National FCE 4th Grade Essay and Artwork Contest

2027 THEME: **"RESPONSIBILITY"**

National Association For Family & Community Education

nafcehq@fuse.net

Note: All National FCE Contest entry forms, essays, and artwork must be submitted, via email, to National FCE: nafcehq@fuse.net, and the current National FCE President on/before April 15, 2027. Artwork must be scanned and submitted in color.

2027
ESSAY and ARTWORK CONTEST CRITERIA
RESPONSIBILITY

National FCE members nationwide present an annual contest for anyone eligible as a 4th grade applicant, i.e., in public, private, home schools, 4-H, scouts, youth or church groups, etc. **This Essay Contest can be done at home.** National FCE's Essay and Artwork Contest promotes FCE's literacy programs, and community involvement. The purpose of the 2027 contest is to encourage applicants to understand and practice **RESPONSIBILITY**. The contest encourages applicants to strive for excellence and creativity in reading, writing, and drawing skills.

TIMELINE:

SUGGESTED LOCAL LEVEL:

The contest will start at the local level.

- The contest can run **September 1, 2026, through March 31, 2027.** *This date may be adjusted as long as the State entry is emailed to National FCE and current National FCE President by April 15,* 2027.
- Each local organization is responsible for notifying its parents, local schools, libraries, or other networks that would have access to publicizing the contest to eligible 4th grade applicants.
- It is suggested that the principal of each school be contacted and asked for approval. Contact individual teachers/leaders after approval is given.
- Make sure the contact information is on the Teacher/Parent/Leader letter and the Permission Form.
- Sign and complete the information for the 4th grade teacher/leader. Make a copy for each teacher/leader you visit or contact.
- If you choose to inform them of the local and state awards, type an additional paper stating what the awards are.
- Retired teachers are a good source for judging entries.
- **Each judge should receive a letter stating the contest criteria and a judging sheet with instructions.** This will ensure that judges will use the same criteria on all levels.
- Local groups may provide prizes and recognition to local and county winners.
- Obtain a permission form from the county winner.
- Each local organization should forward the original copies and forms of their first-place winner to the State FCE Essay and Artwork Coordinator by the state deadline.

STATE LEVEL:

State FCE Associations will judge the winning entries from the local organizations/counties/parishes in their state.

- Retired teachers are a good source for judging entries.
- **Please use judging instructions and judgin**g **sheet included in this packet.** This will ensure that judges from all states will use the same criteria for all levels.
- State FCE Associations can provide prizes and recognition to the state winners.
- State winners will be asked to provide a video recording of the winner reading their essay. (video will NOT be used in judging criteria).

- A photograph of the contestant will also be requested.
- Email all permission forms and the original copy of the first-place winner for each state to the National FCE Headquarters and the current National President by **April 15, 2027**.
- **Scanned copies of all the forms, essays, and artwork are to be emailed to the National FCE Headquarters. Artwork must be scanned and emailed in color.**

NATIONAL LEVEL:

The same judging criteria of creativity, content, grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, vocabulary, and presentation are used on all levels.

- The National 1st, 2nd, & 3rd place winners of the 2027 Essay & Artwork Contest will be announced at the National FCE Annual Conference.
- The National 1st, 2nd, & 3rd place winners will receive a visa gift card or check of $250, $150, $50, respectively.
- The National 1st, 2nd & 3rd place winners' entries will be recognized on the National FCE website, state FCE websites, and other media forms.
- The video recording of the essay will be shown at the National FCE Conference.

CONTEST CRITERIA:

- Any 4th grade applicant, i.e., in public, private, home schools, 4-H, scouts, youth or church groups, etc. is eligible. **This Essay Contest can be done at home.**
- Entries are to include an essay and hand drawn artwork.
- **Use #2 pencils, or computer to type essays.**
- **Use #2 pencils or colored pencils for artwork. No crayons or markers.**
- **Do not fold the artwork.**
- Essay and artwork should reflect the characteristic of **RESPONSIBILITY**.
- For artwork, use unlined, white paper approximately 8 ½ by 11.
- For essays, use lined, white paper approximately 8 ½ by 11.
- Use plain white paper if computer written.
- The essay shall be a **minimum of 50 words**.
- Applicants should print their complete name, date, and teacher/leader's name, and school, (if applicable) at the bottom of the artwork and at the bottom of the essay.

Dear 4th Grade Teacher, Parent, or Leader:

The National Association for Family & Community Education members in _____ (state/local organization) are sponsoring a nation-wide contest. The contest is based on the characteristic of **RESPONSIBILITY,** and we are asking applicants to write a short essay or short story and a drawing about this trait.

The contest starts at the local level, where entries will be judged, and winners recognized from the local level. The first-place local entries will be forwarded to the state level. State FCE Associations will, in turn, judge and recognize winners for the state. First place state entries will then be judged at the national level. The same judging criteria will be used in all states at all levels. These include creativity, content, grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, vocabulary, and presentation of the handwriting.

The National 1st, 2nd & 3rd place winners receive a check of $250, $150, $50, respectively.

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- For essays, use lined, white paper approximately 8 ½ by 11.
- Use plain white paper if computer written.
- The essay shall be a **minimum of 50 words**.
- Applicants should print their complete name, date, and teacher/leader's name, and school, (if applicable) on the bottom of the artwork and at the bottom of the essay.

Please contact the Local or State Contest Coordinator listed below for additional information or questions.

Name: _____

Email Address: _____

Phone Number:_____

All entries/forms must be submitted to Local Contest Coordinator on/before _____

2027 ESSAY and ARTWORK Contest
RESPONSIBILITY
PERMISSION FORM

(**MUST** be submitted with Essay and Artwork to be eligible for judging)

PLEASE NEATLY PRINT ALL INFORMATION

Name of Applicant _____

Name of Parent/Guardian _____

Parent/Guardian phone number _____

Parent/Guardian email address _____

Mailing Address: _____

City _____ State _____ Zip_____

I give my permission for my son/daughter to participate in the Essay and Artwork Contest sponsored by the National Association for Family & Community Education. I also give permission for his/her photograph, video, essay, artwork, and other information used in the contest to be used in publications, the State FCE and National FCE websites, and other media.

This essay and artwork were completed by my son/daughter. I understand that the essay and artwork, and other contest items become property of the National FCE Association.

Parent/Guardian Signature _____ Date _____

Applicant's Signature _____ Date _____

JUDGING INSTRUCTIONS

Dear Judge,

On behalf of the National Association for Family and Community Education, we thank you for being an important part of our literacy project. It would not be a success without the time you so graciously give. If at any time during the judging process you need assistance or have questions, please feel free to contact me.

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS:
A judging sheet has been provided. The theme of the essay and hand drawn artwork is **RESPONSIBILITY.** After scoring the entries, please attach the judging sheet to both the story and the drawing with a paper clip – please do not staple. First, second, and third place winners are to be selected. After judging and selecting the winners, please notify your local FCE representative to pick up the entries and judging sheets. **DO NOT NOTIFY THE WINNER.** The state or local organization will make an announcement and present the award.

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- The essay shall be a **minimum of 50 words**.
- Applicants should print their complete name, date, and teacher/leader's name, and school, (if applicable) on the bottom of the artwork and at the bottom of the essay.

We ask that you do not write or mark on the entries as it may be judged at a higher level.

Sincerely (Local/State Coordinator)

Name_____

Phone number _____

Email Address _____

JUDGING SHEET

Name of Applicant: _____

ARTWORK
Message (10 points) _____
Creativity (10points) _____
Execution (10 points) _____

ESSAY Ideas (20 points) _____
Organization (8 points) _____
Voice (8 points) _____
Word Choice (8 points) _____
Sentence Fluency (8 points) _____
Conventions (8 points) _____

PRESENTATION (artwork & essay) (10 points) _____

TOTAL SCORE (100 pts possible) **Total _____**

Judged by: _____

Date: _____

Trait Definitions

The 6+1 Trait Model of Instruction and Assessment comprise 6+1 key qualities that define quality writing. These are:

- Ideas--the main message
- Organization-- the internal structure of the piece
- Voice-the personal tone and flavor of the author's message
- Word Choice-- the vocabulary a writer chooses to convey meaning. Sentence Fluency-- the rhythm and flow of the language.
- Conventions--the mechanical corrections
- Presentation--how the writing actually looks on the page.