

Prairie-Hills District Essay Contest Rules

2011-2012

All students in grades 3-8 will participate in the essay contest. The topics reflect the three types of writing expected from our students. Students may create their own title for any selected topic.

*All newly transferred students entering after October 15 may be exempt based upon teacher discretion.

Topics: Grades 3, 4 and 5

Narrative: Sometimes we surprise ourselves with what we are able to do. Describe a time when you did something you did not think you would be able to do.

Persuasive: Should students be required to follow rules in school? State your opinion why or why not.

Expository: A role model is someone you look up to. Choose someone you look up to and explain why you admire this person.

Topics: Grades 6, 7, and 8

Narrative: We all have memories connected to our experiences. Think about an experience you feel you'll always remember. Try to picture the time, the place, and the people involved. Try to remember everything you can about this experience. Write a story about the experience you remember. Be sure to include enough details so that your reader can share your experience.

-or-

Narrative: Choose a time when you did something that took a lot of nerve, a time when you didn't follow the crowd or a time when you stood up for your beliefs. Perhaps your friends were urging you to do something that you were uncomfortable with and you chose not to cave in to peer pressure. Maybe you took a stance on a political issue that was important in your community. Whatever you choose, think about the details of the event and write a story that tells what happened. Your narrative should show the readers why you decided to make a stand or try something that took nerve, give specifics on the events, and share how you felt after the event.

Persuasive: Your school is trying to decide if cell phones should be allowed in class or not. Some students think they should be allowed to keep them on in case of emergency. Other students think that they shouldn't be allowed on because they will cause a distraction. Write a persuasive paper explaining whether you agree or disagree with allowing cell phones on in school. Fully explain your argument.

Expository: Write an essay explaining how you changed when you entered either 6th grade or the junior high.

GUIDELINES

- A. All essays will be written in class under the direction of the classroom teacher. Students are allowed a maximum of sixty minutes to complete their essays.
- B. Classroom teachers may assist **only** in providing appropriate materials, e.g., (dictionary, thesaurus, encyclopedias, and textbooks at the appropriate grade level of difficulty) and by encouraging proofreading and self-checking.
- C. Essays are to be long enough to complete the development of the selected topics.
- D. After the initial writing of the essays, classroom teachers will provide a period of time not to exceed **sixty minutes** for the **student** to rewrite the essay, with attention given to the rating criteria. Students should use medium point black pens and white paper when writing the final copies of their essays.
 - a. 1st draft due in October – This process will be repeated for the 2nd draft.
 - b. 2nd draft due in November.
 - c. Final copy due by November 30th.
- E. The final copy should be a word processed document for 4th – 8th grades. All 3rd grade students have the option of completing their final copy in cursive writing or a word processed document.

PRAIRIE-HILLS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DISTRICT 144
2010-2011 ESSAY CONTEST RATING CRITERIA

The writing features used to score essays are defined as follows:

Focus – The clarity with which a composition presents a clear main idea, point of view, theme, or unifying event. The subject is clear and announced in the opening and maintained throughout the paper. The paper closes with an effective conclusion. **20 points**

Support/Elaboration – The degree to which the main point or event is elaborated or explained by specific details and reasons. There are support sentences and paragraphs for main idea logical development, sentences, relating to theme or topic. **20 points**

Organization – The clarity and/or coherence of the logical flow of ideas and the explicitness of the text structure or plan. **20 points**

Conventions – The use of standard English:

Grammar/Syntax (subject and predicate agreement, consistent verb tense) **5 points**

Punctuation (capitalization and usage of appropriate punctuation) **5 points**

Spelling (mechanics of spelling) **5 points**

Vocabulary (variations in word choices, descriptive or vivid vocabulary) **5 points**

Integration – Evaluation of the essay based on a judgment of how effectively the essay as a whole uses the four basic features to address the assignment. **20 points**

Additional Considerations

Essays may be completed using a word processor. All essays should be neat!

**Prairie-Hills Elementary School District 144
Essay Contest Rating Form**

Student Room Number _____
Grade Level _____
School Code Number _____
Student Code Number _____

Category	Maximum Points	Points Awarded
Focus	20	_____
Support-Elaboration	20	_____
Organization	20	_____
Conventions: Grammar/Syntax	5	_____
Punctuation	5	_____
Spelling	5	_____
Vocabulary	5	_____
Integration	20	_____
	TOTAL =	_____

Judge's Signature _____