President Gerald R. Ford Student Writing Challenge 2020
Rules, Guidelines & Timeline

RULES & SUBMISSION PROCESS

“You never know what you can do, until you have to do it.” ~First Lady Betty Ford
Throughout their lives, President Gerald Ford and First Lady Betty Ford showed their sense of
determination and grit time and time again: by overcoming adversity in childhood, facing grave
danger in WWII, beating cancer, overcoming substance abuse, and leading our country through one
of the greatest Constitutional crises in its history.

We invite you to write 500-750 words sharing your thoughts on the topic of determination.

Some ideas include: How do YOU define determination, grit, perseverance?
Tell about a time that your own determination was tested and you prevailed.
Is there someone in your life, or in history, that you admire for their determination?

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 All Submissions:
• A title page is required for each entry. It should include the following: student name,
  phone number, e-mail, grade, school, teacher’s name, school address and school phone.
• Limit one entry per student, per school year.
• Essays must be single-sided and double-spaced, using black ink. They should also include one-inch margins.
• All submissions must be the original work of the submitting student. Plagiarism will result in
disqualification and will be reported to the student’s school. More than one student submitting the
same work will result in disqualification of all identical work.
• Judges will determine legibility of fonts and hand-written entries.
• 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 13, 2020. No late entries will be accepted.

JUDGING CRITERIA & PROCESS

Winners will be selected based on adherence to the theme, quality of writing, originality of the essay, as well as 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 seven honorable mention recipients. One out-of-state student will be chosen for an award. All 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.

Finalists only will be notified no later than April 17, 2020.

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 writing 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 plus a $500 Meijer gift card for student’s teacher
• Second Place: $750 plus a $250 Meijer gift card for student’s teacher
• Third Place: $500 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 13, 2020.
• Winners will be notified by April 17, 2020.
• An award ceremony will be held at the Gerald R. Ford Museum in May of 2020 to celebrate all finalists. (Exact date TBD)