

## **(101) ESSAY WRITING, Early Entry (Due April 1)**

Themes for essays may be evangelistic, inspirational, Biblical, Christian growth, patriotic, persuasive or historical. Please write the THEME of the essay on the judge's forms where indicated.

### **RULES**

1. A contestant chooses a topic and writes a paper between 500 and 700 words in length.
1. Essay must be typed, double-spaced on plain white paper with one full inch margin on all sides. A 50 space line = 10 words; 60 space line = 12 words.
2. A good essay will use facts, arguments, examples, and illustrations that allow the reader to persuade himself of the truth he is reading.
3. The essay must be the original work of the student.
4. Plagiarism of any kind will automatically disqualify the entry.
5. One entry per contestant.

### **HINTS FROM THE ESSAY WRITING JUDGES**

Carefully read the Judging Criteria below before beginning your essay. Judges look for organization and persuasiveness in essays. Begin your entry with a strong thesis clearly stated in the first paragraph, then follow through logically, smoothly, and persuasively to support that thesis. Use your own ideas and avoid clichés or generalizations that are not supported by examples or illustrations. Quotes are a good way to support a thesis but should be used sparingly; the judges are interested in what *you* have to say. Careful attention should be given to organization. Judges also look at the technical merits of the piece. Writing should be in the third person unless you have a specific reason for using first or second person. The essay should be neat and free of typing, spelling, grammar, and punctuation errors. Be careful not to go over the length limit. It would not be equitable for judges to allow you more space than they allow your competitors. Finish with a strong, persuasive closing statement. Consult handbooks on writing for further suggestions.

### **LIST OF SUGGESTED TOPICS**

(Compositions are not limited to the following titles--these are merely ideas.)

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| 1. America Needs Christian Education           | 13. Freedom's Last Choice                            |
| 2. Repentance, Revival, and Reformation        | 14. Christian Political Responsibility               |
| 3. What Is a Christian School?                 | 15. Essential Traits of Christian Leadership         |
| 4. The Fear of God: Antidote to Humanism       | 16. Three Ways to Bring Reform to America            |
| 5. The Character Qualities of a True Leader    | 17. New Laws or New People                           |
| 6. What One Man Can Do for His Country         | 18. Freedom Is...                                    |
| 7. Duties of Responsible Christian Citizenship | 19. Can You Legislate Morality?                      |
| 8. Christians Need Biblical Convictions        | 20. The Umbrella of Parental Authority               |
| 9. What Is Success?                            | 21. Meekness Is Strength                             |
| 10. The Cost of Christian Discipleship         | 22. Abortion Destroys the Sanctity of Human Life     |
| 11. Do We Have Rights or Responsibilities?     | 23. How Darwinism Destroyed America                  |
| 12. Keys for a Reformation                     | 24. How the King James Bible Influenced U.S. History |

# JUDGING CRITERIA

AREAS OF EVALUATION	POSSIBLE POINTS
<b>I. Concept</b> - An evangelistic, inspirational, Biblical, Christian growth, patriotic, persuasive or historical theme should be given in a precise thesis statement which is examined and discussed logically	15
<b>II. Composition</b> (60 points possible)	
A. Essential points given logically and convincingly	20
B. Use of examples and illustrations	10
C. Cogency and unity: everything in the essay directly supports the thesis	10
D. Valid argument and persuasion without exhortation or preaching; strong closing statement	10
E. Creativity and individuality of presentation	10
<b>III. Mechanics</b> (25 points possible)	
A. Neatness, general appearance	5
B. Spelling, punctuation, and grammar (subject - verb agreement, pronoun agreement, no misplaced modifiers, etc.)	15
C. Progression of ideas and argument, transitions, length of paragraphs	5
<b>Total Points</b>	<b>100</b>

NOTE: As many as 10 points may be subtracted if essay is not between 500 and 700 words in length (50 space line = 10 words; 60 space lines = 12 words).