

Mali Rising Foundation's Make the Case for Caring Essay Contest

Official Rules 2018

2018 essay topic

Numerous challenges exist in countries like Mali, where many people live in extreme poverty – poor nutrition and health, food insecurity, lack of sanitation and clean water, violence and instability, low literacy rates, inadequate infrastructure, and more. Why should education be a priority given all of the competing needs in a country like Mali?

About the contest

Mali Rising Foundation wants to increase U.S. students' knowledge about and understanding of Mali and of the value of engaging with international issues. This contest asks students to build a creative, persuasive argument for engagement in a country like Mali – far from our students' homes and daily concerns. National winners of this essay contest receive cash awards and recognition. Students can find helpful research materials and background information at www.malirisingfdn.org starting January 1, 2018.

Basics

All students enrolled in grades 9-12 in U.S. public, private and home schools within the United States are eligible. Students must submit original work. The essay must be 300-500 words. Entries must be typed and double-spaced. Contestants must submit their essay via email to essay@malirisingfdn.org as a Word or Word-friendly attachment. Contestants should review the official rules (below) for additional important information.

Deadline

Submissions accepted beginning January 1, 2018. Submission deadline is midnight eastern time on March 31, 2018.

Award recognition

First place: \$250 cash award and publication online

Second place: \$100 and publication online

Third place: \$50 and publication online

Finalists will be notified via email and winners will be notified via phone. Due to the volume of submissions, non-finalists will not be notified.

Official rules

Section I – General Rules

1. Contestants must submit their essay via email to essay@malirisingfdn.org by midnight eastern time

on March 31, 2018.

2. Essays must be submitted as a Word or Word-friendly document.
3. Contestants must create an original essay with limited guidance from others.
4. Mali Rising will have the right to edit, publish, or otherwise duplicate any essay entered into the contest without payment to the author.
5. Winners must agree to share a personal photo and to participate in an interview. This will allow Mali Rising to create a bio of the winners for use on our website and with the media.

Section II – Qualifications of Contestants

1. The contest is open to all students in grades 9-12 in public, private and home schools within the United States. No individual having previously won the Mali Rising Essay Contest may win again.
2. Contestants may submit only one essay entry during any given contest year.
3. Any student related to any member of Mali Rising's staff, Board, or Council of Advisors is not eligible.

Section III – Contest Rules

1. Participants must write on the official topic.
2. Each entry must include the following biographical information at the beginning of the essay document: name, age, grade, school, city, state, email, and phone number.
3. Essays must be typed and double-spaced. Essays must include a short title.
4. Essays must contain at least 300 words but no more than 500 words. Every word of the essay is counted. This does not include the title, biographical information, or any footnotes (if applicable).
5. Any quotations or copyrighted material used in the essay must be identified properly. Failure to identify non-original material will result in disqualification.
6. If the essay incorporates facts or other verifiable details, the information should be footnoted. Wikipedia is not an acceptable source.
7. Essays must be written in English.
8. Any protest in the conduct of the contest must be made immediately. Mali Rising's executive director will decide all protests in conformity with the contest rules. The decision of the executive director is final, and no higher appeals will be recognized.

Section IV – Judging and Timing

1. Any essay not complying with the rules will be immediately disqualified from any further review. An essay will also be disqualified at any point in the process if facts presented prove to be false or unsupportable (e.g., if numbers, etc. are presented as facts they must be based on defensible evidence as determined by Mali Rising staff and/or the judges).
2. All compliant essays will be reviewed by an initial group of volunteer judges, drawn from Mali Rising's board, staff, and volunteers using the scoring criteria described in Section V. In the case of a tie, the essay scoring higher on the Persuasiveness score will win.
3. The top 40 essays from the review in #2 will make up the Finalist Group. Judging of the Finalist Group will be completed by a panel of qualified judges drawn from the media, education, philanthropy and/or international development fields. Mali Rising's executive director may also serve in the Finalist Group judging panel.
4. Judges will not discuss or compare essays being judged until all essays have been scored.

5. Judging of the Finalist Group will be conducted using the scoring criteria described in Section V. In the case of a tie, the essay scoring higher on the Persuasiveness score will win.

Section V – Scoring of Contest

Scoring criteria at all levels of the contest will be identical:

1. Persuasiveness of the case made (clear thesis, compelling messages, uses evidence well, etc.): 50 points

2. Organization and structure (well structured (good intro, wrap up, etc.), adherence to topic, etc.): 25 points

3. Grammar, punctuation, spelling: 15 points

2. Vocabulary and style: 10 points