

2021 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Writing Contest “We Must Speak”



Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was an activist committed to peace, justice, and equality. As a visionary leader of the civil rights movement, King fought for racial and economic justice for the oppressed. His driving forces were nonviolence, love, the importance of family and self-respect.

This year's theme is “We Must Speak,” from Dr. King's address “A Time to Break Silence” given at New York's Riverside Church on April 4, 1967.

“And some of us who have already begun to break the silence of the night have found that the calling to speak is often a vocation of agony, but we must speak. We must speak with all the humility that is appropriate to our limited vision, but **We Must Speak.**”

Students can reflect on these words and how they relate to themselves or others in their families, schools, neighborhoods or the world.

Eligibility/Categories

The writing contest is open to students in grades K-12 who live in the city of Milwaukee, or are enrolled in a school, either public or private, within the city of Milwaukee. Other districts plan to participate. If you would like to know if your district is participating please contact your district's administrative offices.

There are seven grade level categories:

- K-1: group project only (no individual essays), reflecting children's work and ideas
- Grades 2-3: individual entries, maximum length 250 words
- Grades 4-5: individual entries, maximum length 350 words
- Grade 6: individual entries, maximum length 400 words
- Grades 7-8: individual entries, maximum length 450 words
- Grades 9-10: individual entries, maximum length 500 words
- Grades 11-12: individual entries, maximum length 550 words

Entries must stay within word limitations for their grade level, otherwise the essay will be disqualified.

Judging

The entries will be judged on a point system, with the following criteria considered:

- Entries must address the theme.
- Entries should relate the student's own personal ideas, work and experiences to the topic and show an understanding of Dr. King's ideals.
- Entries must not be a biographical sketch of Dr. King.
- Entries will be judged on the basis of clearly expressed, creative ideas and ability level. In judging entries, emphasis will be placed on clarity, creativity, and originality. Correct usage of basic grammar and writing skills will also be considered.

Teachers are encouraged to help students understand the historical context of Dr. King's words and actions, see the relevance of these words and actions in their world today, and become familiar with Dr. King's life and values. We recommend utilizing the resources of MPS school libraries and the Milwaukee Public Libraries.

Prizes/Recognition

First, second, and third place writing contest winners will receive an engraved plaque and a prize valued up to \$100.

Entry Delivery Information

All entries must be submitted to [THIS LINK](#) by 5pm on Monday, November 22, 2021. Entries submitted after 5pm will not be considered for prizes.

Questions/Concerns

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Donelle Johnson, Contest Coordinator, at 414-445-5635 or donellejohnson@aol.com.

Milwaukee Teachers' Education Association

5130 West Vliet Street, Milwaukee, WI 53208
Phone: 414-259-1990 Fax: 414-259-7801

www.mtea.org



Milwaukee Teachers'
Education Association