

# ***FLORIDA EDUCATION FUND LAWS OF LIFE ESSAY CONTEST***

**THEME.** “*Laws of Life*”

**PURPOSE.** The *Laws of Life* are core values and ideals by which we live. Honesty, perseverance, and the Golden Rule all are examples of these universal “laws” that transcend religions, cultures, and national borders. The *Laws of Life* Essay Contest offers a young person the opportunity to think about and communicate the principles that guide his or her life. As a participant writes his or her essay, the participant must select the quotation below that expresses a key value and/or ideal by which he or she lives and explain why the chosen value/ideal is important to the way he or she lives his or her life by discussing experiences, lessons learned, and people who have served as living examples of the chosen value/ideal.

1. *In a world filled with hate, we must still dare to hope. In a world filled with anger, we must still dare to comfort. In a world filled with despair, we must still dare to dream. And in a world filled with distrust, we must still dare to believe.*

–**Michael Jackson**—internationally renowned professional singer, songwriter, professional dancer, philanthropist, Grammy Award winner, World Music Award winner, Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, Songwriter Hall of Fame, Dance Hall of Fame

2. *The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy.*

–**Martin Luther King**—minister, civil rights leader, author, Nobel Peace Prize winner

3. *Education is the most powerful weapon you can use to change the world.*

–**Nelson Mandela**—President of South Africa, attorney, anti-apartheid revolutionary, philanthropist, author, Nobel Peace Prize winner, Presidential Medal of Freedom recipient

4. *You can't let your failures define you. You have to let your failures teach you.*

–Former President of the United States **Barack Obama**—attorney, author, Noble Peace Prize winner

5. *Education is our passport to the future, for tomorrow belongs to the people who prepare for it today.*

–**Malcolm X**—Sunni Muslim minister, human rights activist, author

6. *Education must not only simply teach—it must teach life.*

–**W. E. B. Dubois**—educator, sociologist, historian, civil rights activist, Pan-Africanist, author, editor

7. *Nothing ever comes to one that is worth having, except as a result of hard work.*

–**Booker T. Washington**—Founder and President of Tuskegee Institute, educator, author, orator, adviser to United States presidents

8. *You may not control all the events that happen to you, but you can decide not to be reduced by them.*

–**Maya Angelou**—author, poet, essayist, civil rights activist, Grammy Award winner, Spingarn Medal, National Medal of Arts, Presidential Medal of Freedom recipient, Pulitzer Prize nominee, Tony Award nominee

9. *The kind of beauty I want most is the hard-to-get kind that comes from within—strength, courage, dignity.*

–**Ruby Dee Davis**—actress, poet, playwright, screenwriter, journalist, civil rights activist, Lifetime Achievement Freedom Award recipient

10. *The world is before you and you need not take it or leave it as it was when you came in.*

–**James Baldwin**—novelist, playwright, essayist, poet, and activist, Guggenheim Fellow, Eugene F. Saxton Memorial Trust Award recipient, Foreign Drama Critics Award recipient, George Polk Memorial Award recipient, MacDowell Fellow, French Government: Commander of the Legion of Honor designee

11. *I don't know what your future is, but if you are willing to take the harder way, the more complicated one, the one with more failures at first than successes, the one that's ultimately proven to have more victory, more glory, then you will not regret it. This is your time.*

–**Chadwick Boseman**—actor, director, playwright, social justice activist, Screen Actors Guild Award winner, NAACP Image Awards recipient

12. *The most important thing is to try and inspire people so that they can be great at whatever they want to do.*

–**Kobe Bryant**—professional basketball player, businessman, venture capitalist, author, philanthropist, NBA Championship winner; NBA MVP, Olympic athlete-U.S. Basketball Team-gold medal winner, Academy Award winner for Best Animated Short Film *Dear Basketball*

13. *To the children of our country, regardless of your gender, our country has sent you a clear message. Dream with ambition, lead with conviction, and see yourself in a way that others might not see you, simply because they've never seen it before. And we will applaud you every step of the way.*

–Vice President of the United States **Kamala Harris**—first female vice president of the United States of America, highest ranking female official in American history, first African American and Asian American vice president of the United States of America, author, former United States Senator from California (2017-2021), Senate Committees: Judiciary; Intelligence; Homeland Security and Government Affairs; Budget), former attorney general of California (2011-2017)

14. *Those who have no record of what their forebearers have accomplished lose the inspiration which comes from the teaching of biography and history.*

–**Carter G. Woodson**—“Father of Black History,” established Black History Month; American historian, author numerous history books (*The Negro in Our History; The Mis-Education of the Negro*), journalist, founder of Association for the Study of African American History, second African American to earn Ph.D. from Harvard University, Dean at Howard University

15. *One of the most important lessons in life is to remember to have an attitude of gratitude.*

–**Denzel Washington**—American actor, director, and producer for film and theater, Academy Award winner, Golden Globe winner, Screen Actors Guild winner, Tony Award winner, Cecile B. DeMille Lifetime Achievement Award winner, national board member for Boys & Girls Club of America, philanthropist

**ELIGIBILITY.** Members of the Centers of Excellence Program (i.e., National Achievers and Believers) in grades 3 through 12 may participate. There are three divisions: Grades 3-5, 6-8, and 9-12.

**REQUIREMENTS.** Essays of 100-300 words **must** be submitted to the Center Director no later than 4:00 p.m., January 31, 2024. Attach this application to the essay.

Center Directors will submit all essays to the Florida Education Fund by February 15, 2024, and will be notified of the essay winners for each division by March 11, 2024. The winners will be expected to read a portion of their winning essays (no more than one minute) at the Florida National Achievers Society Summit to be held in March 2024 in central Florida.

**JUDGING.** The following criteria will be used for judging an essay: Content = 5 points; Presentation = 3 points; and Grammar and Spelling = 2 points. Judges will be selected who understand the writing levels of the essay participants, i.e., the writing skills taught for the FSA and defined by the Florida State Standards: an elementary professional for 3th-5th graders, a middle school professional for 6th-8th graders, and a high school professional for 9th-12th graders.

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**APPLICATION FORM (PLEASE PRINT)**

Director’s use only: ASSIGNED NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_

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*Student’s Name* \_\_\_\_\_ *Age* \_\_\_\_\_ *Grade* \_\_\_\_\_

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*Home Address* \_\_\_\_\_ *City* \_\_\_\_\_ *State* \_\_\_\_\_ *Zip* \_\_\_\_\_

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*Parent or Guardian* \_\_\_\_\_ *Home Phone* \_\_\_\_\_

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*School* \_\_\_\_\_ *Center of Excellence* \_\_\_\_\_

# FLORIDA EDUCATION FUND LAWS OF LIFE ESSAY CONTEST

## JUDGE'S FORM

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2. *The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy.* –Martin Luther King
3. *Education is the most powerful weapon you can use to change the world.* –Nelson Mandela
4. *You can't let your failures define you. You have to let your failures teach you.* –Former President of the United States Barack Obama
5. *Education is our passport to the future, for tomorrow belongs to the people who prepare for it today.* –Malcolm X
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8. *You may not control all the events that happen to you, but you can decide not to be reduced by them.* –Maya Angelou
9. *The kind of beauty I want most is the hard-to-get kind that comes from within—strength, courage, dignity.* –Ruby Dee Davis
10. *The world is before you and you need not take it or leave it as it was when you came in.* –James Baldwin
11. *I don't know what your future is, but if you are willing to take the harder way, the more complicated one, the one with more failures at first than successes, the one that's ultimately proven to have more victory, more glory, then you will not regret it. This is your time.* –Chadwick Boseman
12. *The most important thing is to try and inspire people so that they can be great at whatever they want to do.* –Kobe Bryant
13. *To the children of our country, regardless of your gender, our country has sent you a clear message. Dream with ambition, lead with conviction, and see yourself in a way that others might not see you, simply because they've never seen it before. And we will applaud you every step of the way.* – Vice President of the United States Kamala Harris
14. *Those who have no record of what their forebearers have accomplished lose the inspiration which comes from the teaching of biography and history.* –Carter G. Woodson
15. *One of the most important lessons in life is to remember to have an attitude of gratitude.* –Denzel Washington

**ELIGIBILITY:** A judge must be someone who appreciates the ideals of the *Laws of Life* Essay Contest. A judge **cannot** be a parent or immediate family member of a current contest participant.

**CRITERIA:** Students must be able to demonstrate the writing process and communicate ideas and information effectively. The following criteria should be met: **Content** - the student was able to explain his or her *law of life*. **Presentation** - the essay is clearly written and easy to read. **Grammar/Spelling** - the essay was written with few grammatical and spelling errors.

**SCORING:** Essays will be scored in three categories on a scale from 1 - 5. The highest overall score for an essay is 10 points.

ESSAY ID NUMBER	STUDENT'S GRADE	CONTENT (maximum pts. = 5)	PRESENTATION (maximum pts. = 3)	GRAMMAR/SPELLING (maximum pts. = 2)	TOTAL SCORE

Judge's Signature

Date

Center of Excellence

**SUBMIT THIS FORM WITH THE ESSAYS TO THE CENTER DIRECTOR.**