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 today. A winning scenario example is found on FPSPI’s website www.fpspi.org at the 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 in a variety of ways. 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. We look forward to your participation in the Scenario Writing component of the Future Problem Solving Program.

Who can participate in Scenario Writing?
Students may participate in Scenario Writing in three divisions: Junior (grades 4-6, or the equivalent), Middle (grades 7-9), and Senior (grades 10-12). For students who participate in the Global Issues Problem Solving component of FPSPI, Scenario Writing can serve as an excellent complement to their work on any of the topics. Scenario Writing is also an excellent offering for students who do not participate in other components of FPSPI; the creative writing involved may appeal to students who are not drawn to Global Issues Problem Solving (GIPS) or Community Problem Solving (CmPS). 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.

Scenario Topics
- The Impact of Social Media
- Processed Food
- Propaganda
- Enhancing Human Potential
- Space

Do students need to know the 6-step problem solving process for scenarios?
The six-step problem solving process is used in both the GIPS and CmPS components. Although knowing the process can help students to think about the future, it is not a prerequisite for scenario writing. Since scenarios must relate to one of the topics, students should do some background reading and research on the topic they select for their story.
How can I get started with my students?
The best way to become acquainted with scenarios is for you and your students to read published scenarios. See “Scenario Writing Essential Publications” for support materials available for purchase from FPSPI.

How much help should I give?
The student’s writing must be original. As a coach, you may 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. See “Tips for Coaches” for more information.

How are scenarios evaluated?
Scenarios are read and scored by experienced evaluators who consider these elements: creative thinking, futuristic thinking, idea development, style/voice, character development, mechanics/structure, and topic related research. Authentic evaluation and feedback is provided. See “Scenario Evaluation” for more information.

How do I register for Scenario Writing?
Each Affiliate Program of FPSPI determines its own processes and fees for registration and entries. Use the registration form provided.

When are scenario entries due?
Affiliates may use a “yearlong” option with two submissions, or a “competitive only” 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 at the Affiliate level are entered into the International Scenario Writing Competition. All first-place Affiliate winners and all international winners are eligible to compete in the Scenario Writing Team Competition at the International Conference in June.

Excerpt from Plastic Soup
Middle Division 1st Place 2013 International Champion

No one really cared about me at first, but then again, I wasn’t quite as voracious back then. And to be completely honest, my greediness was encouraged. The humans didn’t know how hungry I was, how truly big I could grow. They simply knew I provided a convenient place for them to throw their unwanted things. I was their garbage dump. And I, I was such a glutton. I stole everything they threw to me, gobbling every piece up with my greedy, salivating jaws.

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These days a few people seem to be drawing up a plan to clear away all of my waste. They want to lift parts of me away somehow, bit by bit, and remove me somewhere else. But it won’t work. I know it won’t, because the particles of plastics in me have become so tiny that they’ve melded with the ocean itself. While my body isn’t completely substantial, it is very much filled with all the plastic waste I’ve been fed over the years. I am a soup bowl of plastic floating in the ocean. I am the ocean. And you cannot, no matter how hard you try, destroy the ocean.

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Oh, humans, you innovators, you destroyer of worlds and builder of civilizations. You ever so resourceful humans, always seeking to improve. Always seeking to destroy. This time they have outdone themselves.

Three short years ago, a certain scientist came up with a terrifying – and amazing – creation. It was the culmination of decades of hard, long, suffering work in the lab. How it must have plagued his dreams! How it must have consumed his life! But oh! This new genetic mutation of his was perfect. It was perfect, and it would destroy me.

He had successfully created a new strain of bacteria so dangerous it could be considered a biological weapon: a bacterium that feeds on plastic. A plastic cup, coming into contact with this kind of bacteria, would decompose into nothing but easily digestible organic material, which the normal bacteria in the ocean could then degrade into minerals and carbon and oxygen within a mere twenty-four hours.

This scientist is being heralded as a genius. Everyone is ever so proud of him, for this great new genetic mutation of his that could potentially get rid of all the waste they’ve created, but they fail to realize how big I am. Why, with these water-thriving, plastic eating bacteria everywhere…who knows where it will go?