

Tips for creating your article entry

- Read through different news articles (print media, online news sites, blogs) to get some inspiration. Drugs.ie recommend that you check out their news section and the previous article winners on the site.
- Try not to cover too many topics in one entry. Don't forget- you can enter separate entries covering different issues. This mean that you can enter the competition as many times as you like with different entries.
- Decide if you want to create your entry as a newspaper article or as a blog post. You can find some inspiration for blog posts from looking at the pieces written by young people on Spunout.ie.
- Decide who your target audience is. Your target audience is who you want to read the entry. Is it someone your age, someone older or younger, a parent or a teacher? This will help you to decide what style of language to use in your entry. Decide if you will use formal or informal language. You might use 'slang' terms if it is aimed at a younger age group so they can relate to it.
- Start off by developing a plan on how you will structure your entry. Generally you will have an introduction, paragraphs that contain the main information you want to get across and a conclusion where you reflection on the points you discussed in your entry.
- If writing a newspaper article, remember to think like a journalist and try to engage the reader in the first paragraph. The first paragraph should discuss the main points or the main story.
- Write down facts that you find useful from your research and where you sourced them from. It can't hurt to double check facts and figures to make sure that they are correct. Don't make statics' up.
- Don't waffle or make the report too long, keep sentences short and to the point.
- If you are writing your piece in an Irish context (based in Ireland), make sure your facts and figures are relevant to Ireland and not other countries like England and America. Remember that Ireland's facts and figures will be unique to Ireland.
- Personal stories will be accepted as well as fictional stories. Be careful not to identify anyone in personal stories that you share. If you are sharing someone else's story - don't forget to ask their permission first!
- The judges are looking for original work, not work that has been previously published elsewhere (even the internet).
- Feel free to include quotes from people. Perhaps you could interview people at school, people in your community or people that work in drug and alcohol services?
- If you are quoting a piece of research or someone you've interviewed, don't forget to include the source/their full title with your entry.

- Sometimes journalists sensationalise stories, try and engage people with balanced, factual and respectful information.
- It is important to remember that the judges are looking for newspaper articles or blog posts and not essays so keep the word count between 600-1000.
- Check your spellings. Get someone to read over your work and double check your spellings.
- Don't forget to download an entry form and send it with your entry. An entry without an entry form cannot win a prize.

Submitting your article entry

- Don't forget to fill out an entry form. Make sure your email address is correct and legible so we can contact you through email.
- News articles will be accepted by e-mail only (in Microsoft Word or PDF format). Word count should be between 600 - 1,200 words.
- The maximum file size accepted via email for all formats is 24MB. There are no upper file size restrictions on entries submitted through the postal service.
- The address for email entries is awards@drugs.ie. All entries submitted by e-mail will receive a correspondence as confirmation of receipt - if you do not receive an email confirmation of receipt your entry has not been received so please follow up with us.
- If you send an entry through email over the weekend, you will not receive a confirmation email early the next week.