying of another artist or writer's work, even if it's just for the purpose of practicing and learning, please do not enter these works into the AHSAE. Entries that are heavily influenced by the work of other artists, even if no materials are directly copied, may not be considered original and should not be entered. Work that is AI-generated is not eligible for entry.

We understand that artists and writers sometimes create work that references other artists, writers, and popular culture in original and meaningful ways. If your work transforms some sort of source material, then it may be considered original.

We define transformative work as a new work that adds value, substantially changes, comments on, or gives a new expression or meaning to the source.

Here are some examples of work that should **not** be entered:

- A pencil drawing that directly copies a portrait that was taken by another artist or a piece of writing that simply rearranges the words of someone else's writing is NOT transformative.
- Changing the medium or visual style of another artist's work is NOT considered transformative. For example, a painting or drawing of a photograph taken from the internet or a magazine is not considered original and should not be entered to the Scholastic Awards.
- Creating a painting or digital artwork based on a photo that was taken by someone else, or creating a poem by rearranging the lyrics to a song—does NOT make the work transformative.
- Cropping or resizing an image that a friend created or that you found on the internet does NOT make the work transformative.
- Changing the order of the lines in a poem or adding a few words to a sentence written by another author is NOT transformative.

- Fan art (such as a painting or drawing of an actor, musician, or preexisting character) or fan fiction is NOT considered original work and should not be entered.
- A critical essay that copies or paraphrases passages from another piece of writing without citing the source is NOT original work. Paraphrasing, which is restating text by another writer using other words, does NOT make the work transformative.
- Even if you have permission to use a work or if the work is in the public domain, the work that you submit must represent a new, original work.
- AI-generated art and writing is NOT original (read more on our AI policy below).

The scenarios listed above are only a few examples and are not meant to represent all instances of non-transformative work.

If you have any doubt about whether an entry is original, we advise that you choose not to enter that work.

What is an AI-generated work? Can I use AI at all?

AI-generated work as a work that is automatically created based on prompts or other inputs, with minimal or no human interaction. These types of works do not meet our standards for originality. **If a teen enters an AI-generated work, we will consider that a violation of our Copyright & Plagiarism Policy and it will be subject to the same consequences.** That is, it will be rejected as ineligible for an award or, if it has been selected for an award and is later determined to be AI-generated, the award will be taken back or canceled.

As previously mentioned, it is highly encouraged that all artists and writers document their creative process. In the event of a concern over a work's originality, the ability to provide the documentation of your creative process is hugely beneficial.

Questions to ask yourself if you're unsure:

- Who made the key artistic and creative decisions—a human, or a machine? Is this my own unique voice and vision?
- Did I apply artistic skills and techniques, and can I articulate them if asked?
- Can I provide the sources for any works cited?
- What could I show as evidence if there are concerns about my work's originality?

- How does my work compare to something created without the use of technology?
- Would I feel that I am being truthful if my work is recognized for its originality?

Consequences of Copyright & Plagiarism Violations

If we have reason to believe that an entry violates the participation terms, an investigation into the entry will be opened, which could lead to disqualification. In this event, we may refuse or revoke an award

What if I find a work that was entered into AHSAE that isn't original?

If you suspect that a work was plagiarized, please [contact](#) Becky. We will investigate to determine if the work violates our participation terms. Because of teen privacy concerns, we are not able to provide any information on the outcome of our investigation.