



JOHN F. KENNEDY  
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## Profile in Courage Essay Contest Submission Deadline: January 6, 2016

### Contest Information and Topic Guidelines

The Profile in Courage Essay Contest invites United States high school students to consider the concept of political courage by writing an essay on a U.S. elected official who has chosen to do what is right, rather than what is expedient. A “Profile in Courage” essay is a carefully researched recounting of a story: the story of how an elected official risked his or her career to take a stand based on the dictates of the public good, rather than the dictates of polls, interest groups or even constituents. The contest challenges high school students to discover new profiles in courage, and to research and write about acts of political courage that occurred after the 1956 publication of John F. Kennedy's [Profiles in Courage](#).

The Profile in Courage Essay Contest meets several [Common Core Standards and National Standards in Social Studies and English](#) and offers a meaningful opportunity for students to develop and enhance research, writing and critical thinking skills while they deepen their understanding and appreciation of politics and history.

#### Topic:

Students are asked to write an original and creative essay that demonstrates an understanding of [political courage as described by John F. Kennedy in Profiles in Courage](#). The maximum word count is 1,000 with a minimum of 700, not including citations and bibliography. Use at least five varied sources such as government documents, letters, newspaper articles, books, and/or personal interviews to address the following topic:

Describe and analyze an act of political courage by a United States elected official that took place during or after 1956. Include an analysis of the obstacles, risks, and consequences associated with the act. The essay may concern an issue at the local, state, national, or international level.

All submissions must adhere to [contest requirements](#).

[Visit the Profile in Courage Essay Contest on Facebook!](#)

The John F. Kennedy Profile in Courage Essay Contest is generously supported by:



John Hancock.

# Eligibility and Requirements

## *Eligibility*

The contest is open to United States high school students in grades nine through twelve attending public, private, parochial, or home schools; U.S. students under the age of twenty enrolled in a high school correspondence/GED program in any of the fifty states, the District of Columbia, or the U.S. territories; and U.S. citizens attending schools overseas. Past winners and finalists are not eligible to participate. Employees of John Hancock Financial Services and members of their families are not eligible to participate.

## *Requirements*

- The contest deadline is Wednesday, January 6, 2016.
- Essays can be no more than 1,000 words but must be a minimum of 700 words. Citations and bibliography are not included in the word count.
- Essays must be the original work of the student.
- John F. Kennedy, Robert F. Kennedy, and Edward M. Kennedy are not eligible subjects for essays.
- Essays must describe an act of political courage by a U.S. elected official that occurred during or after 1956, the publication date of [Profiles in Courage](#). The official may have addressed an issue at the local, state, or national level. See [Contest Information and Topic Guidelines](#) and [Helpful Tips for Writing Your Essay](#) for more information.
- Essays about [past recipients of the Profile in Courage Award](#) will be disqualified unless they describe an act of political courage other than the act for which the award was given.
- Essays must have a minimum of five sources.

## *Source Material*

- Essays with fewer than five listed sources will be disqualified.
- All participants must cite sources they used to research their topic throughout their essay. Please use parenthetical citations within the text. We can not accept citations in footnote form.
- Essays must include a bibliography. Accepted formats include APA, MLA, or Turabian. You must use a minimum of five selected sources. Please refer to [Guidelines for Citations and Bibliographies](#).

## *Essay Submission*

- Students have the choice of either submitting their essay online (preferred) or of mailing their essay. **All** students must complete and submit a registration form online for student and school information. For instructions on how to submit your essay, see [Registration and Submission](#).
- Mailed in essays must be postmarked by January 6, 2016.

## *Nominating Teachers*

- All students must list the name of their nominating teacher on the registration form. The role of a nominating teacher is to provide students with support and advice during the writing of their essay. Nominating teachers are also asked to read students' essays to make suggestions for improvement before they are submitted to the essay contest. As part of this review process, the nominating teacher reviews the essay for syntax, grammatical, typographical and spelling errors and ensures the essay meets the contest requirements listed above. The first place winner and

his/her nominating teacher, as representatives of their school, will be invited to receive awards at the annual Profile in Courage Award ceremony held each May at the Kennedy Presidential Library in Boston.

- Nominating teachers can be former or current teachers, but must still be teaching at the same high school as the essay participant. Usually students ask their English or History/Social Studies teachers. In very few cases, we will make an exception if a student is unable to ask a teacher from their high school to be their nominating teacher. The parent or legal guardian responsible for the instruction of home schooled students can also serve as a nominating teacher.

# Criteria for Judging

## Content (55%)

### **Demonstrated understanding of political courage**

- Demonstrated an understanding of political courage as described by John F. Kennedy in [Profiles in Courage](#)
- Identified an act of political courage by a U.S. elected official that occurred during or after 1956
- Proved that the elected official risked his or her career to address an issue at the local, state, national, or international level
- Explained why the official's course of action best serves or has served the larger public interest
- Outlined the obstacles, dangers, and pressures the elected official is encountering or has encountered

### **Originality**

- Thoughtful, original choice of a U.S. elected official
- Story is not widely known, or a well-known story is portrayed in a unique way

### **Supporting Evidence**

- Well-researched
- Convincing arguments supported with specific examples
- Critical analysis of acts of political courage

### **Source Material**

- Bibliography of five or more varied sources
- Includes primary source material
- Thoughtfully selected, reliable

## Presentation (45%)

### **Quality of writing**

- Style, clarity, flow, vocabulary

### **Organization**

- Structure, paragraphing, introduction and conclusion

## Conventions

- Syntax, grammar, spelling, and punctuation

### An essay will be disqualified if:

- It is not on the topic.
- The subject is not an elected official.
- The subject is John F. Kennedy, Robert F. Kennedy, or Edward M. Kennedy.
- The subject is a previous [Profile in Courage Award recipient](#) unless the essay describes an act of political courage other than the act for which the award was given.
- The essay focuses on an act of political courage that occurred prior to 1956.
- It does not include a minimum of five sources.
- It is more than 1,000 words or less than 700 words (not including citations and bibliography.)
- It is postmarked or submitted by e-mail after the deadline.
- It is not the student's original work.

The top ten essays are judged by members of the [Profile in Courage Award Committee](#).

# Registration and Submission

Please read [contest information and topic guidelines](#) carefully before submitting your essay. Essays must meet [contest requirements](#) to qualify for evaluation.

Complete the online registration when you are ready to submit your essay:

### [Submit your essay online \(preferred method\)](#)

To correctly prepare your essay and bibliography for online submission:

- **Insert line breaks by hitting "Enter"** after each paragraph and bibliographic entry.
- Be sure to **use parenthetical citations in the text of your essay, not footnotes.**
- Complete the [Registration and Submission Form](#).

**OR**

### **Submit your essay via mail**

- Complete the online [Registration Form](#) when you have completed your essay.
- **Print out the completed online registration form along with two hard copies of your essay.** Your essay must be typed, double-spaced, and printed only on one side of the paper.
- **Attach your registration form to only one copy of your essay. Your second copy should contain no personal identification information.**

Please mail to:

**John F. Kennedy Library Foundation  
Profile in Courage Essay Contest  
Columbia Point  
Boston, MA 02125**

Mailed essays must be postmarked by **January 6, 2016**.

**Note to teachers**

If your students are participating as part of a class project, please note that all students are asked to [register online](#) at the time of submission. See above for submission instructions.