

National Rural Education Association

ESSAY CONTEST

**ELIGIBILITY**

Grades 3-8 may participate in a written essay contest using the provided prompt and rubric. Any student who attends a rural school may participate in this contest.

High School students, in grades 9-12, may participate in a video essay contest using the provided prompt and rubric. Any high school student who attends a rural high school may participate in this contest.

**PRIZES**

Grades 3-5: (Elementary) Grades 6-8: (Middle/Junior High) Grades 9-12: (High School)

1st Place: $250 1st Place: $400 1st Place: $400

Runner Up: $100 Runner Up: $200 Runner Up: $200

**SCORING**

All essays, whether written or video, will be scored using the attached scoring rubrics.

**OTHER REQUIREMENTS**

Schools are asked to pre-screen entries according to the attached rubrics and select up to five (5) quality entries for each grade cluster. No more than five (5) entries will be accepted from any one school.

**THE PROMPT**

*Rural schools are often the center of the community. Think about your school and how it relates to your community. Why is your school important to you and the community? What are events and activities that connect your school to the community and why are they important to the livelihood of your community?*

**REQUIREMENTS**

Grades 3-5:

Written essays are to be approximately 250 words in length. Essays must be legible or typed and double spaced. All essays must follow the writing prompt for the National Rural Education Association. Essays may be submitted by email or mail. See submittal process for the requirements regarding submission.

Grades 6-8:

Written essays are to be approximately 500 words in length. Essays must be legible or typed and double spaced. All essays must follow the writing prompt for the National Rural Education Association. Essays may be submitted by email or mail. See submittal process for the requirements regarding submission.

Grades 9-12:

Video essays are to be between 3 and 4 minutes in length. All videos must follow the rubric for the National Rural Education Association. Videos must be submitted via email in an approved format. See submittal process for all requirements regarding submission.

C:\Users\allison_nys\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\UX6JHI1Y\MC900295069[1].wmf**SUBMITTAL PROCESS**

Written Essays

Email Process

1. Scan and email the selected essays to: [nreacontest@gmail.com](mailto:nreacontest@gmail.com)
2. Fill out the student information card, scan and email with essay.
3. By submitting the essays via email to the NREA, teachers and/or administrators are verifying that the essays are done by students in a rural school and are original pieces done by students.

Mailing Process

1. Essays can be mailed to: Allison Nys

110 Fourth Ave.

Laurel, MT 59044

1. Fill out the student information card and paper clip to the written essay.
2. All mailed essays MUST have an attached letter from a teacher and/or administrator stating that the essays are done by students in a rural school and are original pieces done by students.

Video Essays

Email Only

1. All video essays can be emailed to: [nreacontest@gmail.com](mailto:nreacontest@gmail.com)
2. Fill out the student information card, scan and email with video.
3. Approved Video Formats are: avi, flv, mov, mp4, mpeg, wmv
4. By submitting the essays via email to the NREA, teachers and/or administrators are verifying that the video essays are done by a high school student in a rural school and are original pieces done by students. By submitting the essay, you also agree that any student used in the video has a media exemption and can be used by the NREA, in the case that the video should win.

DEADLINE

Entries must be emailed or postmarked by April 1st

Winners will be announced by May 15th

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**STUDENT INFORMATION CARD**

**Please type in gray boxes. They will expand as needed.**

Full name of student:       Grade:

Student Address:       State:    Zip:

Student Phone Number:

Full Name of School:       Phone Number of School:

Address of School:      State:    Zip:

Full name of teacher:       Full name of administrator (if applicable):

All students in video (if applicable) have a media exemption (place initials in box):

The use of copyrighted materials has been used with permission (place initials in box):

**This card must be scanned and emailed with all emailed essays OR attached by paperclip to mailed essays.**

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| Category | 4  **National Rural Education Written Essay Rubric** | 3 | 2 | 1 | Total Points |
| Focus on topic  (content) | There is one clear, well focused topic. Main idea stands out and is supported by detailed information in the essay. | Main idea is clear, but the supporting information is general. | Main idea is somewhat clear, but there is a need for more supporting information. | The main idea is not clear. There is seemingly random collection of information. |  |
| Accuracy of facts  (Content) | All supportive facts are reported accurately. | Almost all supportive facts are reported accurately. | Most supportive facts are reported accurately. | No facts are reported or most are inaccurate. |  |
| Introduction  (Organization) | The introduction is inviting, states the main topic, and previews the structure of the essay. | The introduction clearly states the main topic and previews the structure of the essay, but is not particularly inviting to the reader. | The introduction states the main topic, but does not adequately preview the structure of the essay nor is it particularly inviting to the reader. | There is no clear introduction of the main topic or structure of the essay. |  |
| Sequencing (Organization) | Details are placed in a logical order and the way they are presented effectively keeps the interest of the reader. | Details are placed in a logical order, but the way they are presented sometimes makes the writing less interesting. | Some details are not in a logical or expected order and this distracts the reader from the essay. | Many details are not in a logical or expected order. There is little sense that the writing is well organized. |  |
| Flow & rhythm  (sentence fluency) | All sentences sound natural and are easy to understand when read aloud. Each sentence is clear and has an obvious emphasis. | Almost all sentences sound natural and are easy to understand when read aloud, but 1 or 2 are awkward or difficult to understand. | Most sentences sound natural and are easy to understand when read aloud, but several are awkward and difficult to understand. | The sentences are difficult to read aloud. They are repetitive, and awkward. |  |
| Word Choice | Writer uses vivid words and phrases that linger or draw pictures in the reader’s mind, and the choice and placement of the words seems accurate, natural and not forced. | Writer uses vivid words and phrases that linger or draw pictures in the reader’s mind, but occasionally the words are used in accurately or seem overdone. | Writer uses words that communicate clearly, but the writing lacks variety, punch or flair. | Writer uses a limited vocabulary, which does not communicate strongly or capture the reader’s interest. Jargon or cliché’s may be present and detract from the meaning of the essay. |  |

TOTAL POINTS: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**National Rural Education Video Essay Rubric**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Category | Criteria | 5 | 3 | 1 | Total |
| Content Objective (Total 5 Points) | Storyline | - Tells a compelling story.  - Content relates to the storyline  - Provides fresh, interesting or humorous insights  - Events are presented in a logical order | - Tells a connected story  - Content mostly relates to storyline but some items do not  - Events seem to be slightly out of logical order | - Tells a confused or disconnected story  - Random or irrelevant content included  - Events are completely out of logical order |  |
| Production Quality (Total 20 Points) | Video | - Always in focus (unless purposefully done)  - Always steady  - Variety of camera movements. The movements are planned and purposeful to provide impact to the story  - Variety of angles and shots | - Usually in focus  - Usually steady  - The camera movements are limited throughout  - Very few different angle shots | - Sometimes in focus, often out of focus  - Sometimes steady but often wobbly  - No camera movements used  - No variety of angle shots used |  |
| Audio | - Sound always clear (unless purposefully done)  - Ambient noise is appropriate  - Appropriate use of silence | - Sound usually clear  - Limited ambient noise  - Silence seems awkward or out of place | - Most sound unclear (low voices)  - Overly loud ambient noise  - Too silent, causing storyline to fail |  |
| Voiceovers, Background music & Sound Effects | - Background music and sound effects well balanced  - Music and effects enhance mood/pacing  - Creative/appropriate use of sound effects, narration, etc. | - Background music and sound is somewhat balanced but some is loud or too quiet  - Music and effects are appropriate for mood/pacing but doesn’t enhance it | - Background music overly loud or too quiet  - Sounds are unrelated to material and is not appropriate for mood/pacing |  |
| Lighting | - Additional lighting is used to eliminate shadows or glare  - All scenes have sufficient lighting  - Use of vivid colors | -Additional lighting is used as necessary but some shadows and glares still exist  - Most scenes have sufficient lighting, but some are dark. | - Only ambient light is used  - Many scenes are too bright or too dark  - No use of color |  |

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| Editing  (Total 15 Points) | Cutting | Clips show no slack time and begin and end with thought to the action. | Most clips edited to remove slack time and to begin and end with thought to action. | Clips begin and/or end with slack time or in mid action. |  |
| Transitions | All transitions between clips are appropriate, suit mood and content, and smooth the flow from scene to scene. | Basic transitions used (cut and fade) appropriately. Flow from scene to scene is fairly appropriate but could use some modifications | No transitions between clips are used or too many different transitions are used to confuse the viewer. |  |
| Pacing / Continuity | - Variety of pacing helps the mood and content of the piece.  - Pacing keeps viewers interested.  - Video clips fit the storyline. | - Most video clips move at a steady pace to help keep viewers interested.  - Most video clips fit the storyline. | - Many clips are too long or too short, making pace of video not interesting to viewers.  - Many video clips do not fit the storyline. |  |
| Enhancing  (Total 10 Points) | Titles | Titles and subtitles are clear with lack of errors and are innovative. | Titles and subtitles are usually clear and have minor errors. | Titles and subtitles are unclear due to font, size or color contrast. Errors are found throughout. |  |
| Graphics, Animations & Special Effects | - All graphics, animations, or effects are related to and enhance the storyline of the piece.  - Most graphics and animation are original  - All graphics are clear (appropriate size, composition, resolution.)  - All elements work well with each other | - Most graphics, animations, or effects are related to and enhance the storyline of the piece.  - Some graphics are original, but most are borrowed clipart or images  - Most graphics are clear (most use appropriate size, composition, resolution.) | - Some graphics, animations or effects are related but most are not related to the storyline.  - Most or all of the graphics are borrowed clipart or images  - Graphics are unclear due to size, composition, or resolution. |  |
| Creativity  (Total 5 Points) | Unique and shows originality | -Thorough evidence of imagination, creativity, or thoughtfulness to the piece/topic.  - Style or mood suits the content  - Piece is creative and original work | - Some evidence of imagination, creativity, or thoughtfulness to the piece/topic.  - Style and mood is lacking in parts. | - Little evidence of imagination, creativity or thoughtfulness to the piece/topic.  - Style and mood are obsolete in the piece. |  |
| **TOTAL** |  |  |  |  |  |