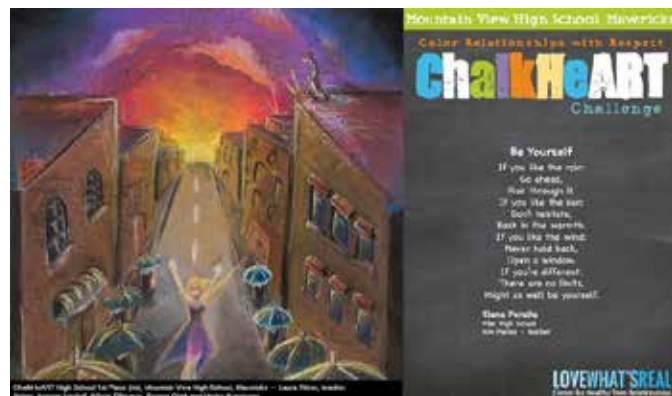


# 2014 Love What's Real Writing Challenge



## High School - Love What's Real and Social Change Themes

One in three teens who have been in a dating relationship report threats of abuse and or being physically or sexually abused. What would have to be different for a world without abuse and sexual assault to become a reality?

The Love What's Real Writing Challenge is an opportunity for Idaho's high school students to win an award - from \$25 to \$250 - and to be published in a book. Simply write a 75 word poem or short piece on one of the four social change themes listed below.

**NEW!!! Teacher Incentive!** Teachers of all 1st, 2nd and 3rd place winners will receive a \$250 stipend. The winning writers and teachers/schools will be recognized in Boise on Thursday, February 26th.

### 1. Real Social Change – How can you end a culture of unhealthy and abusive relationships?

Our generation can make a huge change to make relationships better! What are some things teens can do to make abuse a thing of the past? How will you contribute?

**Get Started!** Abuse and violence are made to seem normal and acceptable, but that can change. Teens and young adults have been powerful social change activists – just think about Malala Yousafzai winning the Nobel Peace Prize at age 17! How can you make sure that violence and abuse are not tolerated in your school or your community? Brainstorm actions you could take in your school or community and write about how you can be part of a movement to end violence.

### 2. Real Relationships – What does a real healthy relationship look like, feel like or sound like?

Real, healthy relationships with a girlfriend or boyfriend are based on equality, respect, trust, honesty, acceptance, support, and other positive characteristics. Each person is able to be their real and best self! In a healthy relationship, girlfriends or boyfriends are not pressured, jealous, or afraid.

**Get Started!** Brainstorm a list of positive characteristics of healthy relationships. Write about a specific moment in time that paints a picture of a real, healthy relationship with a boyfriend or girlfriend. Write about being accepted for who you are or how you have an equal say and put equal effort into the relationship. Write about a moment when you talked honestly and face to face about your feelings. Write about a moment where you were laughing and enjoying time together– that's what makes relationships real.

### 3. Real Expression – How can strict gender roles harm our relationships?

All of us get powerful messages about what it means to be woman and men. People of all genders and communities can be affected by the media, ads, and pop culture. These strict gender stereotypes can often stop us from being our true selves or prevent us from being in real, healthy relationships.

**Get Started!** Brainstorm a list of how media, advertising, and pop culture promotes stereotypes or portrays gender roles in way that is harmful to healthy relationships. Write about the ways you want to see gender roles and relationships change in the future. Write on how stereotypes are harmful and suggest some ways to change it.

### 4. Real Equity – How do inequalities and oppression contribute to a culture of violence?

Violence is supported by the belief that some people have less value than others (sexism, racism, classism, homophobia, able-ism, and other oppressions). Unfortunately, these inequities or discrimination exist in nearly every school and community. Tell us how inequality and/or oppression look in your community and who is impacted most. How does this contribute to violence in your school or community?

**Get Started!** Brainstorm a list of inequalities between genders - boys and girls - in your school, community, and/or the country. Write about what these inequalities look like, as well as, what can we do to change it. Envision a world where everyone is treated equally and where no one needs to control other people.

## How does it work?

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Create an original poem or essay! Writing must be 75 words or less (title does not count) of an original work on one of the four essential themes. Submit up to three poems or essays. Write in the language where you can best express yourself. Over 100 poems or essays will be selected that are creative and capture the spirit of one of the four themes for high school.

### Who is eligible?

Student authors should be in high school - public, private, or alternative school settings.

**Deadline** for submission is **midnight Friday, December 19, 2014.**

### Awards

\$250 First Place Winner, \$150 Second Place Winner, \$100 Third Place Winner, \$25 for each of the additional 100 or more writings selected for publication.

All published works will list the author, teacher, and school. A book of the published works will be distributed to Idaho's secondary school libraries. Make sure your school is represented! Last year's selections are available on [www.lovewhatsreal.com](http://www.lovewhatsreal.com)

### Two Ways to Enter by Friday, December 19th

- 1) Log on to [www.lovewhatsreal.com](http://www.lovewhatsreal.com) and enter your submission online, or
- 2) Mail your writing submission, name, address, cell phone number or home phone, school name, grade, and teacher's name to:  
Idaho Coalition Against Sexual & Domestic Violence  
300 E. Mallard Drive, Suite 130  
Boise, Idaho 83706

**Questions?** Please email [sylvia@engagingvoices.org](mailto:sylvia@engagingvoices.org).

## Now to the writing!

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We experience the world through our five senses. What are the colors, smells, sounds, and textures you see in your mind? There are no big signs that tell us it's raining or that it's fall. We know because we might feel the rain falling, hear the sound of rain outside our windows, see the leaves change colors and/or smell the steam rising up from the sidewalk. It's through our five senses that we learn the truth of the world.

Your job as a writer is to deliver a singular personal experience. And in that experience, the reader makes a connection to it and suddenly, that experience becomes universal. It's through a moment delivered, or a scene rendered in such specificity and detail, that we can see it, feel it and experience it as vividly as you do.

Take those four themes and express them using your five senses. Remember, there's no big sign that tells us what we're experiencing. It's the gray rumpled T-shirt spotted with tears, the smell of pine needles, or the pile of leaves in the neighbor's front yard that reminds us of a specific moment in time.

Write small. Take those big experiences and dive into the middle of them. Imagine it like a scuba diver might. It's impossible to comprehend how immense the ocean is, but once you dive in and look around to see the silver flash of a shark fin, the way seaweed looks like blowing hair, or when you surface with the faintest film of salt across your mask – that's when you know the experience is real.

Remember you only have 75 words so make each one count. (And know that you are invited to write in your native language.) After you're done, go back and read it. Are your verbs active and interesting? Do you have any abstract language? If so, take those abstract ideas and make them concrete. Phrases like "we're there for each other" or "she is amazing" are just white noise. Show us how or why. An image is so much more powerful than a general statement. Keep it small. Make it real. Show relationships in its truth.