

## Middle School Essay Contest

Categories	1 - Beginning	2 - Developing	3 - Strong	4 - Distinguished
<b>Topic development</b>	Disjointed thoughts; missing meaningful details; essay not related to topic	Beginning stage of developing the topic; lacking specific details or information	Begins to develop topic; addresses the topic, but very broad; provides some details; average topic development	Develops the topic well; shows age-appropriate insights; accurate details; develops the topic beyond what is predictable or obvious
<b>Expression of Ideas</b>	Limited vocabulary Incorrect use of simple words; purpose is not expressed; no descriptive language	General correct use of words; attempt to use descriptive language; writing is very surface and lacks conviction	Some active verbs; effective use of descriptive language; Develops the topic with details, quotations, and examples.	Purpose is engaging and powerful; Develops the topics with relevant details, quotations, and examples.
<b>Grammar and Punctuation</b>	Lack of paragraphs; difficult to read because of spelling errors, incorrect punctuation and grammar errors	Common words are spelled correctly; majority of ending punctuation and common capitalizations are correct; grammar errors are minor; Irregular paragraphs	Most spelling, punctuation, capitalizations, grammar/usage, and paragraphs are correct	Correct spelling, punctuation, capitalization, grammar, and paragraph usage.
<b>Organization and Sentence Structure</b>	Lacking opening or conclusion; Hard to follow; no sequencing; choppy, rambling, or incomplete sentences; repetitive beginning of sentences	Ineffective opening or conclusion; structure detracts from the content; too many sentences have the same beginning; sentence structure impairs readability	Essay includes an opening and conclusion; most of essay has a logical sequence; predictable; sentences begin differently; mechanical sentences	Five - paragraph essay including an opening, 3 points and a conclusion. Strong Introduction, effective conclusion, good transition and sequence; sentences easily flow and are strong and varied.
<b>Neatness and Appearance</b>	Different font size or colors; wrong size of font; random or lack of spacing; overall appearance of document is poor	Inconsistent font; attempts to space neatly and use margins; appearance is distracting	Uses consistent and standard font; aligns text to page; effective use of margins and spacing; acceptable appearance	Good balance of space and words; document is clear and aligned properly; overall good appearance
<b>Use of Bible Verses in Essay</b>	Bible Verses are not included or Bible Verses represent 1/3 or more of content (not much room for original thought)	Bible Verses incorrectly quoted	Bible verses quoted correctly and related to topic, but development of content related to verses is weak	Use of 2-3 verses (not to exceed ¼ of the overall content) Effective use of Bible verses in Connection with content

Judges will use this suggested rubric as a guide but may exercise judge discretion in declaring a winner.