

**AFMS BULLETIN CONTEST GUIDELINES**  
**ORIGINAL ARTICLES - JUNIORS**  
***SPECIFIC GUIDELINES***

1. **Junior Articles** have their own score sheets; one for “Under 12,” and one for “12-17.” Please indicate the age of the junior on the score sheet.
2. **Judges must consider the average ability of a youth of that age** in determining the quality of the article. In Juniors Under 12, 12 year-olds are competing with juniors much younger than they (could be with 6 year-olds). However, standards of quality for each must not be sacrificed. For example:
  - A seven year-old (2<sup>nd</sup> grader) might be expected to write one paragraph or one-third to one-half page and not be expected to include a bibliography.
  - A nine year-old (4<sup>th</sup> grader) would be expected to write two or more paragraphs and include a bibliography if knowledge of material came from references.
  - A gifted child may have the ability to write articles several grades above his/her grade level.
  - Presumably, the older youth would have more instruction and experience in writing articles in school. The 12-17 year olds should be able to research material and write an article of one or two pages (comparable to an adult) and to include a bibliography.Although there are no set rules for exact ability per age, per page, the judge may establish some levels of standards before judging. These standards may be established by knowledge of youth or by advice from those in the public school system. After establishing standards expected, be consistent for that age level.
3. **An original article is NOT minutes of the meeting/program.** The editor should praise the efforts of the junior reports of the meetings, programs or field trips, but not enter them as original articles unless they fit that description.
4. **An article is NOT a report of an event** (unless it goes beyond who went, when, where, and troubles). It could become an article if the who, when, and where became minor in comparison to historical facts, materials found or displayed, information about the specimens, or observations of “how to” techniques during demonstrations. The latter would take it out of a travelogue category and give it article quality. Editors should encourage and guide the growth of young writers.
5. **Copyright violation should be avoided.** Even a child should not be allowed to copy a paragraph from a book and sign his name as though the paragraph were his own words. (Parent or editor should explain this to the beginner.) Children may need guidance from the editor or interested club member as to how to research a mineral or fossil. Points will be deducted for not listing source of information.
6. **Original articles entered in AFMS competition should be written for the club bulletin and printed in it first. Authors must be club members.** Articles printed in school papers, etc. may be reprinted in the club bulletin, but should not be entered in the bulletin competition.
7. Only one original article may be entered per author per club.
8. **In case of dual club memberships:** An **original article** for AFMS competition **should have been written for one bulletin and one region** to avoid duplication of AFMS Awards and Trophies. If some authors/editors who belong to more than one club/region were to send **different articles** to two or more club bulletins in one or more regions, it would not cause any duplication and would be acceptable in the AFMS competition.
9. **Youthful writers are our future. Encourage** them in every way possible in the judge’s comments. **Use tact** in making suggestions for improvement. **Help rather than discourage.**