Clever Communities in Action

Martin Luther King: Beyond the Dream

Essay Contest Rules

Eligibility

The contest is open to students in **grades 9–12**.

Essay Length

Essays must be **750–1,000 words**. Citations and source lists do not count toward the word limit.

Essay Formatting Requirements

Double Spaced

12-point Arial, Calibri, or Times New Roman

One-inch margins

PDF or Word Document

***No names, school names or identifying information within the essay document**

Required Reading

Before responding to the essay prompt, students **must read all of the provided excerpts about Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.**

The excerpts are an essential part of the contest and are intended to introduce students to aspects of King's life, work, ideas and sacrifices that may be less familiar.

Essays should demonstrate an understanding of the provided readings and use them as the foundation for responding to the prompt.

Outside Sources

Outside research is **not required**. The provided readings contain the primary material needed to respond to the essay prompt.

If you choose to use information, ideas or quotations from an outside source, you must identify the source. A specific citation style such as MLA or APA is not required, but readers should be able to clearly tell where the information came from.

Original Work

Your essay must reflect **your own ideas, analysis and writing**. You may receive normal feedback from a teacher, parent or another trusted adult, but the ideas and final written work submitted must be your own.

Artificial Intelligence (AI)

AI tools may **not** be used to write, rewrite or generate any portion of your essay. AI may not be used to develop your argument, analyze the provided readings, generate responses to the essay questions or produce content that is submitted as your own work.

Submitting AI-generated or AI-written material as your own may result in disqualification.

Finalists will be required to participate in a brief virtual interview