

News release



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For more information:

[Mary Waggoner](#), Director of Communications, 425-385-4040

[Cheryl Carlson](#), Teacher, Honors English, Everett High School, 425-385-4400

[Sally Lancaster](#), Principal, Everett High School, 425-385-4400

Everett High School students win highest honors in WordWright Challenge

A team of students representing Everett High School recently won highest honors in this year's WordWright Challenge, a national competition for high school students requiring close reading and analysis of many different kinds of prose and poetry. Participating with 596 school teams from all across the country, the school's tenth-graders tied for **eighth place in the nation** in the year's third meet, held in February.

Students at the school who won high individual honors in the meet included sophomores **Eleanore Johnson, Shelby Hocking, Marielle Stockton, Hank Tian, Sean Underhill and Taran Vazquez**. More than 69,000 students from across the country participated in the meet. The team was supervised by Everett High School Honors English teacher Cheryl Carlson.

The WordWright Challenge is based upon a belief that attentive reading and sensitivity to language are among the most important skills students learn in school.

The texts students must analyze for the Challenge can range from short fiction by Eudora Welty or John Steinbeck 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* opinion piece 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 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 his meaning. The WordWright Challenge is a classroom activity and not a college-entrance exam; however, it is intended to be a learning experience, not just a high hurdle. After completing a Challenge, classes are encouraged to talk about the texts and the answers to the multiple-choice questions, and are also given additional topics for open-ended discussion and/or written response.

The texts for the third WordWright meet this year were a poem by Alasair Reid for ninth- and 10th-graders, and a sonnet by Robert Frost for 11th- and 12th-graders. The students will participate in one more WordWright meet during the coming months, and those who progress the most this year earn medals and certificates in June..

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