



**ALLAN A. C. GRIFFITH, SR. EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
NATIONAL UNITED CHURCH USHERS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA, INC.**

National Education “Essay” Contest

RULES AND REGULATIONS GOVERNING THE NATIONAL “ESSAY” CONTEST

WHO IS ELIGIBLE:

...any Junior Usher or Young Adult Usher who is a member of an Usher Board whose Senior Usher Board is a member of a local organization; that Local is a member of a State organization; and that State is a member of the National United Church Ushers Association of America, Incorporated.

...scholars from the second year high-school {10th Grade} through the **1st year of college** inclusive.

...non-professionals in the field contested, i.e., cannot have received a salary or stipend as a writer, editor, or journalist. Participation in a religious, social, or political competition for which a contestant may have received a one-time monetary **award is not** disqualifying.

...must have served on the Local board for at least **2 years** before entering the Contest, and active. In the event of relocation within the United States, the junior or young adult usher must request a transfer to the Local board of his/her choice within 1 year.

...must have won 1st or 2nd place in the Competitions held in each Region. Payment of contestant travel, housing, and expenses to the National Contest is left solely to the discretion of each Region.

...must perform with at least 80% accuracy at all levels of competition to be eligible to participate in the National Competition.

...a participant who has **(previously)** received one of the National Scholarship prizes will **not** be eligible to enter the Contest again.

**The National “Essay” Contest will be held in the Grand Ballroom of the
Host Hotel on Thursday of the Convention week at 7:00 PM**

THE NATIONAL CONTEST

The National “Essay” Contest will be held during the National Convention week at a place and time designated by the Convention **presently** on Thursday evening of the Convention week at 7:00 PM. In order to compete in the National Contest, the contestant must be the **1st and 2nd place winners** of the highest level of competition within the Region represented. Payment of contestant travel, housing, and expenses either to the National Contest or to intermediate competition{s} within a State is left solely to the discretion of each State and Region.

PRIZES TO BE AWARDED

Four scholarships will be awarded at the National Contest:

■ First Prize	\$5,000
■ Second Prize	\$4,000
■ Third Prize	\$2,500
■ Fourth Prize	\$1,500

All scholarship awards will be made in **four** equal installments directly to the winning contestants’ college / university / school upon verification of admission / enrollment. A second year high school winner must start to use his/her scholarship not later than 3 years from the date of award or the scholarship is forfeited. A third year high school winner must start to use his/her scholarship not later than 2 years from the date of award, or the scholarship is forfeited. A winner in the first year of college is expected to begin use of his/her scholarship in the impending academic year. In case of military service, the above-listed times for use of scholarship may be waived. Those contestants not placing in the Contest receive a \$500.00 Cash Book Grant. In addition, the R. E. Harshaw, Jr. Foundation Board of Trustees provides yearly grants of \$250.00 to be matched by State funds for a total of \$500.00 awarded to deserving students in member states.

CONTEST REQUIREMENTS

Contestants must comply with the following:

1. Each contestant who will compete in the National **Essay** Contest must complete the National “Essay” Contest Application Form. **The application must be typewritten.** Contestants must make certain that their completed forms are in the hands of the Education Chairman in their Region well before the due date so that the applications can be mailed by the Regional Education Chairman in a timely manner. The completed and signed applications must reach the National Education Chairman **No Later Than June 1st of the Contest year.**

2. Each contestant who will compete in the National Contest must have achieved a minimum of **80 points** at the Local, State, and Regional levels.
3. Each contestant must perform the same selection **at all levels** of the competition, i.e., Local, State, Regional, and National. **Failure to do so will result in his or her disqualification from the National Contest.**
4. All contestants must submit **five {5} typewritten copies** {double-spaced} of his or her **Region** winning Essay presentation on the day of the Contest. There must not be any reference to your name, Church name, State, or Region in your oration. Failure to comply will result in disqualification.
5. The appropriate salutation for the **Contestant** is: **“Good Evening Ladies and Gentlemen. My topic is _____.”**
6. The time limit for performance of each contestant is **10 minutes**, and will be strictly enforced. The minimum time for each essay is **3 minutes**. An official timekeeper will be present for the competition. **Any contestant who exceeds or falls under the time limit will be allowed to complete his or her performance, but will be disqualified prior to computation of the Judges’ scoring sheets. The brief salutation identified in #5 above will be included in the 10-minute time limit.**
7. The type of attire to be worn at the Local, State, and Region Contest may vary. However, the attire for all contestants at the National Contest **must be formal attire**. Young men will wear a black suit or black tuxedo with a white shirt, black tie, and black shoes. Young ladies will wear evening gowns {floor length}. **No strapless gowns are to be worn. There are no exceptions!**
8. The dress code for Judges is as follows: **men will wear business attire** – suit or jacket and slacks, shirt, and tie; **ladies will wear business attire.**
9. **All contestants must arrive at the National Convention on or before 12:00 Noon Tuesday of the Convention week. They must contact the National Chairman at the time of their arrival.**
10. **All contestants must be registered for the National Convention as a Delegate from the State they are representing, and must attend and participate in the daily Business Session of the Junior and Young People’s Department during the National Convention.**
11. A student / participant who has {previously} received a National Scholarship may not enter the National Contest again.

12. Videotaping, Recording, and Pictures of any type are **not** allowed at the National Contest.
13. There shall be a Timekeeper, three Tally Persons {one of the three must be the Head Tally Person}, and one Runner.

Judges

1. Please check with local high-schools, teachers' unions, and /or educational organizations to secure qualified Judges at least 2 months in advance of the Contest because of calendar commitments.
2. Each Judge must complete the Judge Qualification and Biography Form.
3. **Essay** – the Judge should be a current or former secondary {high-school} English, Speech, or Drama teacher. The rationale is those teachers instruct in those content areas. A college professor should not be used as a Judge unless there is a specialty in secondary English / Speech / Drama teaching method.
4. Judges should be briefed on the Rules and Regulations by a knowledgeable Education Department worker and / or the National / Region Education Chairman before the Contest begins.
5. There shall be three Judges and one Alternate Judge, making a total of four Judges. There shall be a Head Judge to be decided amongst the Judges to give the scores – starting with the lowest to the highest score – of all Contestants, and then declaring the 4th, 3rd, 2nd and 1st Place winners.
6. The Judges will be given a donation of \$100.00 coming from the National Education Department funds. **Special Note:** the specific donation amount is subject to be changed based on current economics. Each Region / State can determine what donation is to be given to their Judges.
7. The Judges' dress code will be **Business Attire**.
14. An **Impromptu Contest** will be given to the contestants on the morning of the Essay Contest {time to be set by the National Education Chairman}. This will account for **10 points** of the total score. If the contestant does not participate in the Impromptu, the 10 points will be deducted from the score, which may cause them to lose the Contest.
15. The contestants are allowed to use a microphone for the Contest.
16. Contestants are allowed to use gestures, expressions, drama, and movements.

ADDITIONAL CONTEST INFORMATION

1. A Rehearsal Room will be made available at the National Convention for use by the contestants. An equal amount of time per day will be allotted to each contestant.
2. The order of performance for the National Contest will be determined by drawing numbers on the night of the Contest.
3. The Tally Persons will calculate the scores of the Judges for each contestant. The Master Tally Person will record the results on the Contest Summary Tally Sheet and sign at the bottom of the Form. The Master Tally Person will then transfer the necessary information to the Contest Winners' Form. The Judges and the three Tally Persons will sign the form to certify its authenticity. The Contest Winners' Form is then given to the Head Judge for announcement of category placements.
4. There will be four {4} winners announced. The Head Judge will announce the runners up, and then the winners from the Contest Winners' Form beginning with 4th Place. **THE JUDGES' DECISION IS FINAL.**
5. Each person attending the National Education Contest must give a donation of \$10.00 through registration. Non-registered attendees must give a donation of \$10.00 at the door, and receive a ticket from the National Education Department or the National Board of Directors. **Special Note:** The specific donation amount is subject to be changed based on current economics.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF REGIONS AND STATES

1. Each State is responsible for a donation of **\$200.00**, whether they have a contestant or not, to the R. E. Harshaw, Jr. Foundation.
2. Each Region may have two contestants.
3. All Region and State Chairmen are responsible for distributing all Contest materials to their local Chairmen.
4. All contestants must be a member of the Junior and Young People's Department, and must be registered and attend their meetings to be eligible to participate in the National Education Contests.
5. All contestants must have competed at the State level, and pass with an 80% score to be eligible for the Region and National Contests.

6. All contestants must be at the National Convention before 12:00 Noon on Tuesday of the Convention week. They must check in with the National Chairman before this time.
7. All parents should be given the Rules and Regulations in writing prior to the Contest. They must also be given the Pre-Condition Form to be signed by the contestant before the Education Contest.
8. All Region Chairmen are responsible for getting the completed, typewritten application to the National Chairman on or before the deadline dated as stated by the National Chairman, or your contestant can be disqualified.



CHOICE OF TOPICS

Be sure to include statistics, surveys, and other relevant data that will support your selected topic.

1. It has been almost 60 years since Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. delivered his “I Have a Dream” speech. What type of impact do you think the speech would have today in the 21st Century?
2. The United States has historically led the way in addressing global issues like global warming and the reduction of waste around the world. What do you believe is the next global issue that the United States should address that when improved, could positively impact our global community?
3. With the emergence of the “Black Lives Matter Movement” since last summer, how do you feel that this Movement has affected teenagers’ trust of police, and what can be done to prevent future incidents of violence between civilians and police?
4. How can the National United Church Ushers Association of America attract new members, post COVID-19, in relation to the Virtual Church?

ALL ESSAYS MUST BE READ – NOT MEMORIZED!



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The maximum total number of points that can be awarded per Judge is 100. Points can be earned as follows:

PHASE ONE – THE IMPROMPTU {Based on a maximum of 10 points}

CONTENT – Maximum Point Value = 4

COMMAND OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE – Maximum Point Value = 4

CREATIVITY – Maximum Point Value = 2

THE CONTEST

CONTENT – Maximum Point Value = 30

- a. Identifies subject clearly.
- b. All material clearly contributes to subject.
- c. Presents own original ideas.
- d. Origination helps audience remember key points.
- e. Points lead to valid conclusions.
- f. Moves from point to point with smooth transitions.

ORGANIZATION – Maximum Point Value = 30

- a. Typewritten and double-spaced.
- b. Preview's subject or viewpoint specifically and clearly
- c. Presents specific issues appropriate to topic and time limitations.
- d. Arranges issues in logical order.
- e. Adequately discusses each issue raised.
- f. Logical and effective progression of arguments to climatical conclusions

COMMAND OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE – Maximum Point Value = 20

- a. Proper punctuation practices
 - b. Correct grammar usage
 - c. Use of words in proper context.
- Appearance of speech – proper paragraphing, neatness, and absence of typographical errors

DELIVERY / STAGE PRESENCE – Maximum Point Value = 10

- a. Steps up and speaks with confidence.
- b. Establishes eye contact before speaking, and maintains eye contact throughout
- c. Varies voice pitch and volume.
- d. Varies speaking rate – not too fast or too slow.
- e. Enunciates clearly.
- f. Pronounces correctly.
- g. Holds audience interest from beginning to end of oration.
- h. Appears confident and relaxed.
- i. Proper posture
- j. Appears to enjoy speaking.
- k. Dresses to help – not hinder – speech.