

SAN DIEGANS FOR A PEACEFUL WORLD



# AWARD-WINNING ENTRIES

## 2008/2009 School Year

### High School Peace Writing Contest

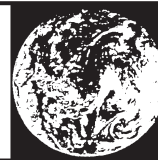
Topic: “What Can My Generation Do To Help Create  
a Peaceful World Free of War and Violence?”

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**San Diegans for a Peaceful World Writing Contest**  
**A project of The Peace Resource Center of San Diego**  
**3850 Westgate Place, San Diego, CA 92105**



**San Diegans for a Peaceful World Writing Contest  
2008-2009 School Year Contest winners**

(in alphabetical order)

**ESSAY**

Harshal Bhakta  
Age 15, Grade 10  
Point Loma High School  
Teacher: Mrs. Hedges

Justo Caballero  
Age 15, Grade 10  
Point Loma High School  
Teacher: Mrs. Hedges

Rachel Rodeheaver  
Age 15, Grade 10  
Point Loma High School  
Teacher: Mrs. Hedges

Alexandra Scott  
Age 15, Grade 10  
Point Loma High School  
Teacher: Mrs. Hedges

Lauren Wiezorek  
Age 14, Grade 9  
Point Loma High School  
Teacher: Mrs. Hedges

**CREATIVE WRITING**

Jack Bowman  
Age 16, Grade 10  
Point Loma High School  
Teacher: Mrs. Hedges

Heather D.  
Juvenile Court and Community School\*

Jasmine Ellis  
Age 14, Grade 9  
Point Loma High School  
Teacher: Mrs. Hedges

Roxanne Terry  
Age 18, Grade 12  
San Diego High  
Teacher: Mr. Robinson

John W.  
Juvenile Court and Community School\*

\*Due to privacy restrictions we cannot publish full names or other identifying information about Juvenile Court and Community School winners

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5/20/09**

# CREATIVE WRITING

**Jack Bowman**  
**10<sup>th</sup> Grade, Age 16**  
**Point Loma High School**

## **I Don't Need Your War**

I don't need your war;  
It feeds the rich while it buries the poor.  
You got power hungry leaders in a human grocery store.  
And in my memories they shot Kennedy,  
I went numb when I learned to see,  
So I never fell for Vietnam.  
You can't trust freedom when it's in your hands,  
When everybody's fighting for their promised land.  
Who said, "Peace could last forever."  
Look at the young men fighting;  
See the women crying for the young men dying.  
All the hate you're breeding to all the fear you're feeding.  
Look at the lives you're leading.  
The billions shift from side to side.  
The wars go on with brainwashed pride.  
For the love of God and our human rights,  
All these things are swept aside.  
By bloody hands time can't deny  
And are washed away by your genocide.  
History hides the lies of your wars,  
For all I've seen has opened my mind,  
But still the wars go on as the years go by  
With no love of God or human rights,  
Because all these dreams are swept aside  
By bloody hands of the hypnotized,  
And history bears the scars of your wars.  
Who will carry the cross of homicide,  
Across the unforgiving terrain,  
Through the field of their promised land?  
With all the blood they're spilling,  
Look at the shoes you're filling.  
Look at the world they're killing,  
The way they've always done before.  
In all the doubt you've wallowed,  
See the lives you've swallowed.  
Look at the leaders the innocent follow.  
I don't want to see no more.  
For war doesn't tell who is right,  
War only shows who is left.  
And spoken here from the highest voice,  
I don't need your war.

###

**Heather D.**  
**Juvenile Court and Community School**

**Plant the Peace**

A seed of peace is sown  
Into a strangers smile  
Its roots take hold  
Of the laughter of a child  
A sapling of peace emerges  
From the depths of a kind heart  
Hungering, thirsting  
For the unity of light and dark  
A leaf of peace grasps  
The stem of honesty  
A bud of peace unfolds  
When shown generosity  
A blossom of peace blooms  
Nurtured by consideration  
Then brings forth the fruits  
Of reconciliation

Until...

The products of peace are exposed  
To the harsh winds of war  
And the fruit's fragile skin  
Is weathered and torn  
By the chill of jealousy,  
The heat of animosity  
And thrown upon the ground  
In a barren field of lies  
Where the fruit is worn down  
By ignorance and pride  
One layer at a time

Until...

All that remains is a handful of seeds  
That can only be saved  
If you dare to plant the peace...

###

**Jasmine Ellis**  
**Grade 9, Age 14**  
**Point Loma High School**

**The World That Could Be**

Claiming to be...  
Free sophisticated, civilized, and enlightened  
Accepting of those who are different  
We preach tolerance, peace and love  
But we do not practice as we preach  
We are deluded  
If we think we practice as we preach

Avoiding the harsh reality  
It's right in front of us  
Yet we cannot see  
Obstructed by society  
Restrained by the case  
That causes the confusion

Fearful and frightened  
We shoot blindly  
Lives have been taken  
Actions dismissed  
And we are left alone

Now lost and loathing  
We turn to destruction and disorder  
Our minds deluded  
We are so convoluted  
We desensitize and dehumanize  
To the point where we can  
Shoot without a tear in our eyes

Distorted perversions of reality  
Deprived of our sight  
No longer you and me  
Because we see  
Retribution and vengeance  
Masked by a seven letter word  
We call it "JUSTICE"

Abhorrence and anarchy  
Children disoriented  
Strapping on bombs  
To die for a cause they are  
Too young to be acquainted with

A disgrace  
Little kids with guns  
Homicide, Suicide, Genocide  
Hate crimes and rape  
Anywhere and everywhere  
At any time  
It's an abomination  
Consumed by hate  
It's an epidemic  
We can not, must not  
And I will not  
Let it defeat us

How can we stand for this atrocity?  
That we even have the audacity  
To utter the words,  
Declare the war on our fellow societies  
So much violence and animosity  
We focus all our energy  
On those we call enemy

We need to alter our focus  
Make the change  
Revolutionize  
Open our eyes

To see...  
Then say we stop viewing our  
Fellow human beings as adversaries  
Recognize that we are all guests  
Who inhabit this earth for a brief moment in time

When the shooting subsides  
And we do open our eyes  
That will be the day  
That we rise to our full potential  
The possibilities will be endless  
And we can live in peace  
This is the world that I see,  
The world that could be.

###

**Roxanne Terry**  
**Grade 12, Age 18**  
**San Diego High School**

**What is Peace?**

Peace is the tranquil sky  
Being watched by a beautiful set of eyes  
The safety you feel when being pulled tight into their arms  
Knowing that you'll never be alone  
Peace is the release of all white doves  
While we sit and enjoy our summer love  
The kisses and hugs,  
We steal from each other  
To help fade our troubles away  
Peace is the dream  
The world needs to achieve  
The hope that all will change  
Peace is Joy  
That is brought from a child's smile  
The warmth you feel  
From a long time friendship

Peace is the unity of a country, a world  
That is not divided by color  
Or beliefs  
But united by the things we have in common  
Or the mere fact that we're all human  
What is Peace? That is Peace.

###

**John W.  
Juvenile Court and Community School**

**“The Root of All Evil”**

The root of all evil is power,  
We seek it,  
We hunger for it,  
Fights break out by the hour.  
Corruption,  
Deception,  
The weak and ignorant are forced to cower.

These corrupt and tyrannous bigots,  
That run ours and other nations,  
They don't think we get it,  
Read between the lines of their subliminal quotations.

We are innocent until proven guilty,  
We are poor until proven rich,  
We are powerless until in control,  
And in debt we dig our own ditch.

I dial a 911 for peace,  
To end the war,  
The violence,  
And the greed.

A 911 for peace,  
To end my pain,  
My worry,  
And my need.

###

# ESSAY

**Harshal Bhakta**  
**Grade 10, Age 15**  
**Point Loma High School**

## **War With Words**

In our time as humans on earth, there has been violence, and until the end of the human species, or even the end of time, there will always be a form of violence happening somewhere on the planet. It is unrealistic to believe we can stop all forms of disagreement, which are the main causes of war and violence. But knowing this does not mean that we should stand idle and watch as we tear ourselves and our planet apart. There are many things our generation can do that can prevent hostility towards one another; one of the ways that this can be achieved is the use of peaceful protest. Of course, there are other methods, but throughout history, peaceful protest has been effective in stopping violence. There are no difficulties with this method, either. Everyone can do it, one person or many, but we are strongest when we are united, and that is why protest is a great way to keep peace.

Instead of expressing our feelings in ways which are violent, such as fighting, bad language and trying to hurt somebody physically or mentally, there are many actions we can take. Aggression is not the answer to our problems, and it is the main cause of horrible events, from street shootings to countries declaring war on each other. The way to get around hurting people is to fight our wars with words, and to speak out about what we need and want. If everyone simply used their minds and not their fists to do their bidding, there would be a lot less war and violence surrounding us. There are many people around the world who want change; those people use peaceful protest as their method of causing change.

One of the most famous practitioners of peaceful protest was Mahatma Gandhi; he was successful in using the technique to get the changes he wanted. He achieved alone, with only the power of words, what many thought an army would be needed for. His weapons weren't guns and other items of destruction, but simple non-violence, peaceful protests, such as boycotts, and sharing his views with others. Alone, he took on the British Empire without an ounce of violent aggression, just acceptance and non-violent resistance; he united his country to support him, and won the independence of India without any battles being started. He also influenced another great civil activist in Martin Luther King, Jr. After MLK visited the Gandhi family in India, he stated "...I am more convinced than ever before that the method of non-violent resistance is the most potent weapon available to oppressed people in their struggles for justice..." Both these people were successful as civil activists, and their use of non-violence protest and resistance helped them achieve what none thought possible.

Currently, we are in a time of terror; around the world there are conflicts that are trying to be resolved through violence, but, for some reason, no one understands that with violence comes retaliation, which leads to even more violence. It will be our generation's choice to solve our many problems by using our power to take life, or our power to communicate as rational beings. Will we use weapons to fight our battles, to get what we want? Or will we peacefully united as a world and navigate our problems together through peaceful interaction and non-violent resistance? To successfully create a more peaceful world we need to follow the ideals of these two men and use their techniques, such as, marches, boycotts, chants and peaceful negotiation. To make positive changes happen.

In a world where violence is a constant and where war rages with no end in sight, we need to do everything we can to help ourselves stay united and keep peace with one another. We must work together to keep our communities together and put aside our differences as human beings to bring a better world for tomorrow. As Gandhi said: "We must be the change we wish to see in the world." Everyone must do their own part in trying to make the world a safer and more peaceful place to live. For our generation to be successful in this goal of bringing non-violence to our planet, each one of us as individuals must practice non-violence to create a world free of war and conflict.

**Justo Caballero**  
**Grade 10, Age 15**  
**Point Loma High School**

**The Way Out of Trouble**

The world that we live in today is filled with many problems, some that are tiny and others that are so enormous that not even all the people on this planet can solve them. From the time that they're born, people have the ability to make their own decisions and change the direction that their lives are heading. Everyone has different ways to look at the same things, giving us infinite possibilities to resolve problems and create new advancements in technology. A person is shaped not only by the environment that he/she has grown up in, but also by the guiding figures that have led him/her to adulthood.

There are stereotypes among all races, differences that all people have, self esteem and security that most people lack, depression, visions through the eyes of many, ignorance, rationalism, frustration, an abundance of points of view, judgments, and many individual experiences. People want to know how to end the injustices that fuel hatred, intolerance and violence, but what they don't realize is that this is caused because of their own unconscious actions. Sometimes people hurt others without even noticing, because jokes for someone can be perceived as negative comments for someone else. The feeling of superiority that races have over other races causes many problems. Sometimes people don't know how to express what they are thinking, feel that they have no voice, or just fail to communicate with the outside world. Money and the large gap that it creates between communities also has an effect on how people behave, because the world runs on money. Some say that we should get rid of materialistic things, but they are what keep us alive.

We all learn from experiences, and this is how we must proceed. Our own results will create solutions to our problems. There are many difference ways that one can have success; some include making the right decisions at the right times. When confronted with gangs, drugs and pressure, the right choice must be taken to maintain the path that was first started toward the ultimate goal. Gangs are created by individuals who have no other way out; they don't know how to solve their differences and weren't given the proper moral support that a child should be given by his/her parents. This is why it is so important to support and educate our children.

Children hold the future in their delicate hands. They need us to enable them to shape that future, to inspire them to imagine and dream of a new world order of hope, peace and love, and to empower them with the concepts, values and attitudes, skills and practices to make their dreams come true. One who had such a wonderful dream to offer was Dr. Martin Luther King, a dream he believed in for his children and the children of the future, and one for which he paid dearly with his life. "I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character." Today, in every country in the world, there are many children silently suffering the consequences of violence. This violence takes many forms: between children and adults on streets; at school; in family life; and, in the community. There is physical violence, psychological violence, socio-economic violence, environmental violence and political violence. Each child can discover, by himself, that violence is not inevitable. We can offer hope, not only to the children of the world, but to all of humanity, by beginning to create and build a new culture of non-violence.

Most people want peace in their lives, both inside themselves and in their surroundings. Most people also do not believe that peace can happen. A significant step to create anything is to visualize it. It doesn't matter whether it is an art creation, hitting an accurate golf shot or planning construction of a new house. The exciting thing about visions and dreams is that they lay a foundation for us to become what we dream and to create around us what we envision. They also focus our attention on what we desire. I have been using visualization for years with positive results. It is even amazing at times what the visions bring. It is important when creating a vision that you not judge your thoughts or ideas, especially with, "Oh, that could never be." Such thinking limits your vision. The interesting thing about visions is that the bigger they are, the more likely they are to expand what exists. It is also not necessary that all of your visions become reality, yet more of your visions will come true if they are expansive instead of limited by doubt.

Being different isn't bad, and this is how all should think because then we can get rid of all kinds of problems. We need to communicate and accept our differences, taking out our frustrations on something else, like on

finding a way to create a peaceful world. Life is filled with many choices that lead us in many different directions, and together we must choose the right ones, in order to improve our goal of a world free of war and violence. All eyes must have unique points of view that coexist among their diverse experiences. Self-esteem and security are important to all people and, by accepting the ideas of others and linking them to our own understanding of the world, we can achieve peace. Communication is the key to success and, when interaction begins, limitless things can happen.

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**Rachel Rodeheaver  
10<sup>th</sup> Grade, Age 15  
Point Loma High School**

### **My Generation Can Help Bring Peace**

My generation can help stop war and violence by simply acknowledging that they are a problem and making a decision to take action. If people do not consider violence to be a problem, how will this predicament ever be solved? If my generation can become aware of the horror of violence and war, then we can move on and become proactive in stopping it. We must take on the mindset of the Golden Rule and try to be good influences on those younger than ourselves.

When a child or young person turns on a video game and is pretending to shoot people, I find it disturbing. It is troublesome in the fact that not only are parents letting their child play a game involving violence, but also dangerous in the fact that the child is learning that violence is okay. Children begin to see these acts of violence as ways to release anger and resolve hurtful situations, while what they are really doing is hurting themselves. We of my generation have grown up in an age where we have been confronted by media of all kind. We've seen the nightly news and know that violence is all around us. Yet, the prospect of a school fight and the violence that takes place during such an event, doesn't seem to faze us. We just seem to accept the fact that two people had a conflict, and they resolved it for a short time by pulling hair and giving bloody noses. That is what is most problematic: The fact that we don't acknowledge violence as an imminent threat. We just stand by and watch what is going on.

The first step in turning this around is to acknowledge the fact that violence actually IS a problem. Solutions cannot be found to a problem that is nonexistent. In order to begin the process of creating a peaceful world, we must stop all acts of violence we commit ourselves.

The second step in ending violence in the world is to convince everyone to obey the Golden Rule. We as a generation must realize that we were all created equally. We must treat each other the way that we want to be treated. By doing this, we will be able to accept the differences among us, instead of resorting to violent conflict.

Another step my generation can take to help stop violence is to find other ways to release frustrations and anger. Oftentimes, violence seems like the only effective way to expel our fury. If we engage ourselves in other activities that help to release negative energy and stress in positive ways, we will be one step closer to ending violence. Different actions we can take are exercising, talking to school counselors, or even writing down our emotions. However, the most meaningful action we can take is resolving problems by talking them out and communicating. By venting in any of these ways, minds can become more focused and cleared to face the conflicts that arise.

A last step in the process is making the next generation aware of the imminent problem of war and violence. Rather than teaching our younger siblings to fight, we need to teach them that fighting is wrong. We need to teach them that there are other ways to release anger. My generation can do this by setting a good example ourselves. If we vent in positive ways, younger teens will see us and follow our model.

So, what can my generation do to help prevent both violence and war? We can become aware of what violence is. We can teach our younger brothers and sisters that war and violence are problems so that they are aware. We can acknowledge the fact that we shouldn't judge people. We can learn other ways to release the anger that always arises with conflict, rather than using violence to solve our problems. The world has become accustomed to war and violence, but my generation can help bring peace.

###

**Alexandra Scott**  
**10<sup>th</sup> Grade, Age 15**  
**Point Loma High School**

### **What Can My Generation Do To Help Create a Peaceful World Free of War and Violence?**

In the world today, violence has become something of a commonality; it is no surprise to hear of a homicide or an ongoing war, although it is still depressing news. It is up to this generation, along with others to come, to create a sense of care among each other, express anger in different forms, and really just make sure that people are well informed. If this starts now, with my generation, then we will definitely begin to create a more peaceful environment. The world should not be as comfortable with violence as it is. With the steps stated and a better unification of all the diverse people in the world, we can create a more efficient, less violent world.

The first step that should be taken is creating a sense of care among one another. A problem that occurs all around the world is one that has to do with the communication between people. Many people feel that whatever it is that they have to say is not appreciated and that no one wants to listen to them. This leads to anger, large actions trying to get attention, and ends in violence. What this generation should work on is making sure that no one feels this way. One way to go about this is talking to others who are known for not being very social; someone needs to make sure that they know that people do want to hear what they have to say, even if they don't want to share their thoughts. Another way to go about this is, if you are one of these people who feels they do not matter or are not being heard, you need to go and share your thoughts with someone close to you who will listen.

Our generation also needs to start learning and teaching how to express our anger in forms other than violence. Many find that hurting others allows them to get their point across better, but this really is not the case. Violence only leads to more anger and evidently, pain. These wars with one another resolve nothing, so communication comes into play yet again. Talking is the way to solutions, not hurting others. Once an environment is created where people feel comfortable talking with one another, things will improve. Instead of using violent actions as a means of communication, people will begin to express their feelings of anger in other forms, such as yelling or arguing, possibly even talking. All these are better than violence and, if practiced by many people, will allow for a less violent world.

It is time that everyone becomes informed. One should be informed on all aspects of violence, its consequences, how to avoid it and how hurtful it can be. Violence is a serious issue in the world today, and law officials are strict with the consequences of abuse and the beating of another human being. Violence toward others can lead to juvenile hall and if severe/old enough, jail. These are serious consequences that people do not seem to know about or just do not take them into consideration. Violence upon oneself can also be avoided by knowing when to just walk away. One needs to know people's boundaries and when an argument is being taken too far. One also needs to know when others are about to take something too far, and, if it is something they cannot prevent, then they need to leave, freeing themselves from any violence about to take place. The last thing one should be aware of is the effect of violence; a simple punch could lead to a horrible head injury that affects someone for the rest of his or her life. No one wants to be the cause of that, which is why everyone should be informed and think before they act.

With all the violence occurring in the world, it is hard not to become a part of it. This generation needs to step up and make sure that violence is becoming a less frequent issue. We need to make sure people are being heard or at least let them know that others want to hear them. Those who don't feel like they can be heard must learn how to

express anger with words not actions. If people become more informed, they are less inclined to be involved in violence, therefore, making for a better world. If we start tackling the violence problem now, we can create a better world and move on to the next issue that needs to be solved.

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**Lauren Wieszorek**  
**9<sup>th</sup> Grade, Age 14**  
**Point Loma High School**

Peace; it's the latest fad. Everyone just passes by, oblivious to the fact that we live in a world far from peaceful. Everyone is quick to cause conflict and put blame on someone. With this we get nowhere. We just continue to fight, instead of getting to the reason why we are fighting. By the time we have ended a war, we don't even remember why we are fighting. We live in a world of diverse views, cultures, and people, but even with the challenge of bringing all of this together to function as one, we can do this if we just work together. However, we choose to stay stubborn and nobody backs down and actually figures it out. So, we end up fighting and suffering for nothing.

Our generation is one where we just find an excuse, blame it on some one else, and stay stubborn in our own views, even if they aren't the right ones. Even though everyone is entitled to his or her opinion, it is not always the answer. Between each country, we have our own misconceptions of the other. We only focus on what we hear and what we think is right, instead of opening up our eyes and getting to the facts.

A huge example of this is our view on Iraq. From our narrow-minded view, we made assumptions about their situation in their country. We took somebody's word and assumed that all Sunni's were Saddam supporters. This brought a huge split to a conflict hundreds of years old, that was semi quiet in Iraq. Even though we have dug a grave for peace that is really deep there is still hope that we can repair what we have done. Even though war seems to be the easiest answer for a dispute it's not the right one. We turn to war to resolve things when really it just causes more trouble.

Everyone these days turns to argument and fighting instead of taking a breath and figuring it all out. Especially now with stereotypes, that just adds to the problem. Every comedian nowadays does not have any original jokes. They are all a satire of the life we live in now and include racism, sexism, or religious slurs. We hear these every day, so it is as being discriminated against becomes a part of our life, and every group is subject to this.

Instead of accepting this, we should take a stand and stop sugar coating what we have done and deal with it. Even the smallest difference is still a difference. So instead of staying bigoted, look around you and think about what else you can do. Instead of jumping to conclusions, think before you do anything, because you might regret your decision. Our generation should focus on coming together, instead of trying to be right even when we are wrong. We should take a look around and make a group effort, instead of running around like chickens with our heads cut off. We have the ability to change this repetitive action of putting people down, and having war as our reprisal. Why can't we give peace a chance?

###

