

League of Minnesota Human Rights Commissions

Annual Essay Contest 2011-2012

Contest Rules & Guidelines

1. All sixth, seventh and eighth grade students are eligible to participate by submitting one entry.
2. Essays may be from one to three pages in length.
3. Essay topic:

Compare and contrast the human rights that young people of your age in your community might take for granted that may not be as readily available to young people in other areas of the United States or around the world.

Reference the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the United States Bill of Rights or the Minnesota Human Rights Act.

4. Complete and attach an official 2011-2012 entry form to the back of the essay. Entry forms from past years will **not** be accepted. Forms **must** be complete and legible.
5. All first place essays selected by local Human Rights Commissions are to be mailed to:

Libby Fairchild
2678 Shadow Wood Court
Chaska, MN 55318
libby_fairchild@leagueofmnhumanrights.org
(612) 805-7141

6. Entry deadline: **March 31, 2012**

Please note that teachers or local Human Rights Commissions usually set earlier deadlines for submission, so to be able to select the first place essay from their class or community. Only one essay per commission or organization will be accepted by the League for consideration.

7. Plans for a recognition program for the students whose essays were selected by the League will be announced at a later date. It is tentatively scheduled for a weekend in May 2012.

8. Awards

First prize	\$500
Second prize	\$350
Third prize	\$200

Only students and teachers whose essays are selected for First, Second and Third Prize or Honorable Mention will be contacted.

9. For more details, refer to the Essay Contest Guidelines.

League of Minnesota Human Rights Commissions

**2011-2012 Annual Essay Contest
Entry Form**

Please provide all of the information completely and legibly, and attach to the back of the essay before submission:

Student's name: _____

Student's grade: _____

Student's home address (including Zip Code): _____

Best phone number to reach the student: _____

Student's email address: _____

Name of student's parent(s): _____

Daytime phone number(s) for parent(s): _____

Parent(s) email address(es): _____

Name of teacher: _____

School name: _____

School address: _____

Best phone number to reach the teacher: _____

Teacher's email address: _____

As the parent or guardian of _____, I give my permission for the League of Minnesota Human Rights Commissions to publish my student's essay, name and photos from the 2011-2012 Annual Essay Contest in any and all forms of media.

Parent(s) Signature

Date

Parent(s) Signature

Date

This is the official entry form for the 2011-2012 League of Minnesota Human Rights Commission's Annual Middle School Contest. No other form, including those from past years, shall be submitted or accepted.

Prewriting Essays

What is the Prewriting Stage?

The prewriting state is when you prepare your ideas for your essay before you begin writing. You will find it easier to write your essay if you build an outline first, especially when you are writing longer assignments.

Six Prewriting Steps:

1. **Think carefully about what you are going to write.** Ask yourself, which question am I going to answer in this paragraph or essay? How can I best answer this question? What is the most important part of my answer? How can I make an introductory sentence (or thesis statement) from the most important part of my answer? Which facts or ideas can I use to support my introductory sentence? How can I make this paragraph or essay interesting? Do I need more facts on this topic? Where can I find more facts on this topic?
2. **Open your notebook.** Write your answers to the questions above. You do not need to spend a lot of time doing this; just write enough to help you remember why and how you are going to write your paragraph or essay.
3. **Collect facts related to your paragraph or essay.** Look for and write down facts that will help you answer your questions. A timesaving hint is to make certain that the facts you are writing are related to the exact question you are going to answer in your paragraph or essay.
4. **Write down your own ideas.** Ask yourself, what else do I want to write about this topic? Why should people be interest in this topic? Why is this topic important?
5. **Decide on the main idea of the paragraph or essay.** Choose the most important point you are going to present. If you cannot decide which point is the most important, just choose one point and stick to it throughout your paragraph or essay.
6. **Organize your facts and ideas in a way that develops your main idea.** Once you have chosen the most important point of your paragraph or essay, you must find the best way to tell your reader about it. Look at the facts you have written. Look at your own ideas on the topic. Decide which facts and ideas will best support the main idea of your essay. Once you have chosen the facts and ideas you plan to use, ask yourself in which order to put them in the essay. Write your own notes that you may use to guide yourself as you write your essay.

Supporting Paragraphs

What are supporting paragraphs?

Supporting paragraphs make up the main body of your essay.

What do they do?

They develop the main idea of your essay.

How do I write them?

1. List the points that develop the main idea of your essay.
2. Place each supporting point in its own paragraph.
3. Develop each supporting point with facts, details, and examples.

To connect your supporting paragraphs, you should use special transition words. Transition words link your paragraphs together and make your essay easier to read. Use them at the beginning and the end of your paragraphs.

Examples of transition words that can help you to link your paragraphs together:

For listing points

First
Second
Third

For counter examples

However
Even though
On the other hand
Nevertheless

For additional ideas

Another
In addition to
Related to
Furthermore

To show cause and effect

Therefore
Thus
As a result of
Consequently
Also

Like all good paragraphs, each supporting paragraph should have a topic sentence, supporting sentences, and a summary sentence.

Editing Checklist

What is the editing stage?

The editing stage is when you check your essay for mistakes and correct them.

Ideas and Content

- My ideas are clear.
- I give enough detail.
- I need to add more information

Organization

- My paper has a main idea.
- My paragraphs only talk about one thing.
- My paper has a strong beginning.
- My ending is well thought out.
- My paper doesn't jump around. It is easy to follow.
- Topic sentences tell about each paragraph.

Voice

- This paper sounds like me.
- This paper shows I care about the topic.
- This paper is lively, or exciting in some way, or it is a little different from everyone else's.

Word Choice

- I chose accurate, strong, specific words.
- My words are fun to read.
- I tried something new with my words.

Sentence Fluency

- Sentences are smooth and easy to read.
- I fixed my choppy sentences.
- Sentences start in different ways.
- I have some long sentences and some short sentences to make my paper interesting.
- Each sentence has a noun and a verb.

Conventions

- I checked my spelling.
- I checked my capitals, periods, and indents.
- I gave each speaker a new paragraph.
- I put quotation marks " " around things that characters said.