

OSM “On Deadline” Contest Prompts for Spring Media Monday 2020

For all categories, please see category descriptions on OSM’s website if you need clarification about the rules and expectations of that category. These “On Deadline” entries are **due by 11:59 p.m. April 9**. All entries will need to be uploaded via the OSM website’s online contest link.

A note on caution for this contest during the COVID-19 pandemic: We understand doing media work may be a challenge if students are limited to doing so from home and away from in-person instruction and school equipment. We expect to see videos and photographs taken on cell phones, interviews conducted over Facetime, etc. OSM would like to remind students and teachers that we only want students doing this work within the perimeters of the health and safety protocols that are in place in your area. All student journalists should put their safety first.

PRINT CATEGORIES

Magazines and newspapers that publish print editions can enter print categories. Print entries for “on deadline” do not have to appear in your publication to be eligible for this contest.

Writing

News Story

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted every school in the state. Write a news story with at least two interviewed sources about one or more ways your school or people within your school have been impacted. Make sure to not share your opinion in this piece, but rather address it as objectively as possible and use only opinions from your sources. Make sure to include the date the story is written with your submission. (300 to 500 words)

Feature: Personality Profile

Write a profile about a student, teacher or staff member at your school who has an interesting hobby. (400 to 700 words)

Feature (Other than Personality Profile)

Write a how-to feature article that you believe is valuable to teenagers. A how-to article provides instructions for how to do something. These articles can be serious, funny or somewhere in between. Sources are not required, but if you are writing about something you are not an expert in, researched or interviewed sources are encouraged. (400 to 700 words)

Mini Feature

Write a mini-feature that involves a way or ways to keep busy while we are all having to stay home. Keep in mind, this is a mini-feature, not just a list. A mini feature should have a creative introduction and a conclusion as well. Make sure to check out the description of this category, especially if you have not written this type of story before. (approx. 200 words)

Sports Column

So many sports teams, from K-12 to professional, have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Write about the long-term impact of this issue in regard to one or more sports teams or a sport in general. Research this issue, and write a column explaining your opinion. Make sure you understand multiple sides of this issue before you begin writing. (400 to 600 words)

Opinion Column

How do you think high schools and/or universities should handle graduations in the event that large gatherings are still banned in May? Do research before you write. The best opinions are well-informed with facts. (400 to 600 words)

Sports News Story

This category is not available for spring 2020, as there are no active, local sporting events to cover. If you have a story idea that is sports related, but not about covering an actual game, you can enter it in the news story category.

Critical Review (two options)

Watch one of the films nominated for best film at this year's Academy Awards. Write a critical review about this film and explain why you think this film did or didn't deserve the Academy Award nomination. **OR** Write a critical review of a video game that was released in 2019 or 2020. (400 to 600 words)

Photography

Sports Photos

This category is not available for spring 2020, as there are no active, local sporting events to cover.

Action Photo

Since there are no official sporting events, group exercise classes, etc., taking place, focus on how people are getting exercise and staying active while under quarantine/practicing social distancing. These can be shots from your own household or any other place that is safe for you to take photos. And, we cannot stress this enough, **PUT YOUR SAFETY FIRST**. Only take photos in the perimeters of the health and safety protocols that are in place in your area. (Submit **three** photos **WITH CAPTIONS**)

News Photos

Think about the “news story” prompt in the writing category above. Take photos that could accompany a story you or someone else on your staff wrote or could write for that prompt. This will take some creative thinking due to the nature of in-person classes and activities being canceled. And, we cannot stress this enough, **PUT YOUR SAFETY FIRST**. Only take photos in the perimeters of the health and safety protocols that are in place in your area. (Submit **three** photos **WITH CAPTIONS**)

Feature Photos

Take a series of photos that could support one of the three feature writing categories as listed above in the writing categories. You can do this even if no one is writing a story, or you can do this to supplement a story you or someone else is writing for one of those feature categories. And, we cannot stress this enough, **PUT YOUR SAFETY FIRST**. Only take photos in the perimeters of the health and safety protocols that are in place in your area. (Submit **three** photos **WITH CAPTIONS that could support the feature article.**)

Design & Graphics

Magazine Inside Page Design

Design one page intended to accompany a **mini feature** from the written description above in the writing category. If this is not going to be published (if it’s **JUST** for this contest) the story and any captions can be “dummy text,” but any headlines should be actual text.

Magazine Inside Spread Design

Design a two-page spread that could accompany a how-to feature story as described in the feature writing category above (not the personality profile). If this is not going to be published (if it’s **JUST** for this contest) the story and any captions can be “dummy text,” but any headlines should be actual text. (Up to three students can work on this entry.)

Newspaper Inside Page Design

Design a page intended to go with a personality profile feature story. If this is not going to be published (it’s **JUST** for this contest) the story and any captions can be “dummy text,” but any headlines should be actual text.

Newspaper Inside Spread Design

Design a two-page spread that could accompany a how-to feature story as described in the feature writing category in the above writing categories (not the personality profile). If this is not going to be published (if it’s **JUST** for this contest) the story and any captions can be “dummy text,” but any headlines should be actual text. (Up to three students can work on this entry.)

Newspaper Front Page Design

Design a front page that has at least two stories (can jump stories) as well as a large, dominant photo or graphic “above the fold.” If this is not going to be published (if it’s JUST for this contest) the stories and any captions can be “dummy text,” but any headlines should be actual text.

Editorial Cartoon

Create an editorial cartoon addressing something to do with the COVID-19 pandemic. Make sure it is something that would be able to be published in your school newspaper.

Informational Graphic

Design an info graphic that could accompany one of the three feature writing prompts as described above in the writing categories.

Original Ad

Design a quarter-page ad (based on your publication size) for any event (school, city, or state) that will take place in fall 2020. It does not have to be a current advertiser with you.

ONLINE CATEGORIES

Entries that do not provide complete and accurate URLs will be disqualified. Entries that do not use at least one online tool (something you could not do in print) will be disqualified.

Writing

Online News Reporting

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted every school in the state. Write a news story with at least two interviewed sources about one or more ways your school or people within your school have been impacted. Make sure to not share your opinion in this piece, but rather address it as objectively as possible and use only opinions from your sources. Reliable sources are key. Remember, an online story must include links and possibly other use of online tools (see category descriptions) and not just be an exact replica of what would go in a print publication. (300 to 500 words)

Online Feature Reporting

Write a how-to feature article that you believe is valuable to teenagers. A how-to article provides instructions for how to do something. These articles can be serious, funny or somewhere in between. Sources are not required, but if you are writing about something you are not an expert in, researched or interviewed sources are encouraged. Keep in mind how a feature story is different from a news story, especially related to finding a theme that ties the story together. Remember, an online story must include links and possibly other use of online tools (see category descriptions) and not just be an exact replica of what would go in a print publication. (400 to 600 words)

Online Sports Reporting

This category is not available for spring 2020, as there are no active, local sporting events to cover. If you have a story idea that is sports related, but not about covering an actual game, you can enter it in the online news reporting category.

Online Critique Column

Write a review of an album, song, movie, TV series, video game or book that has come out in 2020. Remember, an online story must use some online tools and not just be an exact replica of what would go in a print publication. (400 to 600 words)

Blog Entry

Provide a first-person account of something you have realized you enjoy now that you are stuck at home, or something you really miss about being able to go to school or just out into the world as usual. Use multiple online tools. Visual and written work will be considered in judging. (300 to 500 words)

Photography

Photo Gallery

Think about the “online news reporting” prompt in the writing category above. Take photos that could accompany a story you or someone else on your staff wrote or could write for that prompt. This will take some creative thinking due to the nature of in-person classes and activities being canceled. And, we cannot stress this enough, **PUT YOUR SAFETY FIRST**. Only take photos in the perimeters of the health and safety protocols that are in place in your area (7-10 photos required). Upload these into a gallery on your publication’s site. **One photographer** must take all the photos in the gallery. **Each photo** should have a **cutline**.

Video

Video Package

How are people in your school and community handling being in quarantine and doing social distancing? Write and produce a 2-3 minute story that helps answer this question. (Up to three students can work on this entry.)

Design & Multimedia

Multimedia Package

Pick a trend or activity to cover/explore that seems to be catching on now that so many people are stuck at home. Since this is multimedia, make sure you do more than just write or just upload video. You should provide a combination of online writing, original video work, and still visuals (photos and/or graphics). (Up to three students can work on this entry.)

Online Page Presentation/Design

Design an online page for a story that either you or another student is writing in one of these three online writing categories listed above: online news reporting, feature writing, or critique column.

Information Graphic

Design an informative graphic that makes use of some type of statistics concerning COVID-19 (from a credible source). There should be something that makes this graphic specific to the online medium, not just something that could appear in a print publication. Be sure the design includes a reference to the source of the statistics.

VIDEO/AUDIO CATEGORIES

Video

News Story

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted every school in the state. Write and produce a news story with at least two interviewed sources about one or more ways your school or people within your school have been impacted. Make sure to not share your opinion in this piece, but rather address it as objectively as possible and use only opinions from your sources. Reliable sources are key. (Up to three students can work on this entry.) (No longer than 3 minutes)

Feature Story

Produce a broadcast feature about a student, teacher or staff member at your school who has an interesting hobby. (Up to three students can work on this entry.) (No longer than 3 minutes)

Sports Story

This category is not available for spring 2020, as there are no active, local sporting events to cover. If you have a story idea that is sports related, but not about covering an actual game, you can enter it in the news story category.

Promotional/advertising video

Create a 15-30 second promotional video for your station/publication.

Audio

News Report

Conduct at least three interviews with teachers, administration, or staff at your school. Find out how they are preparing for and/or handling the extended school closures due to COVID-19. (Students can work alone or in a pair.) (No longer than 3 minutes)

Feature Report

Produce a story, using at least three interviewed sources, about what people are enjoying about having to stay home so much due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Students can work alone or in a pair.) (No longer than 3 minutes)

Sports Report

This category is not available for spring 2020, as there are no active, local sporting events to cover. If you have a story idea that is sports related, but not about covering an actual game, you can enter it in the news report category.

Promotional Radio/Audio Spot

Create a 15 – 30 second promotional spot for your station/publication for a specific show or segment of your programming.