

The 2023-24 Martin Luther King, Jr. Essay and Art and Contest

Freedom of expression and our libraries

Contest sponsored by the Latah County Human Rights Task Force



Martin Luther King, Jr. was a strong proponent of freedom of expression, both in the U.S. and abroad. Our public libraries have upheld this freedom.

According to a Latah County Library District policy statement, "Freedom to read, view, and listen is essential to our democracy." Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights declares: "Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this includes the freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers."

Contest prompts

Lower Elementary (Grades 1-3). Essay topic:

Write a paragraph about a book from your school or public library that taught you something important. Art topic: draw a picture about a book that has taught you something important.

Upper Elementary (Grades 4-5). Essay topic:

Write a three paragraph thank-you letter to your school or public library, discussing an aspect of the library that you value most. Art topic: create a drawing or poster celebrating an aspect of your library that you value most.

Middle School (Grades 6-8). Essay topic:

Write a five-paragraph essay explaining why the freedom of expression is important to you, to your library, and to our democracy. Art topic: create a poster celebrating the freedom of expression.

High School (Grades 9-12). Essay topic:

Research the current debate over the freedom of expression in school and public libraries. Write a report on this debate, then draw your own conclusions. Art topic: create a poster, video, or podcast that conveys what is important to you about freedom of expression.

Contest entries are due January 25th. Teachers and individual students can submit entries anytime up to this date. Email Walter Hesford (hesford@uidaho.edu). to have entries picked up, or mail them to the Latah County Human Rights Task Force, P.O. Box 8613, Moscow, ID 83843. Contest winners will be honored in a ceremony on February 10th and receive a \$25 gift certificate from BookPeople of Moscow.