



WILLIAM PATERSON UNIVERSITY
GANDHIAN FORUM FOR PEACE & JUSTICE
2015 High School Peace and Justice Writing Contest

The Gandhian Forum for Peace and Justice at William Paterson University invites students at Paterson public high schools to participate in its 2015 “Peace and Justice Writing Contest.” The Gandhian Forum is an organization committed to promoting engagement with issues of peace and justice on the William Paterson campus and in the broader community. The writing contest offers high school students an opportunity to reflect on important contemporary social problems and their solutions, and share those reflections in a public setting.

To participate, you must write an essay on one of the three topics below. You may include personal or family experiences in your essay, but the primary focus must be on issues of social justice. Essays must be no more than 1,500 words.

Here are the topics:

1. Choose a current international conflict. Describe the conflict and propose a peaceful solution. Explain why your solution would be just and achievable.
2. Choose a country in which some social injustice is occurring. Describe the problem and propose a solution. Explain why your solution would be just and achievable.
3. Choose a situation in the United States—whether in your local community, New Jersey, or nationwide—where citizens are experiencing social injustice. Describe the problem and propose a solution. Explain why your solution would be just and achievable.

There will be two categories of submissions: (1) 9th and 10th graders, and (2) 11th and 12th graders.

Within each category, three winning essays will be selected. Winners will receive a monetary prize and be invited to dinner at William Paterson University, along with their parents/guardians and teachers, where they will read their winning essays. In addition, some essays may be selected for honorable mention; these students will also be invited to the dinner to read their essays, but will not receive monetary prizes. All students who submit essays will receive a certificate of participation. The winning essays will be posted on the Gandhian Forum’s website. Essays by previous winners can be seen here: <http://www.wpunj.edu/gfpj/hscontest2013/> and here <http://www.wpunj.edu/gfpj/hscontest2014/>.

Submissions must be received by email on or before April 20, 2015, at 5:00 p.m. Entries will be read by a panel of judges who will evaluate the essays on the basis of the following criteria: (1) Does the writing make a significant statement about peace or justice? (2) Is the essay well-researched and factually accurate? (3) Is the argument convincing? (4) Is the writing successful in style, content, and mechanics?

Prizes

	9th and 10th Graders	11th and 12th Graders
1st place	\$500	\$500
2nd place	\$300	\$300
3rd place	\$200	\$200

See over for detailed rules

For further information, please contact Prof. Steve Shalom, shaloms@wpunj.edu

Rules for the Gandhian Forum's 2015 Peace and Justice Writing Contest

1. **Students must be currently enrolled in a public high school in Paterson, NJ.**
2. **A student may submit only one essay in this year's contest.** A student who submitted an essay in a previous year may submit again this year.
3. **Each essay must be written by a single student.**
4. **Essays cannot have been previously published.**
5. **All work must be original.** Writers often incorporate suggestions and editing from friends, colleagues, and teachers. This doesn't take away from their sole authorship. But the first draft and any subsequent substantial revisions need to be the student's own work.
6. **Essays containing plagiarized material will be disqualified.** We will run all essays through "Turn It In" as one means of detecting plagiarism. We recommend that teachers run their students' essays through "Turn It In" before submitting them.
7. **All submissions must conform to the following format:** The first page must have only the author's name, grade, and school name. There must be no other identifying information on any other pages of the submission. The essay should begin on the second page and must be typed double spaced, 12-point font. (The judges will read the essays with the cover pages removed and thus not know the name or school of the students whose essays they are reading.)
8. **The 1,500 word limit is rigid** (use the word-counter on your word processor!). Count everything beyond the cover page (the page with name, school, and grade)—thus, footnotes or references count as part of the 1,500 word limit.
9. **Do not use any sort of running header or footer that contains the name of the student or the school.**
10. **There is no required citation style.** MLA, APA, or any consistent citation style is permissible. Any material or quotations taken from other authors must be properly attributed and acknowledged.
11. **If an essay uses footnotes that give complete citation information, no further bibliography is required.**
12. **Submissions must be written in English.**
13. **Submissions must be non-fiction prose essays,** not poetry or fictional works.
14. **The social problem identified in an essay must have a peace or justice angle to it.** So, for example, crime is obviously a social problem, but unless the essay ties crime to some *injustice* (e.g., differential treatment by the criminal justice system), it is not a peace and justice issue appropriate for this contest.
15. **No graphics, music, or multimedia may be included with the essays.**
16. **Essays should be turned into a teacher for the teacher to submit electronically,** rather than the students submitting their essays directly. **Teachers should send the essays as an email attachment to gfpj-contest@wpunj.edu no later than 5:00 p.m. on April 20, 2015.** All submissions will be acknowledged.
17. The dinner for the winners (and their parents/guardians and teachers) will be held on the William Paterson University campus on an evening on a date yet to be determined. Winners are expected to attend, but if a student is unable to do so, arrangements can be made for the prize to be mailed.
18. We will post the winning essays on the Gandhian Forum website. Winners will need to sign a release allowing us to post their essays, though the writers will retain all other rights to their work.