

Secondary Competition Rules



There are specific rules that Secondary students (Years 7-10) must follow when creating their entries for the four challenges in the 2026 News In My Neighbourhood Competition.

Term 1 Challenge | 2 FEB - 10 APR 2026

Write an open letter to an individual or group who you think can make a difference on a political or social issue that's important to you.

- Secondary students' letter should be 300 to 350 words.
- Students must use the appropriate language, structure and tone for an open letter. They should clearly define the issue or problem, explain their connection to the issue, use evidence to support their perspective and provide a call to action or propose a solution to the issue.
- The letter must be in English but can include words in other languages, so long as an English translation is provided.
- To support their arguments, students might like to reference other sources. A short reference list should be provided with their open letter, with clear details or links so that the sources can be verified.
- Students' work must be their own and must be original. It cannot have been generated by artificial intelligence, plagiarised or produced by someone else (see the Terms & Conditions).
- Students must follow safe media practices. They should avoid including personal or identifying details (like addresses or full names) about themselves or others (without consent) in their work.
- The letter must be in a .doc, .docx., or .pdf file format.
- Students **cannot** work with a partner or in groups for this challenge.
- Only one entry per student. Entries must be submitted to the specified deadline by a teacher. Parents or guardians must give their consent for the student to enter (see Terms and Conditions).

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Term 2 Challenge | 20 APR - 3 JUL 2026

Create a podcast or radio news story to tell us how different media and digital technologies are impacting your life at school, at home or in the community.

- Secondary students' audio piece should be between 3 and 5 minutes long.
- Students must use the appropriate language, structure and tone for their audio piece. This could mean using clear, plain language and following a news story structure, or having a well-structured conversation or interview for a podcast.
- Following safe media practices, students should **interview and include comments from at least one expert source for their entry**. Students should make sure they have contact details for the person/people they interview, so we can get in touch if we need to confirm their statements.
- Students might like to reference other sources (like reports). A short reference list should be provided, with clear details or links so that the sources can be verified.
- Students' audio pieces must be in English but can include words in other languages, so long as an English translation is provided.
- Students' work must be their own. They **can't** use copyright audio material (like music and sound effects) or use artificial intelligence.
- The audio entry must be submitted in a .mp3 or .wav file format. Students must also submit a transcript of their audio entry, in a .doc, .docx, or .pdf format.
- Students can work individually or in groups of up to four for this challenge.
- Only one entry per student (can't be named on multiple entries). Entries must be submitted to the specified deadline by a teacher. Parents/guardians must give consent for the student to enter (see Terms and Conditions).

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Term 3 Challenge | 13 JUL - 25 SEPT 2026

Produce a photo essay or a short video to tell us about a community or culture you're a part of and something newsworthy about it that you think other people should know.

The video:

- Secondary students' video entry should be around 4 minutes.
- Students must use the appropriate language, structure and tone for their video. This could mean using active, plain language and present tense for a news report, or following a three-act structure for a documentary.
- Following safe media practices, students should **interview and include comments from at least one expert source for their entry**. Students should make sure they have contact details for the person/people they interview, so we can get in touch if we need to confirm their statements.
- Students must record their own footage, and must make sure they have the appropriate permissions and consent for all footage (including consent from individuals interviewed or featured in cutaway/b-roll).
- Students might like to reference other sources (like reports). A short reference list should be provided, with clear details or links so that the sources can be verified.
- Students' videos must be in English but can include words in other languages, so long as an English translation is provided.
- Students' work must be their own. They **can't** use copyright material (like footage, graphics, images, music and sound effects) or use artificial intelligence to create their entries.
- The video must be submitted in a .mp4 or .mov file format and be 16x9 (1920x1080). Students must also submit a transcript of their video, in a .doc, .docx, or .pdf format.
- Students can work individually or in groups of up to four for this challenge.

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- Only one entry per student (can't be named on multiple entries). Entries must be submitted to the specified deadline by a teacher. Parents or guardians must give their consent for the student to enter (see Terms and Conditions).

The photo essay:

- Secondary students' photo essay should include 4 or 5 photographs.
- The photo essay should centre around a clear topic or story. Students should use different techniques, structure and style to communicate that topic or story, like focusing on small details, using light and colour to build emotion.
- The photo essay must have a title and each photograph should have a short caption (up to 50 words each). The caption should build connections between the photos and add detail and meaning to the overall story.
- Following safe media practices, students must take their own photographs, and must make sure they have the appropriate permissions and consent for any individuals featured in any of the images.
- The captions must be in English but can include words in other languages, so long as an English translation is provided.
- Students' work must be their own. They can't use copyright material (like graphics or images) or use artificial intelligence to create their entries.
- The photographs must be submitted in a .png, jpeg or jpg file format. The photographs should be high quality (ideally 16x9, 1920x1080px up to 300dpi).
- Students can work individually or in groups of up to four for this challenge.
- Only one entry per student (can't be named on multiple entries). Entries must be submitted to the specified deadline by a teacher. Parents or guardians must give their consent for the student to enter (see Terms and Conditions).

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Term 4 Challenge | 5 OCT - 11 DEC 2026

Produce a creative response in any media format to reflect on a news story or event that has had a big impact on you and your local community this year.

- Secondary students can use any media format (video, audio, illustration, text, photography) to create their entry. Students must use the appropriate language, structure, tone and technique for the media format they choose.
- Students must follow the **entry limits**: 4 minutes for video, 3-5 minutes for audio, 250-350 words for text, 4-5 photographs.
- Students must follow safe media practices, and must get consent and contact details from any one interviewed/photographed/filmed.
- Students' work must be their own and must be original. It **cannot** have been generated by artificial intelligence, plagiarised or produced by someone else (see the Terms & Conditions). Students also can't use copyright material, like footage, graphics, images, music and sound effects, in their entries.
- If students reference other sources, like reports or data, a short reference list should be provided, with clear details or links so that the sources can be verified.
- Students' work must be in English but can include words in other languages, so long as an English translation is provided.
- Entries must be submitted in the specified file formats (see previous challenges).
- Students **can** work individually, or in groups of up to four for video, audio or photography submissions.
- Only one entry per student (can't be named on multiple entries). Entries must be submitted to the specified deadline by a teacher. Parents or guardians must give their consent for the student to enter (see Terms and Conditions).