

# KERA Maya Angelou Essay Contest Rules

No purchase is necessary to enter or win. There is no entry fee.

The Maya Angelou Essay Contest (the Contest) is sponsored by KERA and its parent company North Texas Public Broadcasting (the Sponsor).

## Contest Overview:

The Contest is open to high school students across North Texas. Contestants must select one poem by Maya Angelou and write an essay that:

1. Interprets the poem's themes and meaning and includes details from the poem to support the contestant's interpretation and explain how the poet used literary devices such as images, word choice and meter to convey meaning;
2. Describes how the poem contributes to the understanding of race in the United States and the African American experience;
3. Presents an original, well-reasoned proposal for improving racial relations in the U.S. that draws on some element of the selected poem; and
4. Supports main points in the proposal with references to actual events, either recent or historical, that relate to race in the U.S.

The Contest is designed to inspire students to engage deeply with poetry and provide a thoughtful explanation of how careful reading of poetry enriches their understanding of current events and social history. Encouraging clear thinking, logical explanation and lucid writing is also a goal.

The Contest is offered in conjunction with the airing of *Maya Angelou: And Still I Rise* February 21, 2017, on KERA Channel 13. Students are encouraged to watch the documentary to gain insight into Maya Angelou's life, her vivid personal presence and her contributions as a civil rights activist as well as her celebrated poetry, essays and autobiographical writing.

The three top-scoring essays will win cash prizes of \$150, \$100 and \$50. KERA will announce winners' names along with the names of their schools, and winners will be asked to submit a photo to appear with such announcements. Winning essays may be published on the KERA website and winners may be invited to read their essays on air.

## How to Enter

1. The Maya Angelou Essay Contest opens on February 7, 2017, and closes March 21, 2017. All entries must be accompanied by the entry form provided on this site. Entries may be submitted online ([www.kera.org/angelou](http://www.kera.org/angelou)), mailed or delivered in

person to KERA. Mailed entries must be postmarked by March 21, 2017, and received by March 27, 2017. Mailed and personally delivered entries should be marked, Maya Angelou Essay Contest, KERA, 3000 Harry Hines Boulevard, Dallas, Texas 75201.

2. The Contest is open to high school students attending any public (ISD or charter) or private school or homeschool in the KERA broadcast area.
3. Eligibility: Students are not eligible if they are members of immediate families of KERA employees or contest judges, or if they are household members, whether or not related. Immediate family members include spouses and parents, children and siblings and their respective spouses, regardless of where they reside. The Contest is subject to all applicable federal, state and local laws.
4. By participating, each entrant and his/her parent or legal guardian agrees to follow these rules and the decisions of the Sponsor and the Contest judges, which will be final and binding and not subject to appeal or review. Entries become the property of the Sponsor and will not be returned to contestants.
5. Each participant may submit only one essay.
6. Only single-author essays will qualify (no co-authored work).
7. Participants must have permission from their parent or legal guardian and must work with a sponsoring teacher who can discuss the assignment with the student and help him/her think through the essay's arguments and writing. The teacher also must verify that the final essay is the student's original work.
8. Essays should include the name of the poem interpreted in the essay and attach a copy of its text.
9. Essays must be typed with 12-point font and double-spaced with one-inch margins. Essays must be at least 800 words and not exceed 1,200 words, excluding any citations. Essays must be in PDF format that has been created from a Word document. The entry should not be created by scanning documents and saving them in PDF format, with the exception of the poem's text. Entries not meeting these standards for length and format will be disqualified.
10. Essays that reference other work that has been published or broadcast must include a reference list at the end that includes the title of each cited piece, the author(s), the publication or broadcast date, the title and publisher if it was part of a book, journal or other publication, and a URL if the work was downloaded from an online site. This list will not count toward the essay's total word count. Do not use footnotes.
11. The essay should have a title, and the title should appear at the top of each page.
12. The essay cannot contain any identifying information (i.e., author's name, school) or contain references that identify the author. Identifying information is allowed only on the contest entry form. Essays submitted with identifying information will be disqualified to avoid any suggestion of bias by judges.

13. Each entry will be assigned an identification number, and that number will be linked to the student's contact information.

14. Essays must:

- a. be the student's own original work;
- b. be in English;
- c. not be previously published, broadcast, distributed or submitted in connection with any other contest;
- d. contain no language or content that is offensive or inappropriate for broadcast or circulation, as determined by the Sponsor, or language that defames or invades publicity rights or privacy of any person, living or deceased, or otherwise infringes upon any person's personal or property rights or any other third-party rights.

The Sponsor reserves the right to disqualify any entry that it determines does not comply with these standards in its sole discretion.

15. Essays must be accompanied by a completed entry form that includes names and contact information for the student contestant and his/her sponsoring teacher and parent or legal guardian. The form also includes a certification to be signed by the student that the essay is his/her original work and certification by the sponsoring teacher that he/she worked with the student and can verify that the essay is original.

## **Judging**

1. Essays will be scored according to these criteria:
  - a. Level of understanding of the chosen poem and of topics explored in the essay related to race in the United States and the African American experience, as well as relevance of details from the poem and references to events related to race in the U.S.
  - b. Original thinking in framing and justifying the proposal for improving racial relations in the U.S.;
  - c. Effectiveness in presenting a point of view, including the quality of organization and support for main ideas; and
  - d. Clarity of writing style and accuracy of spelling and grammar.
2. All essays will have an initial round of judging by KERA staff.
3. Top-scoring essays will then be judged by a panel of teachers and other educators in K-12 and higher education who are familiar with high-school-level work. Each essay in the final round will be read and scored separately by two judges. Inconsistent scores will be reviewed by additional judges.
4. Winners, their parents or legal guardians and their sponsoring teachers will be notified by telephone, mail and/or email in April or early May.

### **Warrants and release of liability**

By entering, each entrant (and his/her parent or guardian) represents and warrants to the Sponsor, KERA, that his/her entry is (1) completely the original work of the entrant and was written solely by the entrant, (2) not copied from any other source or previously broadcast or otherwise distributed or disseminated in any media or format, (3) not in the public domain, and (4) not in violation of or conflict with the trademark, copyright, rights of privacy, rights of publicity or any other rights, of any kind or nature, of any other person or entity. Entrant agrees to release, discharge, and hold harmless the Sponsor for any breach of the above representations. By submitting an entry, each entrant (and his/her parent or legal guardian) agrees to release, discharge, and hold harmless the Sponsor and its parent companies, affiliates, subsidiaries, promotional partners and agents, and all others associated with the development and execution of this Contest, including Contest judges, and the officers, directors and employees of each of the foregoing, from any and all claims and liabilities arising from or in connection with participation in this Contest, including without limitation (a) claims for injury, loss or damage of any kind resulting from participation in this Contest or acceptance or use of any prize and (b) claims based on rights of privacy, rights of publicity, false light, defamation, copyright and/or trademark infringement relating to the submission or exploitation of the entrant's concept.

The Sponsor reserves the right to terminate, modify or suspend this Contest due to an act of God; unavoidable accident; epidemic; fire; blackout; act of public enemy; war, riot or civil commotion; enactment, rule, order or act of government or governmental instrumentality or tribunal; inclement weather; the recapture of any time period scheduled for the live broadcast of a program for an event of national importance or emergency; failure of technical facilities; failure of essential production, or technical personnel to appear or be available for production or broadcast; or other cause beyond its control. The Sponsor is not responsible for lost, late, incomplete, damaged, inaccurate, illegible, stolen, delayed, misdirected, undelivered, or garbled essays or mail. Persons who tamper with or abuse any aspect of the Contest, who act in an unsportsmanlike or disruptive manner, or who are in violation of these official rules, as solely determined by the Sponsor, will be disqualified. Nor is the Sponsor responsible for any expenses incurred in connection with participation in the Contest.