



2023 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Youth Oratorical Contest

RULES & REGULATIONS

RULES

I. TIME LIMITATIONS

- A. **PRIMARY DIVISION** (Grades K-2nd) – A Time limit of two minutes will be permitted for orations.
- B. **INTERMEDIATE DIVISION** (Grades 3rd-5th) – A time limit of three minutes will be permitted for orations.
- C. **JUNIOR DIVISION** (Grades 6th-8th) – A time limit of four minutes will be permitted for orations.
- D. **SENIOR DIVISION** (Grades 9th-12th) – A time limit of five minutes will be permitted for orations.

Note: *Statewide competition division assignment is dependent on contestant grade at the time of regional competition. Independently registered contestant who had no regional competition available will compete in division based on grade at the time of registration date.*

II. PRESENTATION OF ORATION

- A. Contestants will deliver oration from memory. Note cards (3x5 index cards) are optional.
- B. Contestants will introduce himself/herself by stating in complete sentences:
“Judges, Ladies and Gentleman, my name is...”
 - 1. Name (first and last names)
 - 2. Age and grade
 - 3. School
 - 4. City
 - 5. Topic (time begins when the topic is stated.)

III. SUMMARY OF ORATION

- Timekeeper will indicate wrap-up time one minute before time expires.

REGULATIONS

- I. Contestants must provide a typewritten, double-spaced composition of his/her oration on 8 ½x11 paper (standard margins) **by Monday, November 20, 2023.**

NOTE: Compositions should be sent via email (Word or PDF format) or physically taken to or mailed to the address noted in the Registration Form.

- A. Cover sheet for composition should include the following information:

- Contestant's Name
- Age and grade
- School
- City
- Date
- Topic
- Ambition (career goal)
- Coach/Parent's name

- B. Penalty of five points will be subtracted from contestant or possible disqualification for failure to submit composition postmarked by **November 20, 2023.**

- C. Notes on 3 x 5 index cards may be used in contest (optional).

- II. Contestant should provide a photo when submitting a copy of their composition to the MLK Youth Oratorical Committee **by November 20, 2023** (high resolution jpg)

NOTE: All requests to return photos must be submitted with a self-addressed stamped envelope.

- III. The coach/parent is permitted to assist the contestant during the composition of the speech and is requested to accompany the contestant at the contest. (The absence of the coach/parent will not affect the status of the contestant.) However, coaches/parents must remain a part of the audience. They may remain in view of contestant but must refrain from offering prompts and assistance in the delivery of the speech.

- IV. **Contestants will be evaluated on the following criteria:**

- A. Aplomb – poise, self-confidence, audience appeal
- B. Voice Quality – audibility, articulation, inflection of voice, moderation of pitch
- C. Physical Dynamics – proper use of gestures and taking the microphone off the

stand is acceptable if desired

- D. Observance of Time Limit – contestants should not go over nor under time limit
 - E. Creativity and Relevant Content – poetic and/or musical interpretation is welcome
 - F. Posture
 - G. Accuracy of Content
 - H. Composition – punctuation, spelling, grammar, logic, appearance
- V. Each regional oratorical contest will send ONLY the first, second and third place winners to the statewide level competition.
- VI. The decision of the judges is final.
- VII. All contest materials and photos are the property of the City of Columbus MLK Youth Oratorical Contest.

Any student who competed in The City of Columbus 2022 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Youth Oratorical Contest **MUST** prepare a new oration.

- a. All orations must be an **original** piece created by the student.
- b. Creativity in selecting topics is encouraged.

Below is a list of suggested topics. However, contestants' choice of topic is **not** limited to the following:

- 2023 MLK Holiday Commission Statewide theme:
“The Dream Deferred: Where Do We Go From Here?”
- The Legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
- Relate one’s own commitment to Dr. King’s philosophy of nonviolence, peaceful protest and respect.
- “What Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.’s life means to me...” (Expound on what this means to you.)
- “The 21st century depends upon me...” (Expound on what this means to you in terms of Dr. King or Kingian Principles in the 21st Century.)
- Research major events in Dr. King’s life:
 - a. End War in Vietnam Campaign

- b. Letter from Birmingham Jail
- c. March from Selma, AL to Montgomery
- d. March on Washington, D.C.
- e. Nobel Peace Prize
- f. Pilgrimage to Nonviolence (Stride Toward Freedom)
- g. Poor Peoples Campaign

NOTE: Oration topics shall not promote or call for violence or otherwise present themes that would oppose Dr. King’s legacy or principles of nonviolence. The MLK Youth Oratorical Contest committee reserves the right to select or not select any contest winner for participation in the commemorative celebration based on what the MLK Youth Oratorical Contest committee deems appropriate for the event.

VIII. RIGHT OF REFUSAL

The City of Columbus Department of Neighborhoods staff has the right to refuse an orator’s submission and admission into the contest due to the number of contestants, content of written oration, etc. The orator and their coach and/or parent will be notified of their inability to participate via a written response prior to the contest.

IX. WINNERS

The City of Columbus 2023 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Youth Oratorical Contest will send ONLY the first, second, and third place winners of each division to the statewide level competition, which takes place in April 2024.

X. ATTIRE – All contestants must dress as follows:

- A. Boys – Black or navy pants, white shirts, and dark ties. Jackets are not necessary.
- B. Girls – Black or navy slacks or skirts, and white shirts, blouses, tops or turtlenecks.

QUESTIONS

Contact Gale Gray at GAGray@columbus.gov or (614) 645-1993

SUBMIT APPLICATION & ORATION BY
Monday, November 20, 2023
(no later than 5:00 p.m.)