

[48 Mohawk Trail Regional School students become published authors in writing contest](#)

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BUCKLAND — Leanne Blaszak, a seventh grade English language arts teacher at Mohawk Trail Regional School, offered students in her classes the opportunity to become published authors.

But there was a requirement. Each story could only be 100 words long.

By taking part in the Young Writers competition, Mohawk Trail middle schoolers were tasked with writing “speculative fiction” stories that take place in our world, but feature magical, supernatural, futuristic or other twists. The exercise — and competition — is designed to allow students to write about what inspires them while focusing on the act of writing and carefully considering their word choice. The Peabody-based organization provided materials to help educators lead their students through the process of starting with an idea to submitting a finished piece.

“Encouraging young people to experiment with language in creative and challenging ways empowers them to trust their ideas, their skills and their ability to tackle something new,” Blaszak said in a statement.

The contest theme was “The Glitch,” in which students had to imagine a story that involved a change that has world-altering consequences. Writers used a graphic organizer to help map out the ideas and elements to their story. First steps included considering prompts, defining their characters and choosing a setting. Next came the creation of the big details of the beginning, middle and end. Fleshing it out and refining were the final steps.

Submitted in late February, some titles of completed 100-word works include “The Last One To See Color,” “The Forgetting,” “What We Thought Was The End,” “The Dark Box,” “The Subliminal Space,” “The Multi-Pocket Parallel Catastrophe” and “Portraits.”

Each of the writers received a bookmark commemorating the experience. Those who were chosen to have their stories published also received a certificate of merit. “The Glitch — Stories of Imagination” is set to be published on July 31. As a participating school, Mohawk Trail will receive a complimentary copy of the book, allowing all 48 featured students the chance to see their work in print.

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