

News release



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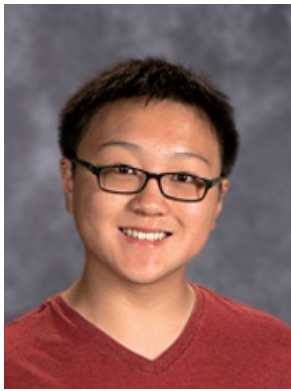
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Everett High School sophomore ranks among nation's top 115 *WordWrights* *Hank Tian's expertise with prose and poetry earns him national ranking*



What is a *WordWright*? Synonyms for "wright" include "artisan" and "craftsman." The term has a bit of an antique feel and is not used as frequently as in the days when "wheelwrights" were crucial to wagons and carriages.

The national [WordWright Challenge](#) competition tips a hat to careful and gracious use of words of the past and of today. [Everett High School](#) sophomore Hank Tian is one of the nation's best high school artisans of words.

Tian's near-perfect score in the October competition placed him in the top 115 students of those 69,000 students from 47 states who entered last month's meet. The competition requires close reading and analysis of many different kinds of prose and poetry. *WordWright* is based upon the premise that attentive reading and sensitivity to language are among the most important skills students acquire in school.

"Everett High's participation in WordWright is designed to provide more challenging and engaging activities to our students," said Principal Sally Lancaster. "I'm thrilled to see Hank be so successful in our first formal competition and look forward to more students participating."

The texts students must analyze for the challenge can range from short fiction by Eudora Welty or John Updike to poetry as old as Shakespeare's or as recent as Margaret Atwood's, and to essays as classic as E. B. White's or as current as a *Time Magazine* essay by James Poniewozik.

Though the texts vary widely in voice, subject, tone, and length, they have one thing in common: style. All use language skillfully to convey layers and shades of meaning not always apparent to students on a first or casual reading. Like the questions on the verbal SAT I, the SAT II in English Literature, and the Advanced Placement exams in both English language and English literature, the questions posed by the *WordWright Challenge* ask students both to recognize the emotional and/or rational logic of a piece of writing and to notice the ways in which a writer's style shapes and shades meaning.

(more)

Because the *WordWright Challenge* is a classroom activity and not a college-entrance exam, however, it can be a learning experience, not just a high hurdle. After completing a challenge, students talk about the texts and the answers to the multiple-choice questions, and are also given additional topics for open-ended discussion or written response.

The texts for the first *WordWright* meet this year were a short story by Tessa Hadley for ninth- and 10th-graders and a pair of essays by Frank Bruni and Thomas Carlyle (written more than 150 years apart) for 11th- and 12th-graders. The students will compete in three more *WordWright* meets in the coming months. Those who achieve or improve the most over the year will earn awards in June.

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