Rules & Submission Process

The President Gerald R. Ford Scholarship Essay Challenge is open to all 9th through 12th grade students. To enter, write a 500-750 word essay on the 2019 theme:

“I have always believed that most people are mostly good, most of the time. I have never mistaken moderation for weakness, nor civility for surrender. As far as I'm concerned, there are no enemies in politics--just temporary opponents who might vote with you on the next Roll Call.”

~President Gerald R. Ford

We invite you to write a 500-750 word essay sharing your thoughts about civility. Some ideas include: What does civility mean to you? How might we create a sense of civility in both our social circles and our government? Have you had an experience where, through civility, people were able to find common ground? Is there someone you admire for their sense of civility?

Students may submit essays online at https://geraldrfordfoundation.org/essay-challenge-form/.

Submissions will also be accepted via U.S. Postal Service.

For Mailed Submissions:

- Please send to:
  Gerald R. Ford Presidential Foundation
  Attn: Clare Shubert
  303 Pearl St. NW
  Grand Rapids, MI 49504-5353
- All essays must be submitted on white 8 ½” x 11” paper.

For Essays Submitted Both Online and Via Mail:

- Limit one entry per student, per school year.
- A title page is required for each entry. It should include the following: student name, address, phone number, e-mail, grade, school, teacher’s name, school address and school phone.
- Essays must be single-sided and double-spaced, using black ink. They should also include one-inch margins.
- Judges will determine legibility of fonts and hand-written entries.
All submissions must be the original work of the submitting student. Plagiarism will result in disqualification.

The sponsors reserve the right to interpret the scholarship essay rules and to make decisions concerning the awards in situations not covered by these rules.

Participation in the contest constitutes entrant’s full and unconditional agreement to and acceptance of all official rules and guidelines, including eligibility requirements.

Entries must be submitted online OR postmarked by March 11, 2019.
No late entries will be accepted.

Judging Criteria & Process
Winners will be selected based on adherence to the theme, quality of their narrative, originality of the essay, as well as their proper use of grammar, spelling, and punctuation. Plagiarism will result in disqualification. Judges will select the top three entries. Judges also reserve the right to select up to four honorable mention recipients. One out-of-state student will be chosen for an award. All of these decisions made by the judges are final. Participating sponsors are not responsible for lost, late, misdirected, illegible, incomplete essays, or essays that do not follow all rules and guidelines.

Essays will be reviewed by judges comprised of leaders of a civic, education, and/or business background.
Finalists will be notified no later than April 19, 2019.
Essays will not be returned to students following the Essay Challenge.

Eligibility
9th-12th grade students living in the United States are eligible to apply for this award. Household members and/or children of the employees of the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Museum and the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Foundation are not eligible.

By participating in the essay challenge, each contestant agrees to comply with these rules and further agrees to accept the decision of the judges as final and binding. Parents or guardians of the finalists will be required to sign and submit a publicity consent form as a condition of a student’s participation in this contest.

Awards
Students from Michigan who submit their essay are eligible to receive the following awards:

- **First Place:** $1,000 scholarship plus a $500 Meijer gift card for student’s teacher
- **Second Place:** $750 scholarship plus a $250 Meijer gift card for student’s teacher
- **Third Place:** $500 scholarship plus a $100 Meijer gift card for student’s teacher
- **Up to 7 Honorable Mentions:** $250 scholarship each

One $500 award will be given to a submitting student living outside of Michigan.
Special thanks to Meijer for providing our teacher gift awards!

**Timeline**

- Entries should be submitted online or postmarked no later than March 11, 2019.
- Finalists will be notified by April 19, 2019.
- An award ceremony will be held at the Gerald R. Ford Museum in May of 2019 to celebrate all finalists. *(Exact date TBD)*