

"Courage In My Life" Essay Guidelines

OVERVIEW

As the capstone experience of the Max Courage Curriculum, each student will write a personal narrative essay about courage in their own life. The process of brainstorming, writing, and revising with their teacher and classmates will tie together all of the ELA skills they have been practicing—reading, writing, discussion, and critical thinking. It will also allow them to apply the social-emotional capacities they have been building over the course of the Max Courage program by reflecting on their thoughts, feelings, values, and actions related to courage.

Once the students submit their essays, a panel of judges composed of local authors, professors, journalists, educators, and members of the community will read each essay and select at least one essay from each school, based on the writer's ability to demonstrate their understanding of courage. These chosen essays will be published in an anthology titled *The Courage of Children*.

DRIVING QUESTION (PROMPT): How have you experienced courage in your life?

CRITERIA FOR SUCCESS: A successful student author will...

- Write a complete personal narrative. (For more specific narrative writing guidelines, see Common Core State Standards: [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W](#))
- Answer the Driving Question by reflecting on their actions, thoughts, and emotions in a situation when they were called to show courage. Though our student authors' story topics vary widely, the common theme of courage unites them all.
 - We strongly encourage students to tell a story about themselves, but if they feel passionate about another topic, they may also choose to tell a story about how they grew from witnessing the courage of another person.
- Channel their own unique writer's voice to make their story heard!

SUBMISSION DETAILS

- Length: Essays should be around one page, preferably 550 words or less. There is no minimum word count.
- Format: Each essay should include the following heading in the upper right corner of every page:
 - Line 1: Student Name (First Name and Last Initial)
 - Line 2: Teacher Name
 - Line 3: School Name
- Word Processing: If possible, we would prefer that essays be typed. However, all essays, whether typed or handwritten, will be evaluated equally.
- Graphics: Please refrain from including any computer graphics or images.

Questions? Contact our Program Director, Molly McCafferty, at molly@maxcourage.org for support!