



CONTEST GUIDELINES

XI ZETA OMEGA CHAPTER
OF
ALPHA KAPPA ALPHA SORORITY, INCORPORATED
PRESENTS THE
2012 BLACK HISTORY YOUTH ORATORICAL AND ARTS CONTEST

The 2012 Black History Youth Oratorical and Arts Contest is a competition designed to encourage students to celebrate and embrace the contributions of African-Americans, past and present. Participants will learn about the efforts of African-Americans and will also have an opportunity to display their oratory and artistic talents in the visual arts, music, the written word, and public speaking. The contest is open only to students in grades 6 through 9 who are enrolled in District of Columbia public and charter schools and Prince George's County (Maryland) public schools.

Students in grades 6 through 8 are eligible to compete in the following five contest categories: original poetry/spoken word; oratory/speech; music/instrumental; music/vocal; and visual arts. These students may submit an entry for no more than two contest categories. Students in grade 9 may compete in the original essay category only. **Applications are due Friday, January 20, 2012.** Late applications will not be accepted.

Entries in each category will be judged separately by a panel of non-partisan judges. The top three entries in each category will be awarded a monetary prize of up to \$150. All participants will receive a certificate of participation.

Original Poetry/Spoken Word

Grades 6-8

Contestants of the original poetry/spoken word category must write an original poem or spoken word piece that celebrates black history. The contestant must recite the original piece at the culminating event on Sunday, February 19, 2012. All presentations must be ***three to five minutes in length and memorized.*** Each participant must make an introductory statement at the start of the presentation explaining why the particular piece or excerpt was chosen to reflect the overall contest theme, "Celebrating Black History." The introductory statement will not be counted as part of the presentation time, but will be judged. Participants are encouraged to use props or other means of artistic expression in their presentation.

Entries in this category will be evaluated on the following criteria:

- Best presentation of the overall theme;
- Originality;
- Pronunciation;
- Presence and style of presentation; and
- Artistic interpretation.

The original piece must be submitted electronically to jbrown@gds.org by Friday, February 3, 2012.

Oratory/Speech

Grades 6-8

Contestants of the oratory/speech category must select a poem, speech or other oration, written by an African-American or written about the experiences of African-Americans, to recite. All oratorical presentations must be ***three to five minutes in length and memorized***. Therefore, participants may recite an excerpt of the oratory piece so that the presentation is within the time limit. Each participant must make an introductory statement at the start of the presentation explaining why the particular piece or excerpt was chosen to reflect the overall contest theme, “Celebrating Black History.” The introductory statement will not be counted as part of the presentation time, but will be judged. Participants are encouraged to use props or other means of artistic expression in their presentation.

Entries in this category will be evaluated on the following criteria:

- Best presentation of the overall theme;
- Pronunciation;
- Presence and style of presentation; and
- Artistic interpretation.

Music/Instrumental

Grades 6-8

Contestants of the music/instrumental category must choose a musical work to recite on the day of the culminating event, Sunday, February 19, 2012. The musical work must reflect the contest theme, be played from memory, and be no more than 5 minutes in length. Each participant must make an introductory statement at the start of the presentation explaining why the particular piece was chosen to reflect the overall contest theme, “Celebrating Black History.” The introductory statement will not be counted as part of the presentation time, but will be judged. Students must bring their own instruments, and any other needed props.

Entries in this category will be evaluated on the following criteria:

- Sound quality;
- Technique;
- Interpretation; and
- Stage presence and delivery.

Music/Vocal**Grades 6-8**

Contestants of the music/vocal category must choose a song to perform on the day of the culminating event, Sunday, February 19, 2012. The song must reflect the contest theme, be sung from memory, and be no more than 5 minutes in length. Each participant must make an introductory statement at the start of the presentation explaining why the particular song was chosen to reflect the overall contest theme, “Celebrating Black History.” The introductory statement will not be counted as part of the presentation time, but will be judged. Students are encouraged to use props or other means of artistic expression in their presentation.

Entries in this category will be evaluated on the following criteria:

- Vocal range;
- Vocal quality;
- Interpretation; and
- Stage presence and delivery.

Visual Arts**Grades 6-8**

Contestants of the visual arts category must create an original artwork that reflects one of the themes listed below. Original photography, graphic art, drawings, paintings, and other visual works will be accepted. The participant may use any medium at his or her disposal (e.g., paint, collage, photography, sculpture, etc.) to create their visual interpretations. Each participant must submit a brief statement explaining how the artwork reflects the chosen theme. Participants must create a visual representation of one of the following themes:

- A visual interpretation depicting African-American life.
- A campaign poster encouraging students to learn about black history.
- A campaign poster of an individual of African descent who you think should be commemorated on a U.S. postage stamp. (Note: All individuals who are commemorated on a U.S. postage stamp are deceased.)

Entries in this category will be evaluated on the following criteria:

- Technique;
- Personal Expression;
- Organization; and
- Integration.

Visual arts contestants must bring their artwork and brief explanatory statement to the culminating program for judging. Artwork must be submitted for judging by 2:30 PM on February 19, 2012.

Contestants of the original essay category must submit an entry that reflects one of the themes listed below. The participant must research the topic and write a sound essay. **All entries must be at least 1,000 but no more than 3,000 words in length.** Participants must write an essay on one of the following themes:

- Why is it important to learn about Black History?
- Many diseases/illnesses (e.g., breast cancer, diabetes, hypertension, and HIV/AIDS) disproportionately affect African-Americans more than other ethnic groups. Why do you think this is the case? What can you do to change this in your community?
- Why is it important to learn about issues related to social justice and human rights (e.g., education equity, youth aging out of foster care, the right to vote, and equal access to technology) as it relates to the African-American experience?
- What important historical events and cultural practices should be displayed in the new African American Museum of History and Culture (opening in 2012) and why?

Entries in this category will be evaluated on the following criteria:

- The essay demonstrates a strong understanding of the theme.
- The essay reflects familiarity with primary sources related to the subject.
- The essay demonstrates the student's own serious reflection on the theme.
- The essay is focused and well-reasoned.
- The essay is written clearly, with correct spelling and grammar.

Contestants must read their entries at the culminating event. **All entries must be submitted electronically to jbrown@gds.org by February 3, 2012 for judging.**