

2024-2025 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Contest

Rules and Information

Sponsors: Missouri National Education Association

Theme: "Youth for Change: Continuing the Legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.": Reflect on Dr. King's vision of equality, justice, and peace and how you can contribute to advancing this vision and promoting a more just and peaceful future.

Eligibility: Students can compete in six categories based on grade level:

- **Written Essay w/Poster:** K-2 and 3-5
- **Written Essay:** 6-8 and 9-12
- **Visual Art (spoken word, poem, song, drawing/digital media):** 6-8 and 9-12

Process: Your Missouri NEA local association **MUST** host the initial contest and submit **1st, 2nd, and 3rd place winners**, in any or all categories, with a maximum of 3 per category (**up to 18 entries per local association**).

Entries will only be accepted from the local MNEA affiliate.

K-5 Criteria: An essay accompanying each poster **MUST** meet all the criteria listed below.

- K-2:** two-three complete sentences **3-5:** minimum of one-two paragraphs
- The essay **MUST** be written/typed on a separate sheet of paper and taped to the back of the poster.
 - Poster and essay **MUST** address and reflect the **THEME**.
 - Use pencils, crayons, paints, markers, or colored pencils for posters.
 - A completed entry form must be taped to each poster.
 - **Posters must be no smaller than 8.5" x 11" and no larger than 11" x 17"**.
 - Poster lamination is optional.
 - Only students' original work will be accepted.
 - **ESSAYS WITHOUT POSTERS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.**
 - **POSTERS WITHOUT ESSAYS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.**
 - Reports will not be accepted.

6-12 Criteria: Submissions must achieve all scoring guide criteria related to the following:

Written Essay

- Title
- Statement of Purpose/Focus
- Organization
- Elaboration of Evidence
- Language/Vocabulary
- Conventions

6-8: Minimum of 4 paragraphs

9-12: Minimum of 5 paragraphs

Visual Art

- Title
- Description
- Theme
- Creativity/Originality
- Skill

See scoring guides for additional information.

[MNEA MLK Essay Scoring Guide.pdf](#)

[MNEA MLK Visual Art Scoring Guide .pdf](#)

Deadline: All winning entries must be delivered to your local association by _____.

Prizes: Three winners will be determined in each category at the **STATE** level:

(up to 18 entries per local association, 3 per category)

1st Place: \$75 gift card and certificate

2nd Place: \$50 gift card and certificate

3rd Place: \$30 gift card and certificate

Teachers of student winners will receive a \$30 gift card.

****If a teacher has multiple winners, they will only receive one teacher prize.**

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Entry Form (Please print legibly)

Due Date for Judging: _____

To be determined by local association.

Grade Level Category (circle): **K-2** **3-5** **6-8** **9-12**

Student's Name: _____

Student's Address: _____
(Street/P.O. Box) (City) (State) (Zip)

Student's Phone#: (_____) _____ E-mail _____

Student's Signature: _____

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) Names & Addresses: _____

School District: _____ School: _____

School Phone: _____

School Address: _____
(Street/P.O. Box) (City) (State) (Zip)

Student's Teacher: _____

Teacher's Phone: (_____) _____ (_____) _____
School Home

Teacher's E-mail: _____ Teacher's Signature _____

Local Association: _____

Local Contact Person: _____

Local Contact Person's Phone Number: (_____) _____

A copy of this COMPLETED entry form MUST be attached to each winning entry submitted for state level judging.

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Information for Local Associations ONLY!

All entries must be received in the MNEA headquarters office
by January 30th, 2025

(Up to 18 entries per local association)

Mail entries to:

MNEA
Attn: Lauren Vinson
1810 E. Elm Street
Jefferson City, MO 65101

Contact Information:

Lauren Vinson, MNEA Governance Secretary
Phone (800) 392-0236, ext. 606
E-mail Lauren.Vinson@mnea.org
Visit www.mnea.org/mlkcontest

2025 Dr. King Contest K-5 Scoring Guide

Judge's Initials _____ Entry # _____

Theme: *Youth for Change - Continuing the Legacy*

0 1 2 3 4 5
Low High

- ___ ___ Does the essay and poster convey a sense of originality and creativity?
- ___ ___ Does the essay and poster demonstrate creativity in developing the theme?
- ___ ___ Does the essay and poster reflect the writer's own thoughts and ideas that relate to the theme?
- ___ ___ Does the essay and poster demonstrate good writing skills: proper spelling, sentence structure, grammar, and punctuation?

___ **TOTAL SCORE**

2025 Dr. King Contest K-5 Scoring Guide

Judge's Initials _____ Entry # _____

Theme: *Youth for Change - Continuing the Legacy*

0 1 2 3 4 5
Low High

- ___ ___ Does the essay and poster convey a sense of originality and creativity?
- ___ ___ Does the essay and poster demonstrate creativity in developing the theme?
- ___ ___ Does the essay and poster reflect the writer's own thoughts and ideas that relate to the theme?
- ___ ___ Does the essay and poster demonstrate good writing skills: proper spelling, sentence structure, grammar, and punctuation?

___ **TOTAL SCORE**

2025 Dr. King Contest K-5 Scoring Guide

Judge's Initials _____ Entry # _____

Theme: *Youth for Change - Continuing the Legacy*

0 1 2 3 4 5
Low High

- ___ ___ Does the essay and poster convey a sense of originality and creativity?
- ___ ___ Does the essay and poster demonstrate creativity in developing the theme?
- ___ ___ Does the essay and poster reflect the writer's own thoughts and ideas that relate to the theme?
- ___ ___ Does the essay and poster demonstrate good writing skills: proper spelling, sentence structure, grammar, and punctuation?

___ **TOTAL SCORE**

2025 Dr. King Contest K-5 Scoring Guide

Judge's Initials _____ Entry # _____

Theme: *Youth for Change - Continuing the Legacy*

0 1 2 3 4 5
Low High

- ___ ___ Does the essay and poster convey a sense of originality and creativity?
- ___ ___ Does the essay and poster demonstrate creativity in developing the theme?
- ___ ___ Does the essay and poster reflect the writer's own thoughts and ideas that relate to the theme?
- ___ ___ Does the essay and poster demonstrate good writing skills: proper spelling, sentence structure, grammar, and punctuation?

___ **TOTAL SCORE**

MLK Visual Art Scoring Guide (Grades 6-12)

Entry # _____

Score/Criteria	3	2	1	0
Title	The artwork includes a written title.			The artwork does not include a written title.
Description	The piece includes a written description that fully complements the artwork, creating a cohesive whole.	The piece includes a written description that partially complements the artwork but does not fully support it.	The piece includes a written description that is disjointed or unrelated to the artwork.	The piece does not include a written description.
Theme	Clearly communicated understanding of the theme with insightful explanations articulated in the artist's statement and/or demonstration in the artwork.	Partially communicated understanding of the theme with moderately developed explanations articulated in the artist's statement and/or demonstration in the artwork.	Did not communicate understanding of the theme with few explanations articulated in the artist's statement and/or demonstration in the artwork.	A response gets no credit if it provides no evidence of understanding of the theme and/or gives no artist statement.
Creativity/Originality	Created a unique or original piece of artwork representing their individual style and/or technique.	Created a piece of artwork with some originality representing their individual style and/or technique.	Created a piece of artwork by replicating another artist with little or no originality representing their individual style and/or technique.	
Skill	Created an original work of art emphasizing effective use of the elements of art related to the media of choice (i.e. use of color and techniques for drawings/digital media, lyrics for songs, words for poems and spoken word)	Created an original work of art which demonstrates an emerging use of the elements of art related to the media of choice (i.e. use of color and techniques for drawings/digital media, lyrics for songs, words for poems and spoken word)	Created a work of art that shows little or no understanding of the elements of art related to the media of choice (i.e. use of color and techniques for drawings/digital media, lyrics for songs, words for poems and spoken word)	

TOTAL POINTS ___ /15

MLK Essay Scoring Guide (Grades 6-12)

Entry # _____

Score/Criteria	3	2	1	0
Title	The piece includes a title.			The piece does not include a title.
Statement of Purpose/Focus	<p>The response is fully sustained, clearly and consistently, and purposefully focused:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Central theme or main idea is focused, clearly stated, and strongly maintained. Central theme or main idea is introduced and communicated clearly within the context. 	<p>The response is partially sustained and inconsistently focused:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus is clear but is insufficiently sustained. <p>And/Or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Central theme may be unclear and occasionally unfocused. 	<p>The response may be related to the topic but may provide little or no focus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> May be very brief. May have a major drift. Focus may be confusing. 	<p>A response gets no credit if it provides no evidence of the theme, a focus, or use of conventions.</p>
Organization	<p>The response has a clear and effective organizational structure creating unity and completeness:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of a variety of transitional strategies. Logical progression of ideas from beginning to end. Effective introduction and conclusion for audience and purpose Strong connections among ideas, with some syntactic variety 	<p>The response has an evident organizational structure and a sense of completeness, though there may be minor flaws and some ideas loosely connected:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inconsistent use of transitional strategies with some variety. <p>And/Or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inconsistent progression of ideas from beginning to end. <p>And/Or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weak introduction and conclusion. <p>And/Or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inconsistent, connection among ideas 	<p>The response has little or no organizational structure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Few or no transitional strategies are evident. <p>And/Or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Frequent extraneous ideas may intrude. 	
Elaboration of Evidence	<p>The response provides thorough and convincing support/evidence for the central theme or main idea that includes the effective use of sources, facts, and details. The response achieves substantial depth that is specific and relevant:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of evidence from sources is smoothly integrated, 	<p>The response provides uneven support/evidence for the central theme or main idea that includes the use of partial sources, facts, and details:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some evidence from sources is integrated, though citations may be general or imprecise. <p>And/Or</p>	<p>The response provides minimal support/evidence for the central theme or main idea that includes little or no use of sources, facts, and details.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of evidence from sources is minimal, absent, in error, or irrelevant. 	

MLK Essay Scoring Guide (Grades 6-12)

Entry # _____

	<p>comprehensive, and concrete.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effective use of a variety of elaborative techniques 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some elaborative techniques are used. 		
Language and Vocabulary	<p>The response clearly and effectively expresses ideas, using precise language:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of academic and domain-specific vocabulary is clearly appropriate for the audience and purpose. 	<p>The response partially expresses ideas, employing a mix of precision with more general language:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of domain-specific vocabulary is inconsistent for the audience and purpose. 	<p>The response expression of ideas, is vague, lacks clarity, or is confusing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses limited language or domain-specific vocabulary. <p>And/Or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> May have little sense of audience and purpose. 	
Conventions	<p>The response demonstrates a strong command of conventions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Few, if any, errors, in usage and sentence formation Effective and consistent use of punctuation, capitalization, and spelling 	<p>The response demonstrates a partial command of conventions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some errors in usage and sentence formation may be present. <p>And/Or.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inconsistent use of punctuation, capitalization, and spelling. 	<p>The response demonstrates a lack of command of conventions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Errors are frequent and severe and meaning is often obscure. 	

TOTAL POINTS ___ /18