

# 2022 American Dream Essay Contest

November 22, 2021

Dear Educator,

Each year, high school students from across Wyoming examine their personal beliefs and ethics to pen an essay based on those beliefs. The American Dream Essay Contest awards thousands of dollars each year to the student authors of the winning compositions.

I am writing to invite you to open this door for your students this year as we kick off the 2022 contest. This competition is centered on bestselling author, Jim Owen's "Ten Principles to Live By," as highlighted in his book *Cowboy Ethics*. Every high school and homeschool student is invited to participate by asking students in grades 9-12 to reflect on the ten principles and write an essay based on their own personal beliefs or guiding forces.

Monetary awards are given for first, second, and third place winners from your school. The first place local winner is then forwarded to the state competition. The top essay on the state level wins \$5,000 cash, second place receives \$3,000, third, \$2,000, and two honorable mention prizes of \$1,000. In addition, you, as their sponsor, will receive monetary awards for participation and prize money if your student's essay places at the state level. Last year, over \$39,000 was awarded in prize money!

In this packet you will find complete contest information to implement the contest in your classroom. You may work this into your lesson plans at any time from **December 2021 through February 4, 2022**. If you plan to participate, please visit [www.americandreamessay.org/educators-2/](http://www.americandreamessay.org/educators-2/) to confirm your participation by Jan. 1, 2022. A panel of local judges arranged by you will evaluate the essays to determine the top local winners. A separate panel of judges arranged by the contest committee will evaluate the winning essays for the state prizes.

All local winners, their families, and teacher sponsors will be invited to the state awards luncheon to be held in Casper on Sunday, April 10, 2022. A hotel room for teachers and winners will be provided for Saturday evening.

If you have any questions, I encourage you to visit our website at [www.americandreamessay.org](http://www.americandreamessay.org), call 307.235.4079, or email [adec@bgccw.org](mailto:adec@bgccw.org).

We look forward to welcoming you to this year's American Dream Essay Contest.

Regards,



Cece Tolin  
Contest Coordinator

## Student Eligibility:

1. Must be attending a high school in the state of Wyoming, or be a high school homeschooler participating through the Homeschool Organization of Wyoming (HOW), or an active member of a Boys & Girls Club in the state of Wyoming. Students can only participate in one local contest per year.
2. All participants must have a teacher/sponsor to guide them through the writing process.
3. In order to receive State Awards, 1<sup>st</sup> place winners must attend the **Awards Luncheon on April 10, 2022 in person. If the winner is not in attendance, the prize will go to the next highest placing contestant.**

## Essay Requirements:

1. Essays must be inspired by the writing prompt and must be original.
2. Essays must be titled, between 300-2,000 words in length, typed, and double-spaced.
3. Local first-place winners are encouraged to submit a photograph of themselves, along with their winning essay, in order to be honored at the Awards Luncheon in April. These will be submitted via Google Forms by your teacher/sponsor. **The photo and essay in its entirety will be published in *The American Dream Essay Contest* booklet.**

## Student Prizes:

Prizes are substantial for this contest, and each participating high school is guaranteed at least 3 winners at the local level for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Place.

### Local High School Winners:

### State High School Winners:

1st Place	\$300	1st Place	\$5,000
2nd Place	\$200	2nd Place	\$3,000
3rd Place	\$100	3rd Place	\$2,000
		Honorable Mention	\$1,000
		Honorable Mention	\$1,000

- **All prize money will be distributed via EFT (Electronic Funds Transfer) to the bank of your choice. A completed Electronic Credit Application and W-9 must be submitted for prize money to be transferred. Forms included and may also be submitted via Google Forms.**
- **Additionally, each Local High School 1st Place Winner will receive one free night stay at the Ramkota Hotel and Conference Center in Casper, Wyoming, for the Saturday evening before the Awards Luncheon.**
- **All RSVPs for the Awards Luncheon and room reservations are due by April 1, 2022. Rooms must be canceled within 48 hours of the event or guests will be charged full amount.**

**SPONSORED BY:** The Zimmerman Family Foundation, Larry and Margo Bean, Kevin and Julie Murphy, Hilltop National Bank and Boys & Girls Clubs of Central Wyoming.

# Teacher Requirements:

1. Provide your students with the necessary tools to write their essays, including helping them build a solid understanding of the “Ten Principles to Live By,” as described in James P. Owen’s book, *Cowboy Ethics*. For additional materials, please visit [wyomingyouth.org](http://wyomingyouth.org).
2. Adhere to the timeline provided.
3. In order to receive the \$300 teacher sponsor award, there must be **100% class participation**.
4. Submit all your class essays, the 1st place school winner's photo (if from your class), and your class roster if you wish to receive your full-participation award. All of your qualifying essays and participation information must be submitted and completed via the Google Forms link at [americandreamessay.org](http://americandreamessay.org) by February 28, 2022. All judges’ tally sheets must also be included on the Google Forms or emailed to [adec@bgccw.org](mailto:adec@bgccw.org). **We need to have complete information, including address, phone number, EFT form, and W-9 for all local winners and teacher/sponsors in order for them to receive their prize.**
5. If more than one class or teacher sponsor participates at a school, each qualifying teacher will receive a participation award. Each teacher should submit one’s own class’ essays via Google Forms.
6. If you have several participating classes that you teach, you only need to submit one full class and roster. Special circumstances and incomplete class participation will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
7. Teachers will administer the local contest, and are responsible for informing students of their local win. *If only one student participates, they are automatically the first-place winner.*

**PLEASE NOTE:** *The essay submitted will be the property of Boys & Girls Clubs of Central Wyoming and may be published partially or in its entirety and shared through media outlets and appropriate parties.*

# Teacher Sponsor Prizes:

Each participating high school is guaranteed at least three student winners at the local level for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place. In appreciation of your time and effort, we provide the following incentives:

Full Class Participation	\$300
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### Anniversary Awards:

### Sponsor of State High School Winners:

5 years	\$500	1st Place	\$1,000
10 years	\$500	2nd Place	\$750
15 years	\$1,000	3rd Place	\$500
25 years	\$2,000		

- **All prize money will be distributed via EFT (Electronic Funds Transfer) to the bank of your choice. A completed Electronic Credit Application and W-9 must be submitted for prize money to be transferred. Forms included and may also be submitted via Google Forms.**
- **Additionally, you and your family or guests will receive one free night stay at the Ramkota Hotel, in Casper, WY for Saturday evening before the Luncheon in April.**
- **All RSVPs for the Awards Luncheon and room reservations are due by April 1, 2022. Rooms must be canceled within 48 hours of the event or guests will be charged full amount.**

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## Local Judging:

1. Remove any identifying information and assign each essay an anonymous number.
2. Recruit 2 or more judges – they do not have to be educators or involved with your school; the only requirement is that they will give a fair and unbiased ranking of the essays.
3. Download the local “Judging Information,” which can be found on *The American Dream Essay Contest* website, ([americandreamessay.org](http://americandreamessay.org)) by clicking on “Educators” in the navigation. *Template included.*
4. Print copies of the “Judging Information” packet, the “Judging Tally Sheet” and “Judging Rubric” for each judge. Only one copy of the “Final Tally of All Essays” needs to be filled out to determine winners. *Templates included.*
5. Each school must hold a local judging **February 7 - 18, 2022**, to select the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place essays from each high school.
  - a. The local judging **must be anonymous**. Proof of the judging will be the signed “Tally Form For Judge’s Use” for each judge.
  - b. All of your qualifying essays and participation information must be submitted and completed via the Google Forms link at [americandreamessay.org](http://americandreamessay.org).
6. The winners of the local competition will then go on to participate in the state competition. In order to receive the state awards, participants **must attend** the Awards Luncheon in person. If the winner is not in attendance, the next highest-placing contestant present will be awarded.

Judges for the American Dream Essay Contest determine the winners. Anonymity is essential. By the time the judges see the essays, they will have been given an anonymous number and WILL NOT have the student’s name on them. If a judge sees a student’s name on an essay, it is critical that the judge brings this to the attention of the committee immediately. DO NOT read the essay until it is returned with the student’s name removed. Also, before judges read the essays, be sure to mark over or black out any identifying information, such as high school name, town, etc.

## Timeline:

Students write essays:	December 2021 - February 4, 2022 <i>*Whenever fits best in your schedule!</i>
Local judging at high schools:	February 7 - 18, 2022
Submit all essays online by:	February 28, 2022
Judging and selection of state winners:	March 7 - 18, 2022
Awards Banquet Luncheon:	Sunday, April 10, 2022

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# Writing Prompt:

## American Dream Essay Contest: “What it Means to Me”

Take a moment to read and reflect upon the “Ten Principles to Live By,” as described in James P. Owen’s book, *Cowboy Ethics*:

- LIVE EACH DAY WITH COURAGE
- TAKE PRIDE IN YOUR WORK
- ALWAYS FINISH WHAT YOU START
- DO WHAT HAS TO BE DONE
- BE TOUGH, BUT FAIR
- WHEN YOU MAKE A PROMISE, KEEP IT
- RIDE FOR THE BRAND
- TALK LESS AND SAY MORE
- REMEMBER THAT SOME THINGS AREN'T FOR SALE
- KNOW WHERE TO DRAW THE LINE
- **CREATE YOUR OWN PERSONAL ETHICAL BELIEF**

As you reflect on your life so far, *describe* how one of the “Ten Principles to Live By,” or your own personal ethical belief, has been a driving or guiding force in your life. Whether a part of your internal guidance from within, the decisions you make every day, or how they inspire the decisions you make for the benefit of your future, define “what it means to me” in 300-2,000 words.

*Essays will be judged primarily on content: Is the essay based on the Principles above? Does the essay show a respect for life and people? Would most people agree that this is an important law of life? Presentation is also considered (compelling, flow, and clarity). Grammar, usage and conventions will also be considered but should not weigh heavily on how they rank.*

# Judging Rubric:

This Judging Rubric will be used as a guide to rank the essays. Feel free to distribute to judges and participating students.

	<b>Exceptional</b>	<b>Capable</b>	<b>Developing</b>	<b>Needs Improvement</b>
<b>ORGANIZATION/CLARITY</b>	<p>The arrangement of examples and commentary enhances the writer's central argument. Ideas and arguments progress logically and effectively and clearly connect to the main thesis.</p> <p>All parts of the essay contribute to a single overall argument.</p>	<p>The organization of commentary and examples help to convey the writer's central argument.</p> <p>Most parts of the essay contribute to a single argument, but there may be some extraneous details or commentary.</p>	<p>The organization of commentary and examples cloud the writer's central argument; some rearrangement would help.</p> <p>There are several areas of the essay that do not relate to the main insight. There may be some areas that are contradictory.</p>	<p>The organization is ineffective in revealing a central argument. Paragraphs do not clearly connect to one another.</p> <p>The essay is often contradictory without intending to be.</p>
<b>CONTENT/INSIGHT</b>	<p>Essay contains exceptional insights and complex ideas. The writer demonstrates a deep, fresh understanding of the subject.</p> <p>Provides relevant, substantial, concrete and genuine examples that clearly support the central argument.</p>	<p>Essay contains some insights. The writer demonstrates an adequate understanding of the subject, but some ideas could have been explored further.</p> <p>Provides reasonable and predictable examples that develop the central argument.</p>	<p>Main argument of the essay is simplistic. The paper may be contradictory or too broad, rather than making a simple point.</p> <p>Some examples are useful but others may not illustrate the main point. Examples need further development.</p>	<p>Main argument of the essay is limited or unclear.</p> <p>Provides few or irrelevant examples to support an undeveloped or unclear central argument.</p>
<b>STUDENT VOICE/STYLE</b>	<p>Shows exceptional awareness of audience, control of voice, variety in sentence structure, sophisticated word choice, and smooth transitions.</p>	<p>Shows awareness of audience, control of voice, some variety in sentence structure and word choice with some smooth transitions.</p>	<p>Shows inconsistent awareness of audience, simplistic word choice, little variety of sentence structure, and limited use of transitions.</p>	<p>Shows limited awareness of the audience, minimal or incorrect word choice, little or no variety of sentence structure, and few or no transitions.</p>
<b>MECHANICS/CONVENTIONS</b>	<p>Free from errors in grammar, usage, and the conventions of written English.</p>	<p>May have a few errors in grammar, usage, or conventions of written English; these errors do not cause confusion.</p>	<p>May have errors in grammar, usage, or conventions of written English; these errors may lead to some confusion.</p>	<p>May have a variety of repeated errors in sentence structure, grammar, usage, and the conventions of written English; these errors often cause confusion.</p>

# Judging Information:

## Judge Requirements

A judge must be someone capable of comprehending and appreciating the purpose of *The American Dream Essay Contest*. Essays should be judged on content. A judge should be able to evaluate an essay for clarity, its general organization and how compelling it is, but the judge need NOT necessarily be a “grammar expert” or English teacher. Judges must not be a parent or relative of a current contest participant. Judges should not meet together to judge the essays and should not discuss their choices with each other. Each judge should read through each essay and place the essays in order from exceptional to needs improvement. The judge should then complete the tally sheet (provided). All the judge’s tally sheets together are used to complete the overall contest tally sheet (provided). The essay with the lowest numeric score is the 1st place winner.

## Essay Criteria

Please refer to the Judging Rubric, as well as the criteria below, to guide your ranking decisions.

- **Content-High Importance!**

A Cowboy Ethic/Code of the West Principle. Students were given the following writing prompt:

*Take a moment to read and reflect upon the “Ten Principles to Live By,” as described in James P. Owens’ book, Cowboy Ethics:*

- *Live each day with courage*
- *Take pride in your work*
- *Always finish what you start*
- *Do what has to be done*
- *Be tough, but fair*
- *When you make a promise, keep it*
- *Ride for the brand*
- *Talk less and say more*
- *Remember that some things aren’t for sale*
- *Know where to draw the line*
- *Create your own personal ethical belief*

*As you reflect on your life so far, describe how one of the “Ten Principles to Live By,” or your own personal ethical belief, has been a driving or guiding force in your life. Whether a part of your internal guidance from within, the decisions you make every day, or how they inspire the decisions you make for the benefit of your future, define “what it means to me” in 300-2,000 words.*

- Has the student fulfilled the purpose of the essay?
- Positive and life-affirming: Does the essay show a respect for life and people?
- Universal appeal: Would most people agree that this is an important law of life?

- **Other Judging Criteria:**

- **Presentation**

- Compelling. Does the essay move you in some way? Are you persuaded by what the student has written?
    - Clarity. Can you tell what the student means?
    - Flow. Does one thought flow into the next?

- **Grammar and Spelling**

- Grammar and spelling are not of utmost importance, unless a high number of glaring mistakes are present that suggest a careless and hastily-written essay, where the basic concept and flow of the essay are difficult to understand.





# JUDGING TALLY SHEET

Judge's Name

Contest Date

YOUR SCORE (RANK FROM FIRST TO LAST)	ESSAY I.D. #	COMMENTS
1 (Your First Choice)		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
9		
10		
11		
12		
13		
14		

# Electronic Credit Authorization

Please fill out and return with a *voided check* from your checkbook.

I authorize you and the financial institution listed below to initiate electronic entry to my  Checking Account or  Savings Account (Please check one). This authority will remain in effect until I have canceled it in writing.

- The credit will be on the day \_\_\_\_\_ of the month for \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**OR**

- I realize the day of month/amount may differ & authorize you and the financial institution to initiate electronic entry to my account. \_\_\_\_\_ (please initial)

The authorization is to remain in full force and effect until the Company has received written notification from me (or either of us) of its termination in such time and in such manner as to afford Company and Depository a reasonable opportunity to act on it.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Company Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Financial Institution

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name (Please Print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
City/State

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Account Number

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Routing and Transit Number

I understand the company will notify me in writing 10 days prior to any transaction that exceeds the agreed upon amount of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ by more than \$ \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Initial I understand that the above company may initiate a reversal of any entry made under this agreement if an error has been made. I understand that the financial institution at which I have the above account is required to provide to me the procedures for resolving errors on entries made under this agreement. I understand that the company will provide a written notice to me of the error within 24 hours.

**Attach Voided Check Here**

# Request for Taxpayer Identification Number and Certification

Give Form to the requester. Do not send to the IRS.

▶ Go to [www.irs.gov/FormW9](http://www.irs.gov/FormW9) for instructions and the latest information.

	1 Name (as shown on your income tax return). Name is required on this line; do not leave this line blank.	
	2 Business name/disregarded entity name, if different from above	
Print or type. See Specific Instructions on page 3.	3 Check appropriate box for federal tax classification of the person whose name is entered on line 1. Check only <b>one</b> of the following seven boxes.	4 Exemptions (codes apply only to certain entities, not individuals; see instructions on page 3):
	<input type="checkbox"/> Individual/sole proprietor or single-member LLC <input type="checkbox"/> C Corporation <input type="checkbox"/> S Corporation <input type="checkbox"/> Partnership <input type="checkbox"/> Trust/estate	Exempt payee code (if any) _____
	<input type="checkbox"/> Limited liability company. Enter the tax classification (C=C corporation, S=S corporation, P=Partnership) ▶ _____ <b>Note:</b> Check the appropriate box in the line above for the tax classification of the single-member owner. Do not check LLC if the LLC is classified as a single-member LLC that is disregarded from the owner unless the owner of the LLC is another LLC that is <b>not</b> disregarded from the owner for U.S. federal tax purposes. Otherwise, a single-member LLC that is disregarded from the owner should check the appropriate box for the tax classification of its owner.	Exemption from FATCA reporting code (if any) _____
	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (see instructions) ▶ _____	<i>(Applies to accounts maintained outside the U.S.)</i>
	5 Address (number, street, and apt. or suite no.) See instructions.	Requester's name and address (optional)
	6 City, state, and ZIP code	
	7 List account number(s) here (optional)	

## Part I Taxpayer Identification Number (TIN)

Enter your TIN in the appropriate box. The TIN provided must match the name given on line 1 to avoid backup withholding. For individuals, this is generally your social security number (SSN). However, for a resident alien, sole proprietor, or disregarded entity, see the instructions for Part I, later. For other entities, it is your employer identification number (EIN). If you do not have a number, see *How to get a TIN*, later.

**Note:** If the account is in more than one name, see the instructions for line 1. Also see *What Name and Number To Give the Requester* for guidelines on whose number to enter.

<b>Social security number</b>											
				-			-				
<b>OR</b>											
<b>Employer identification number</b>											
				-							

## Part II Certification

Under penalties of perjury, I certify that:

- The number shown on this form is my correct taxpayer identification number (or I am waiting for a number to be issued to me); and
- I am not subject to backup withholding because: (a) I am exempt from backup withholding, or (b) I have not been notified by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) that I am subject to backup withholding as a result of a failure to report all interest or dividends, or (c) the IRS has notified me that I am no longer subject to backup withholding; and
- I am a U.S. citizen or other U.S. person (defined below); and
- The FATCA code(s) entered on this form (if any) indicating that I am exempt from FATCA reporting is correct.

**Certification instructions.** You must cross out item 2 above if you have been notified by the IRS that you are currently subject to backup withholding because you have failed to report all interest and dividends on your tax return. For real estate transactions, item 2 does not apply. For mortgage interest paid, acquisition or abandonment of secured property, cancellation of debt, contributions to an individual retirement arrangement (IRA), and generally, payments other than interest and dividends, you are not required to sign the certification, but you must provide your correct TIN. See the instructions for Part II, later.

<b>Sign Here</b>	Signature of U.S. person ▶	Date ▶
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## General Instructions

Section references are to the Internal Revenue Code unless otherwise noted.

**Future developments.** For the latest information about developments related to Form W-9 and its instructions, such as legislation enacted after they were published, go to [www.irs.gov/FormW9](http://www.irs.gov/FormW9).

### Purpose of Form

An individual or entity (Form W-9 requester) who is required to file an information return with the IRS must obtain your correct taxpayer identification number (TIN) which may be your social security number (SSN), individual taxpayer identification number (ITIN), adoption taxpayer identification number (ATIN), or employer identification number (EIN), to report on an information return the amount paid to you, or other amount reportable on an information return. Examples of information returns include, but are not limited to, the following.

- Form 1099-INT (interest earned or paid)

- Form 1099-DIV (dividends, including those from stocks or mutual funds)
- Form 1099-MISC (various types of income, prizes, awards, or gross proceeds)
- Form 1099-B (stock or mutual fund sales and certain other transactions by brokers)
- Form 1099-S (proceeds from real estate transactions)
- Form 1099-K (merchant card and third party network transactions)
- Form 1098 (home mortgage interest), 1098-E (student loan interest), 1098-T (tuition)
- Form 1099-C (canceled debt)
- Form 1099-A (acquisition or abandonment of secured property)

Use Form W-9 only if you are a U.S. person (including a resident alien), to provide your correct TIN.

*If you do not return Form W-9 to the requester with a TIN, you might be subject to backup withholding. See What is backup withholding, later.*