

ECHOES and REFLECTIONS Leaders in Holocaust Education



2016 Moral Courage Essay Contest



Overview

This essay contest uses the lens of the Holocaust to **educate students about the ramifications of present-day stereotyping, prejudice, racism and anti-Semitism**. The Holocaust provides a context for exploring the dangers of remaining indifferent and silent in the face of the oppression of others. In addition, this essay contest invites the writer to learn about moral courage and the personal and societal benefits that may be realized by standing up to injustice.

Although there is no single definition, **moral courage** can be defined as *displaying an altruistic act in spite of the substantial risk of being persecuted for doing so*.

Purpose

The purpose of this contest is for you to **(i)** explain how historical or present day events illustrate or command an act of moral courage, and **(ii)** express your connection with, or thoughts regarding, such events or acts. Your research and writing should focus on how one person can make a positive impact.

Rules & Guidelines

1. Writers must be Arizona students in grades 7-12.
2. Word count is 500-750 words for 7/8, and 750-1,000 words for 9-12
3. All submissions must (i) have a title, (ii) be typed, and (iii) be double-spaced.
4. Two to five references must be cited in a bibliography. Wikipedia does not count as a reference. One reference must be primarily about the Holocaust.
5. STAPLE In Order: (i) Completed Entry Sheet, (ii) your Pre-Writing Reflection Sheet, and (iii) one copy of your essay. PLUS- provide an ADDITIONAL COPY of your essay. (Yes, that means send 2 copies of the essay. Staple all the submission info to one and include one clean copy.)
6. DO NOT write your name or school anywhere on the CLEAN Copy of the essay. The entry form will include this information.
7. DO NOT plagiarize.
8. DO NOT submit more than one entry.

You will be **automatically disqualified** if you violate or fail to meet any of the above rules & guidelines.

Step 1: Contextual Research

Learn about the **Holocaust**, and specifically the actions of those who resisted the Nazis by displaying various forms of moral courage. Although there are many sources available for your research, it is highly recommended that you consult the [Righteous Among Nations information on the Yad Vashem website](#). Also, consider other historical and present-day acts of moral courage or situations in which moral courage is required.

Step 2: Specific Research

Select and research a **historical or contemporary event in which** moral courage is highlighted. Although some students may be tempted to skip Step 1, it will be impossible to write a successful essay for this contest without having the necessary contextual background. It will be apparent in your submission.

Step 3: Pre- Writing Reflection Sheet

On a separate sheet of paper to be attached to the application:

- Brainstorm a list of at least ten individuals who exhibited moral courage. Your list must include both Holocaust and non-Holocaust-related examples. To get you started, you might consider including people like Raoul Wallenberg, Sojourner Truth, Nelson Mandela, Cesar Chavez, Miep Gies, Mohandas Gandhi, and Aung San Suu Kyi and Malala Yousafzai.
- Write your own definition of moral courage and, if you desire, why you think your definition is better than the sample definition (**HINT: We want your definition to be better!**)
- Based on your contextual and specific research, briefly explain what was meaningful to you.
- Specifically identify **(i)** the individual or group highlighted in your essay, **(ii)** an example of how such individual or group exhibited moral courage, and **(iii)** the manner in which such acts have meaning to you.

Step 4: Write

Write an essay that includes the following:

- A summary of how the individual or group selected by you exhibited moral courage.
- A reference to the Holocaust. Although your essay does not have to be about moral courage displayed during the Holocaust, your essay must include a connection between (i) your chosen topic and (ii) the Holocaust.
- A discussion of moral courage and/or why this information is meaningful to you.

For Teachers: Arizona College and Career Ready Standards

As a classroom assignment, this essay can meet several Arizona State Standards in Reading, Writing and Social Studies.

For example:

RH 11-12.7, requiring students to Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media in order to address a question or solve a problem.

RH 9-10.9, requiring students to compare and contrast treatments of the same topic in several primary and secondary sources.

RH 6-8.10, requiring students to be able to read and comprehend history/social studies texts, independently and proficiently.

The following websites provide valuable information:

- Echoes and Reflections: www.echoesandreflections.org
- Shoah Foundation I-Witness: <http://iwitness.usc.edu/SFI/>
- United States Holocaust Memorial Museum: www.ushmm.org
- Righteous Among the Nations-Yad Vashem Museum: <http://www1.yadvashem.org/yv/en/righteous/index.asp>

Email mdunn@adl.org to request past winning essays.

Awards and Recognition

<u>Student Awards*</u>	Division 1 Grades 7-8	Division 2 Grades 9-10	Division 3 Grades 11-12
1 st Place	\$200	\$300	\$400
2 nd Place	\$100	\$200	\$300
3 rd Place	\$50	\$100	\$150

Teacher Awards
Discretionary awards may be given to teachers for a variety of reasons
(e.g., number of students who participate in this essay contest, percentage of students in a single class who participate in this essay contest, number of students who receive a certificate of recognition, etc.).

* Additionally, certificates of recognition will be awarded to the top ten essays in each Division.

Submission and Notification Timeline

Thursday, March 3, 2016: Deadline for all Essay Packet submissions

Packets must include:

- 1a. Entry Form
- 1b. Original Essay
- 1c. Reflection Sheet
2. Copy of Essay

Essay Packets should be sent to: Echoes and Reflections Essay Contest
ADL, Arizona Regional Office
3200 N. Central Ave. Suite 2120
Phoenix, AZ 85012

Mid-April 2016: All winners will be notified.

May 2016: ADL will host an Awards Ceremony for all winners and recognized entrants.

“How far that little candle throws its beams; so shines a good deed in a naughty world.”

- William Shakespeare



The Anti-Defamation League (ADL) was founded in 1913
“to stop the defamation of the Jewish people and to secure justice and fair treatment to all.”

www.adl.org