

TIPS FOR COACHES
SCENARIO WRITING COMPONENT
2007-08 Future Problem Solving Program International

General

- Ideas and good writing are both important in FPSPI scenario writing.
- If participating in the competitive round, follow the instructions carefully (1,500 words, identification of word processing program, printed/typed, double-spaced, title on the first page of the scenario, number of copies, etc.). See the 2007-08 scenario writing rules for more information.

Review each of the five topics with students.

- Which topic interests them the most?
- Review the future scenes if provided.
- Generate imagined futures for the other topics.

Students should read as much material on their chosen topic as they need to understand the various facets of the topic.

- The enclosed bibliographies, readings students find in the library, or the appropriate chapters in the *2007-08 Readings, Research, and Resources* are useful materials for understanding the topic.
- As students read, have them take notes on facts, which may be useful in their writing, as well as impressions or ideas they get while reading the materials.

Encourage students to use a shortened version of the FPS model to help them clarify their thinking on the topic, as well as provide sources for a scenario theme.

- Scenario writing is actually a seventh step in the FPS process.
- A suggested shortened version of the process includes 8 challenges for Step 1, an underlying problem for Step 2, and 8 solution ideas for Step 3.
- What outcomes and scenarios might result from students' findings in using the Future Problem Solving model?

Students should now be ready to identify an outcome to develop into a scenario.

Scenario writers should identify a central, identifiable, sustained character(s) -- animate or inanimate -- and develop that character throughout the events and/or plot of the scenario.

Students should write their scenarios as though their future were the present.

- A strong portrayal of futuristic trends and predictions should be evident.
- Lengthy explanations and descriptions of the present day mechanical devices and social trends can interfere with the flow of the scenario that should be placed 20 years in the future. If, for example, you were writing today about computers, you would simply mention computers; you would not describe what computers are, what they do, and how they were developed because the audience would already be familiar with computers.

Tips for Authors

General

- Ideas and good writing are both important in FPSPI scenario writing.
- If participating in the competitive round, follow the instructions carefully (1,500 words, typed, double-spaced, title on the first page of the scenario, number of copies, etc.). See 2007-08 scenario writing rules for more information.

Futures

- Incorporate futuristic thinking into your writing – portray futuristic information and trends. (It is fun to explain how inventions affect our future lives, but don't "over gadgetize.")
- Incorporate creativity into your writing – use inventive, innovative, original, resourceful ideas.

Pre-Writing

- Read and gather information in *2007-2008 Readings, Research, and Resources; Omni; Futurist; Discover, etc.*
- Use creative problem solving generating tools to come up with a title that captures the essence of your scenario.
- Write an outline and rough draft of your scenario.
- Use key words or phrases to identify your story with the selected topic and the time period in which your scenario is set.

Technique

- A narrative, dialogue, diary, journal, and letter are among appropriate formats for writing a scenario.
- Conflict, adventure, suspense, humor (satire, parody) can be used in the development of the scenario.
- Use first or third person.
- Incorporate dialogue, if it's appropriate to do so.
- To give background information, "bits and scratches" in dialogue and/or thoughts in a sentence or two works best. Blocks of flashback are usually too long for 1,500 words.

Character(s)

- Use a minimum number of characters, animate or inanimate (usually 1–2 protagonists).
- Introduce main character(s) as soon as possible.
- Place the lead character directly into the situation developed in the scenario.
- Demonstrate how things have changed and how the main character is affected.
- If conflict is a central part of the story, lead to the point where the character(s) has a chance to "win, lose or draw." This sets up a moment of suspense.

Purpose

- Narrow the topic to establish and maintain a clear focus.
- The scenario tells a story with a point set in the future as if it were really happening in the present.

Audience

- Involve the audience (readers) immediately in the introductory paragraph.
- Be aware of your audience. Involve readers by writing to elicit an emotional response from them.

Style

- Demonstrate a suitable voice/tone throughout the scenario.
- Exhibit the author's personal touch through vivid, colorful description that gives the writing life and spirit.

Idea Development

- Develop the idea of the scenario to point out positive social and cultural aspects or the consequences of doing without them.
- A climax must occur as a logical outgrowth of the story line or character development.
- Provide a resolution to any conflict developed in the scenario.
- Provide a conclusion. Be sure to end; don't just stop without giving the reader something think about.

Mechanics/Structure

- Use appropriate grammar, effective sentence structure, organizational strategies, and effective closure.
- Use effective organizational strategies and appropriate transitional elements.

Post-Writing

- Edit, edit, edit.
- Proofread: Is the scenario whole, unified, coherent? Are paragraphs/sections clear, unified, coherent?
- Sentence by sentence check the following: grammar, spelling, omissions, repetitions, verb tenses, word usage.