

Future Problem Solving Program International (FPSPI) Scenario Writing Overview



What is Scenario Writing?

Scenario Writing is an individual competition in which students develop short stories related to one of five FPS topics for the year. The story (1500 words or less) is set at least 20 years in the future and is an imagined, but logical, outcome of actions or events taking place in the world. A winning scenario example is found on FPSPI's website www.fpspi.org at the Scenario Writing component tab.

Why Scenario Writing?

To prepare students for the challenges of the 21st century, Future Problem Solving Program International teaches students to think critically, creatively, and futuristically. The Scenario Writing component of FPSPI strives to help students enlarge, enrich, and make more accurate their images of the future, while honing their creative writing skills. Scenario Writing personalizes the ever-growing perspective a student has on the future. In addition, participation provides opportunities for students to meet and exceed educational standards as they refine their writing skills. A rubric-based authentic evaluation is provided, giving students tools for continuous growth.

Who can participate in Scenario Writing?

Students may participate in Scenario Writing in three divisions as determined according to the grades as identified within the US school system: Junior (grades 4-6), Middle (grades 7-9), and Senior (grades 10-12). For students who participate in the Global Issues Problem Solving (GIPS) or Scenario Performance components of FPSPI, Scenario Writing can serve as an excellent complement to their work on any of the topics. Scenario Writing can be used as a stand-alone activity by an FPS coach, an English teacher, a parent, or any instructor with students who are interested in creative writing. Students who are enthusiastic about stories of the future may be interested in the Scenario Performance component, which is an oral story telling experience.

Scenario Topics

- Spread of Infectious Disease
- Toxic Materials
- Disorders
- Cloud Storage
- Biosecurity

Do students need to know the six-step problem solving process for scenarios?

The six-step problem solving process is used in both the Global Issues Problem Solving and Community Problem Solving components. Although knowing the process can help students to think about the future and organize a story line, it is not a prerequisite for Scenario Writing. Since scenarios must relate to one of the topics, it is imperative that students do some background reading and research on the topic they select for their story.

**Excerpt from *Out of the Mouths of Babes*
Junior Division 1st Place 2017 International Champion**

I am on duty, monitoring the information relayed by the millions of sophisticated sensors deployed in disaster-hit areas. Neon statistics, colour-coded based on severity, quiver in front of me on a holographic screen. Sitting in my Aeromobile, I'm ready to swing into action at a moment's notice.

Earthquake, magnitude 8.9, together with tsunami. 50 people missing, presumed dead...

The text is bright orange. Not severe enough for my team. Another team will respond. A line of red comes into view.

Hurricane, category 7. 75 people confirmed dead, 200 people missing, young children among them...

The red is my cue to embark on a rescue mission "Take me there," I instruct the Aeromobile.

I begin by mentally turning on my specialised search-and-rescue (SR) chip. The SR chip, which is implanted in my brain in addition to my other information chips, will automatically connect with sensors on the ground and give me detailed and precise information about the situation. It will also link up with the identity chips of people on the site, enabling other SROs and I to locate them and assess their condition quickly, as well as the SR chips of other SROs.

I swing into action prompted by the information leads from my SR chip. Other SROs are moving around, locating survivors to be fitted into body cases. Only survivors who have more than a seventy percent chance of survival (as calculated by the SR chip) are rescued. This may seem inhumane, but with the multitude of disasters occurring, a perverse sort of triage is practiced – medical intervention only for those who will probably survive...

How can I get started with my students?

The best way for you and your students to become acquainted with scenarios is to read published scenarios. See "Scenario Writing Essential Publications" for support materials available for purchase from FPSPI at www.fpspimart.org.

How much help should a coach give?

The student's writing must be original. As a coach, you may provide direct instruction on creative writing, read the student's work, ask questions that occur to you as a reader, and make general suggestions for improvement. Authors may receive assistance to correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation errors. Peer revision is a beneficial process.

How are scenarios evaluated?

Scenarios are read and scored by experienced evaluators who consider the following elements: creative thinking, futuristic thinking, idea development, style/voice, character development, mechanics/structure, and topic related research. Authentic evaluation and feedback is provided. See "Evaluation Guidelines for International Scenario Writing Competition" for more information.

How does one register for Scenario Writing?

Each Affiliate Program of FPSPI determines its own processes and fees for registration and entries. Mentoring where the Scenario Writing component is not offered is done through FPSPI. (april@fpspi.org)

When are scenario entries due?

Affiliates may use a "yearlong" option with two submissions or a "competitive" option with a single submission. With the yearlong option, the first submission is noncompetitive and provides written feedback to guide improvement of the story. Check with your Affiliate Director for options and due dates.

Is there another level of competition?

Winning stories in 1st through 3rd place of each division at the Affiliate level may be entered into the International Scenario Writing Competition. All first-place Affiliate winners and all International winners 1st-5th are eligible to compete in the Scenario Writing Team Competition at the International Conference in June.