

2026 Elyria Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday Commission Essay Contest

The Elyria Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday Commission is pleased to announce its 2026 Essay Contest. This contest is intended to encourage students to reflect upon Dr. King's life, philosophy, and impact on the Civil Rights Movement and present-day America. It is meant to challenge students to think about how civil rights and diversity affect their lives and how they can continue the work of Dr. King in their own way.

All **Lorain County** students in grades 6-12 are invited to enter this contest and may submit one (1) entry per student. **Contest entries must be accompanied by a clearly written official entry form, completed in its entirety. (Submissions will not be considered without a completed entry form.)**

CONTEST THEME

"I've Been to the Mountaintop" is one of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s most powerful and historically significant speeches not only because of its message, but also because it was his final public address before his assassination the next day, on April 4, 1968.

In the speech, delivered at the Mason Temple in Memphis, Tennessee, Dr. King spoke in support of striking sanitation workers who were demanding better wages and working conditions. Beyond that immediate cause, he tied their struggle to the broader fight for racial and economic justice across America.

A few key themes and moments from the speech include:

- **Economic empowerment**
- **Unity and nonviolence**
- **Faith and destiny**

The Mountaintop Today

When Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. spoke of "the mountaintop," he was using it as a metaphor for a higher moral and social vision — a place from which one could see the Promised Land: a just, equal, and compassionate America. He knew he might not live to reach it, but he believed that the people, united and persistent, eventually would.

Describe "the mountaintop" today and how we measure progress toward that vision

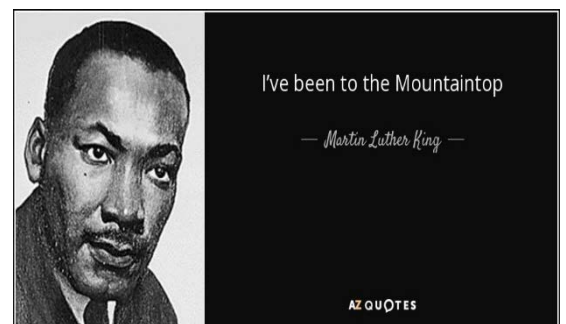
Contest Entries: Each participant in the contest is invited to participate by creating work that creatively responds to the above statement in bold print.

Questions? Call us at 440-326-1552 or visit us online at: www.cityofelyria.org

All entries should be **emailed to parks@cityofelyria.org or received by mail* no later than January 2, 2026 at 5:00 PM.**

Elyria Dr. MLK Commission
131 Court Street, Suite 301
Elyria, OH 44035

Contest rules and entry forms are also available online at
www.cityofelyria.org



2026 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Essay Contest Official Entry Form

PLEASE PRINT OR TYPE

Essay contest

Student Information

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY

DEADLINE: JANUARY 2, 2026

The Elyria Dr. MLK Jr. Holiday
Commission 2026
131 Court Street, Suite 301
Elyria, OH 44035
parks@cityofelyria.org

Grade Level: 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

Student Name:

FIRST

LAST

Student E-Mail Address (if applicable):

Parent or Guardian Name:

FIRST

LAST

Parent or Guardian E-Mail Address (if applicable):

Home Address:

City:

Zip:

Phone Number:

School Information

School Name:

Address:

City:

Zip:

Phone Number:

Principal's Name:

FIRST

LAST

Teacher's Name:

FIRST

LAST

Teacher's email address:

DEADLINE: RECEIVED* BY January 2, 2026

*Please complete the entire form. Submissions will not be considered without a completed entry form.
Forms, essays submissions can be emailed to parks@cityofelyria.org*

2026 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Essay Contest

Essay Contest Rules

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- ◆ Entries must be prose, no poetry, please.
 - ◆ Essays may be typed or handwritten but must be legible. Illegible essays will be disqualified.
 - ◆ Pages must be single sided with the student's name appearing on the top left-hand corner of each page.
 - ◆ Each student may submit only one entry and each entry must be the original work of only one student.
 - ◆ Each entry must be accompanied by an official contest entry form. (Stapled to the essay if hard copy is submitted).
Essay submissions and entry forms should be electronically submitted to parks@cityofelyria.org
 - ◆ Please ensure document access settings permit public reading and downloading.
 - ◆ There is no maximum or minimum length, however successful essays tend to be 1-2 typed pages.
 - ◆ Entries that are deemed by the OCRC to infringe upon copyright protected material will be disqualified.
 - ◆ Entries received after the deadline may not be considered in the competition.
 - ◆ Hard copies of entries will not be returned.

Winners will be selected according to the following criteria:

Originality

Writing

Quality

Relevance to theme

Effective and creative expression

DEADLINE: JANUARY 2, 2026

The Elyria Dr. MLK Jr. Holiday

Commission 2026

131 Court Street, Suite 301

Elyria, OH 44035

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