

The Legacy and Lessons of the Civil Rights Movement Essay Contest

This contest is tied to a documentary scheduled to appear on PBS during Black History Month, [*Legacy: Black and White in America*](#). All high school classes are invited to participate by submitting essays on the theme: what are the legacy and lessons of the Civil Rights Movement? Teachers/classes may participate in two ways: 1) You can start your own [“Legacy” local writers gallery](#) in the National Gallery of Writing and invite each student to submit an essay on this theme **prior to the December 15 deadline date**. Once your students’ work is in, you can select the essay you consider the best in your class and submit it to the [National Partner Legacy Essay Contest Gallery](#); 2) Alternatively, you can collect essays from your class and post only the top essay to the [National Partner Legacy Essay Contest Gallery](#)—note the “contribute to this gallery” button at the bottom of the webpage. Again, December 15 is the deadline for submissions, with awards to be announced in February 2010.

This contest offers cash awards and laptop computers to the national finalists, and the top winner will take part in a VIP Capitol ceremony that may include President Barack Obama. The underlying purpose of the contest is to motivate high school students to take a serious look at what it means to be Black or White in America today, how this has and hasn’t changed since the days of the Civil Rights Movement, and what lessons we have learned about how to further the quest for genuine racial equity. In addition to NCTE, the contest is supported by the Congressional Black Caucus, NEA, AFT, NCSS, and ASCD, among others.

The NCTE Achievement Awards in Writing

This is a school-based program designed to encourage high school writers and publicly recognize some of the best student writers in the nation. Only students who are JUNIORS in the academic year 2009-2010 may be nominated for 2010 awards; they must be candidates for high school graduation in 2011.

Nomination Procedures

Each high school selects its own nominee or nominees: one or more juniors agreed upon by the English department, not chosen by an individual teacher. Home-schooled students may submit through a cooperating school.

- Nomination form for each student must be submitted to NCTE, postmarked no later than **February 17, 2010**.
- One student may be listed on each form. Students may not nominate themselves.
- All entries from a school must have the same nominating teacher's name to receive the follow-up instructions in March.
- All entry forms from a school must be mailed to NCTE in the same envelope.
- All information requested on the nomination form must be provided.

Number of Nominees

The number of nominees allowed from each school is determined by the current total enrollment in grades 10, 11, and 12. The enrollment figure used must be an official one from administrative reports of the current year and must not include ninth-grade students.

Entries

Two Written Compositions

- Impromptu theme written under teacher supervision in no more than 2 hours. The topic is designated by NCTE.
- Best writing sample (prose and/or verse) that the student considers his or her best work, regardless of the amount of revision. No entries are returned. Teachers or students should make copies of the compositions before submitting the originals. No publication of a student's work will be made without his or her written permission.

Nomination Brochure

[PDF of the 2010 brochure.](#)

NCTE/Norman Mailer Writer's Colony High School Writing Award for Creative Nonfiction

Norman Mailer produced extraordinary works in many genres, including the category of this year's award: creative nonfiction. Students who will be seniors in fall 2010 may submit work in any of the many subgenres of creative nonfiction: memoir or autobiography, essay, literary journalism, profiles of people or places, and so on. Whatever its type, the best work will be true material presented with compelling literary merit. This year **submissions will be accepted between February 1 and May 1**. The top winner will receive a \$5,000 cash award, with plaques and citations also awarded to national finalists and semifinalists.

Submission and Formatting Guidelines

Students may submit one or more pieces of writing for a total of up to 10 single-spaced pages, though quality is far more important than quantity. The writing you upload must include a title, your name, and page numbers within your file. Use a plain, common, and easily readable font, such as Times New Roman; 11 or 12-point only, please. Accepted file types: .pdf, .doc, .docx, and .txt (maximum file size: 8 megabytes). Submissions will be accepted online only and must be endorsed by a teacher and released by a parent or guardian.