Your child. Their culture. Their creative voice.

A parent guide to the National PTA Reflections Program, Kindergarten through Grade 5.

THIS YEAR'S THEME

What My Culture Means to Me

SUBMIT BY FRIDAY, OCTOBER 30, 2026

What can culture mean to a child?

Culture can be the languages we speak, foods we make, holidays we celebrate, stories we hear, places we care about, or little things we do together. A child does not need to represent a whole country or community.

Start with one personal memory or experience

- Ask: What is special to you? Who do you share it with? Why does it matter?
- Let your child decide what to create and how to show that idea.
- Simple work made with everyday materials is completely welcome.

Important: keep it in your child's voice. The idea, title, creative work, and artist statement must come from the student. Adults can discuss the theme and provide permitted technical help, but should not choose, rewrite, choreograph, or improve the entry.

Choose how to tell your story

These images are only inspiration for the type of work a student could create—not examples to copy.

01 Visual Arts

What can I create? A drawing, painting, collage, sculpture, craft, or model that shows something meaningful about your culture.

Ask your child: What is one family tradition, meal, place, celebration, or memory you would like to show? What would you like people to notice?

Submit: 2D art: one clear JPG/JPEG/PNG image. 3D art: three images from different angles. 2D work must be no larger than 24 x 30 inches, including matting. Include materials and dimensions in the form.



02 Literature

What can I create? One original poem, short story, essay, narrative, or play. Handwritten and typed entries are welcome.

Ask your child: What story about your family, language, or community would you like someone else to hear? What happened? Why do you remember it?

Submit: One numbered PDF, up to 2,000 words. Handwritten pages can be scanned into one PDF. Work in another language must include an interpretive English translation.



For both categories: The student chooses the subject and title and creates the work independently. Adults may help photograph, scan, or upload it. They should not rewrite the child's story or make artistic decisions for them.

Movement, meaning, and words

03 Dance Choreography

What can I create? An original sequence of movements that tells a story or expresses a feeling about culture. The student creates the choreography; other people may perform it.

Ask your child: Could you show a family celebration, memory, or tradition through movement? What actions, rhythms, or gestures tell your story?

Submit: One MP4, MOV, or AVI video, no longer than five minutes or 1,000 MB. Do not add text or graphics over the video. Credit background music with its title, composer, and performer.



If your child takes dance lessons: They may be inspired by a style, but a routine taught by a dance instructor is not student-created choreography.

The artist statement: 10–100 words

Every entry needs a title and an artist statement explaining what the student made, how it relates to the theme, and why it matters to them. Both must be chosen and expressed by the child.

Ask, then listen: What did you create? What part of your culture does it show? Why is it important to you?

For younger children: A parent may type the child's exact spoken words when permitted. Do not turn them into polished adult language or supply an adult-written title.

Child originality matters. The child creates the idea, artwork or choreography, title, and statement. Parents may assist with permitted materials, photography, recording, or uploading. If adult creative involvement is evident, the entry may not advance to the next phase. See the official rules for allowed accommodations.

Ready to submit?

Deadline: Friday, October 30, 2026

Choose one of two ways to submit your original student-created work.

OPTION 1 - ONLINE SUBMISSION

1. Open the online form and enter student, guardian, and artwork details.
2. Choose Visual Arts, Literature, or Dance Choreography.
3. Upload the correct file: images for art, a PDF for literature, or a video for dance. Add both required digital signatures.
4. Submit a separate form for each entry.

Submit: forms.gle/hiw7dVz52qvFGHhaA

A Google Account is required to upload files.

SCAN TO SUBMIT

OPTION 2 - SUBMIT AT SCHOOL

For original paper artwork or handwritten literature entries:

1. Pick up a printed Student Entry Form in the school office.
2. Fill in student/guardian details, title, 10-100-word artist statement, artwork details, and student and parent/guardian signatures.
3. Write student name, grade, and teacher on the back of the work.
4. Paper-clip the entry form to the work; do not staple the artwork.
5. Place both items in the Reflections Submission Box at school.

Submission box and printed forms: Ben Rush school office.

PTA will photograph/scan entries for digital judging.

FINAL CHECK

- Each entry is the student's original idea, work, title, and artist statement.
- Include a separate signed entry form for each physical artwork.
- Dance videos must be submitted online. Follow the category rules.
- Paper artwork should be mounted on sturdy material; 2D maximum is 24 x 30 inches.

Questions or need help? Email reflections@benrushpta.org

Official National PTA and LWPTSA rules govern all submissions.