

The Max Warburg Courage Curriculum's Courage in My Life National Essay Contest Frequently Asked Questions



The Max Warburg Courage Curriculum recognizes courage in classrooms across the country through our Courage in My Life National Essay Contest. The contest is open to all students in grades 5 through 8 in the United States, outside of Massachusetts. The program engages students in the reading and writing process, while encouraging young people to write about personal experiences with courage.

Essay Prompt: Describe a moment when you demonstrated or witnessed courage.

Successful essays will be written in the student's individual voice and represent his or her understanding of the nature of courage, while describing a moment when the student demonstrated or witnessed courage

What are the criteria for selecting essays?

Our essay contest is non-traditional in that we focus on content rather than mechanics. We seek to select those essays that best demonstrate a student's understanding of the value or nature of courage.

Can students write about themselves?

We strongly encourage students to reflect on the value or nature of courage as it relates to their own experience. Many of the most powerful essays we receive are personal narratives in which students explore a moment in their life when they acted courageously.

Our students show courage not only in the stories they share, but in the very act of sharing them. Our judges agree to keep the content of the essays confidential. All essays are pre-screened by MWCC staff and all proper procedure is followed to ensure the safety and well-being of students.

Can students write about other people?

While we encourage students to write about a specific time when they have demonstrated courage, some may be more comfortable writing about someone else. This is perfectly acceptable.

The Max Warburg Courage Curriculum's Courage in My Life National Essay Contest Frequently Asked Questions



Do grammar and spelling errors matter?

We have the privilege of working with many different schools, both in Boston and across the United States. There are a significant number of factors that may differ from one school to the next, or one student to the next (for example, a student may be an English Language Learner, or a teacher may be teaching our program for the first time). We ask our judges to focus on the student's voice and the story he or she is sharing, rather than spelling and grammar. All essays selected for publication in *The Courage of Boston's Children*, Volume XXV will be reviewed by our office prior to being printed.

Where can I find examples of winning essays?

The most recent volume of *The Courage of Boston's Children* is available as a PDF document on our website, www.maxcourage.org. You may also reach out to our office by email (essaycontest@maxcourage.org) or phone (617) 373-7399 to receive a hard copy for your classroom. This collection of essays demonstrates the rich spectrum of experience, writing style and ability that we celebrate in our programs. We invite you to explore these examples and share them with your students.

Can a student submit an essay individually?

A student can participate in the contest outside of his or her classroom by submitting an essay individually. All submissions should include an official entry form and a completed release form. These forms can be found on our website, www.maxcourage.org, under the National Essay Contest tab.

Along with engaging students in the reading, writing and critical thinking processes, the Courage in My Life essay contest and all of The Max Warburg Courage Curriculum's programs are specially designed to foster a sense of community within the classroom. Our programs have been successfully used as a vehicle for teachers to better understand their students and their students' lives, and for classmates to better understand one another. We invite students participating outside of the classroom to share their essay and MWCC materials with their English Language Arts teacher.

For more information, please contact our offices by email: (info@maxcourage.org) or phone: (617) 373-7399.