



2025 MLK CELEBRATION ESSAY CONTEST INSTRUCTIONS

The Ames/Story County MLK Celebration committee invites all Story County high school students to enter an essay contest celebrating the life and work of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Contest Topic:

1. How has Dr. King, Jr. impacted your life, or the life of your family, friends, and community, that helps motivate and inspire others to continue his legacy?

Contest Requirements

Eligibility

- The contest is open to high school students in grades nine (9) through twelve (12) attending public high schools or home schools in Story County, Iowa.
- Only one essay can be submitted per student.
- Past winners are **not** eligible to participate.

ACCESS Instructions

- Please do a file **“Save As”** of the Essay Application of your choice to your computer before completing the application to submit as instructed under #5 below!!

Essay Requirements

1. 700 – 1,000 words
2. Template has been provided to type essay (12-point font, double spaced)
3. The organizer will disqualify the candidates if the document contains any plagiarism.
4. Write your paper in English only.
5. The following documents must be submitted to 4mlkdayamesia@gmail.com, with **“MLK Essay Contest for High Students 2025”** in the email’s subject to participate
 - a. Application Form and Essay
 - b. Permission slip (release form), signed by parent or guardian.

(Entries submitted without an essay contest release form will not be considered.)

6. Each of the winning students may either pre-record themselves reading their essay or attend the Hybrid MLK Event on Monday, January 20, 2025, at 7 p.m.

Deadline

Applications with Essay (s) must be submitted to: 4mlkdayamesia@gmail.com by 11:59 p.m., Sunday, December 15, 2024. Winners will be announced by January 13, 2025.

Selection Criteria

The panel of judges will select the candidates on the following basis:

Presentation (100%)

Quality of writing (e.g., style, clarity, flow, and vocabulary)

Organization (structure including introduction and conclusion)

Grammar, spelling, punctuation

Recognition Awards for both Essay Contest Options:

Three contestants from the winning essays will receive the gift card prizes listed below. The best will also be published on the official MLK website and social media. The winner will be invited to read their essay at the MLK Celebration on January 20th at the Ames City Hall Auditorium. Second and Third-place winners will be invited and recognized at the January 20th Celebration.

Please note that all winners under 18 will be required to have their parent/guardian complete a promotion release form.

1st place prize: \$500

2nd place prize: \$250

3rd place prize: \$200

More information about the January 20, 2025, celebration will be announced on our Facebook at @AmesMLKCelebration and Instagram @AmesMLK.