



**2019-2020
Essay/Speech Contest**

Sponsored by:

City of Naples
School District of Collier County
Collier County Sheriff's Office
Southwest Florida 49'ers
Rotary Club of Naples



Character Education Essay/Speech Contest

This is the twenty-fourth year of the *Laws of Life* Essay/Speech Contest for students in grades 4-12 in Collier County Schools. Students are invited to write an essay/speech that causes them to reflect upon an important character trait and to explain how it influences their life and the lives of others.

The essay/speech topics for this year are given on page four.

The four competitive levels are: Grades 4-5 Grades 9-10
 Grades 6-8 Grades 11-12

THIS YEAR’S SCHEDULE

August 2019	Identification of participating schools and school contact persons
September 2019	Distribution of contest rules, and scoring procedures
Prior to November 15	There is a maximum number of essay/speeches that can be submitted. Schools are asked to screen all essay/speeches and <u>submit no more than five entries for each competitive level</u> (elementary, middle, high 9/10, and high 11/12). A completed School Cover Sheet should be submitted with the five essays. <u>To be eligible as a school winner, five entries must be submitted in each of the applicable competitive levels.</u>
November 15	All entries are to be submitted to: Mikie Stroh, Coordinator of Character Education School District of Collier County/ Curriculum and Instruction 5775 Osceola Trail, Naples, FL 34109 Phone 377-0096
November 20-Dec. 6	Written essays are judged
December 12	Announcement of top 10 semi-finalists in each division who will deliver speeches on January 9 th and 10 th
January 9 & 10, 2020	Oral presentations of essay/speeches at the MLK Administrative Center
January 23, 2020	Announcement of four finalists in each division
February 20, 2020	<i>Laws of Life</i> Banquet and announcement of finalists’ ranking

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AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

Student District-Level Awards:

Elementary School (4-5th grades)

First	\$250 Check
Second	\$200 Check
Third	\$150 Check
Fourth	\$100 Check

High School (9-10th grades)

First	\$600 Check
Second	\$400 Check
Third	\$300 Check
Fourth	\$200 Check

Middle School (6-8th grades)

First	\$250 Check
Second	\$200 Check
Third	\$150 Check
Fourth	\$100 Check

High School (11-12th grades)

First	\$2,000 Check
Second	\$1,000 Check
Third	\$ 500 Check
Fourth	\$ 250 Check

Student School-Level Awards:

Each school winner, **not among the top four finalists**, will receive a \$25 Amazon Gift Certificate. A school must submit five essays in the applicable competitive level to be eligible for a school winner. School winners will be announced after the banquet.

Teacher Recognition:

Each school contact person will receive a \$25.00 Amazon gift certificate in appreciation for their coordination of the *Laws of Life* program in their school.

Teachers who sponsor a student among the 16 finalists will receive an invitation to the Recognition Banquet.

The teachers of the students who win first place in their division will receive a \$50.00 Amazon gift certificate. Teachers of the other 12 finalists will receive a \$25.00 Amazon gift certificate.

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RULES FOR WRITTEN ESSAY/SPEECH

ESSAY/SPEECH TOPICS

Elementary and Middle School Topics

The *Laws of Life* are the character traits that we develop as positive, productive members of a global community. The *Laws of Life* are always with us, helping us make good decisions. Respect is one of the *Laws of Life*. It is said that respect is the cornerstone of all the *Laws of Life*, and that it cannot be purchased or demanded – it can only be given to others and earned through actions. Why do you think respect for yourself and other people is important and what can you do to earn or show respect? You may use living or historical examples of people who have earned or exemplified respect.

High School Topics

The *Laws of Life* are a collection of principles that help determine our individual moral value systems. Our values are our personal inventory of what we consider most important in life and determine to a great extent our character. Our character is defined by what we do, not what we say or believe. Every choice we make helps define the kind of person we are choosing to become.

Character is defined as “the final decision to reject whatever is demeaning to oneself or to others and, with confidence and honesty, chose what is right” (Arthur Trudeau). Which *Laws of Life* do you value as most important in helping you make the right choices, and who or what influenced your character development?

1. Papers must be on the assigned topics. Papers are to be typed, double spaced, with standard margins. Length of papers: Elementary School 200-350 words; Middle School 350-500 words; High School 400-750 words. Students will be asked to sign an honor statement indicating they have written their own essay. Students submitting material from previous contests will be automatically disqualified.
2. Each student submitting a written essay/speech in the *Laws of Life* Character Education contest will be responsible for presenting the speech orally if his/her entry is selected as a semi-finalist.
3. Each student will complete the entry form (copy enclosed) that is to be stapled to the top of their essay/speech. Students are reminded not to use their last name or any other reference that would identify the paper as theirs. **Essays will not be returned, so please keep a copy.**
4. The written essays will be judged based on the *Florida Standards Assessment* Rubric, content, and how well examples are used to illustrate the *Laws of Life*.
5. The Screening Panel of Judges will determine the 10 best papers at each level (Grades 4-5, 6-8, 9-10, 11-12), and the finalists at each level will receive further information regarding the preparation for, and the oral presentation of, their essays/speeches. The Blue Ribbon Panel of Judges will hear the 10 finalists in each division and determine the top four finalists. These students will attend the *Laws of Life* banquet where the order (first - fourth) will be announced, and the first place winner in each division will present his/her speech.

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RULES FOR ORAL PRESENTATIONS

Statement of Philosophy

Each contestant will be judged on the overall effectiveness of his or her delivery. The students with the highest scoring essays will deliver thought provoking, well-written speeches in a very effective manner.

1. Students should deliver a captivating performance of a well-written script.
2. Students adhering to the written length of the speech will be allowed to deliver the entire piece. There will be no penalty for time. However, students should bear in mind that speeches that SEEM long and dull may be penalized for overall effectiveness, the most important category in the judging.
3. Speeches must be on the assigned topic and conform to written length.
4. The most effective speeches are delivered from memory with minimal or no reference to notes.
5. Appropriate dress is expected.
6. Movement should have a purpose.
7. No props, costumes, audio or visual aids are allowed.
8. Students are encouraged to review the information and guidelines for judging as they practice and prepare for their presentation.

SCORING CONSIDERATIONS

- | | |
|----------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Focus | (score of 10 – 20) _____ |
| 2. Organization | (score of 10 – 20) _____ |
| 3. Vocal variety | (score of 1 – 10) _____ |
| 4. Articulation/pronunciation of words | (score of 1 – 10) _____ |
| 5. Eye contact | (score of 1 – 10) _____ |
| 6. Posture, gesture, movement | (score of 1 – 10) _____ |
| 7. Overall effect | (score of 10 – 20) _____ |

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SCHOOL COVER SHEET
(Please attach to your school's entries.)

School: _____

School Contact Person: _____

School Contact Email: _____

Number of Essays Submitted (Maximum number for each competitive level is 5): _____

Total number of essays from which the submitted essays were selected: _____

Please **PRINT/TYPE** the names of the teachers and students whose essays are being submitted.

Teachers

Students

- | | |
|----------|-------|
| 1. _____ | _____ |
| 2. _____ | _____ |
| 3. _____ | _____ |
| 4. _____ | _____ |
| 5. _____ | _____ |

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STUDENT COVER SHEET

ESSAY/SPEECH CONTESTANT: Please complete the following form. Make sure your name and the name of your school appears ONLY on this cover sheet and NOWHERE else in your essay/speech.

NAME: _____

AGE: _____

GRADE LEVEL: _____

SCHOOL: _____

TEACHER: _____

DATE: _____

HOME PHONE: _____

HOME ADDRESS: _____

HOME EMAIL ADDRESS: _____

NUMBER OF WORDS IN THE SPEECH: _____

I hereby certify that this essay/speech is my own work, and I have received no assistance, other than editorial, from another student or adult.

Student Signature

Date

JUDGES USE ONLY: ASSIGNED NUMBER: _____

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CHARACTER TRAITS

Self-Control: To be self-disciplined means to control one's behaviors and emotions and when necessary, to postpone immediate needs/desires for long term benefits.

Attributes: Demonstrating self-control
Exercising moderation
Demonstrating effective habits
Demonstrating patience

Citizenship: To be a good citizen means to do one's share to make the community a better place.

Attributes: Caring about the common good
Protecting the environment
Helping your school and community be better, cleaner and safer

Patriotism: To be patriotic implies love of nation, respect for its past as well as its institutions and the desire to be actively involved in making it even better.

Attributes: Obeying laws
Participating in the democratic process
Voting
Serving others

Honesty: To be honest means to be truthful, trustworthy, and behave with integrity.

Attributes: Not misleading others
Being forthright

Fairness: To be fair means to promote equal opportunity for everyone and to apply agreed upon rules equally to everyone.

Attributes: Being impartial
Being without prejudice
Being just

Courage: To have courage is to be brave and to have a personal strength to face difficulties, obstacles and challenges.

Attributes: Working through real or imagined fear
Facing mistakes and learning from them
Standing up for what is right even when others ridicule you

Tolerance: To be tolerant means not only to accept differences in others, but also to sustain or defend people whose ideas are different from your own.

Attributes: Being open-minded
Defending the rights of others

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Respect: To show respect for something or someone means to treat them as valuable and worthy. A person should exhibit respect for him/herself, other people, property and the environment.

Attributes: Caring about other's feelings
Being courteous and polite
Honoring roles of authority

Responsibility: To be responsible means to be accountable for one's own actions, and to know and follow laws/rules/conduct codes.

Attributes: Thinking before acting
Accepting consequences for your actions
Meeting commitments
Being dependable

Cooperation: To cooperate means to recognize mutual interdependence with others resulting in polite treatment and respect for each other.

Attributes: Willingness to compromise to reach a common goal
Showing courtesy and kindness to others
Respecting the rights and feelings of others

Kindness: To be kind means to treat other people, as you want to be treated.

Attributes: Showing compassion
Showing empathy
Being considerate
Being unselfish
Being friendly
Being helpful

Perseverance: To persevere means to complete a task even when it becomes difficult, boring, or discouraging.

Attributes: Working hard toward goals
Overcoming obstacles
Not giving up easily
Being resourceful in reaching a goal

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Laws of Life Character Education Judging Criteria for Written Essay/Speech

POINTS	1	2	3
FOCUS	Partially focused on topic May include loosely related or extraneous material	Generally focused on topic Some loosely related material	Consistently focused on topic Little or no loosely related material
ORGANIZATION	Inconsistent organizational structure Inconsistent use of transitional strategies Uneven progression of ideas from beginning to end	Clear and evident organizational structure Adequate use of transitional strategies Adequate progression of ideas from beginning to end	Clear and effective organizational structure Variety of transitional strategies Logical progression of ideas from beginning to end
EVIDENCE & ELABORATION	Provides uneven support Repetitive or ineffective use of elaborative techniques (including but not limited to definitions, quotations, and examples) Simplistic expression of ideas Simple construction of sentences	Provides adequate support Adequate use of elaborative techniques (including but not limited to definitions, quotations, and examples) Adequate expression of ideas Some variation in sentence structure	Provides thorough and convincing support Effective use of elaborative techniques (including but not limited to definitions, quotations, and examples) Clear and effective expression of ideas Varied sentence structure
CONVENTIONS	Various errors in usage Inconsistent use of correct punctuation, capitalization, sentence formation, and spelling	Minor errors in usage but no pattern of errors Adequate use of punctuation, capitalization, sentence formation, and spelling	Minor errors in usage but no pattern of errors Few, if any, errors in mechanics, punctuation, capitalization, or spelling
Papers with more than a few errors in the mechanics and conventions of writing will not be considered.			
POINTS	1-4	5-8	9-12
OVERALL EFFECT	Dull Disjointed Hard to follow Trite Poor speech potential Many errors in the conventions of writing	Some interest Fairly well organized Somewhat engaging Some creative aspects Good speech potential Some errors in the conventions of writing	Very interesting Cohesive Engaging Creative Excellent speech potential Few, if any, errors in the conventions of writing

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