

Lincoln Essay Competition

Lincoln felt passionately that slavery was evil. When the repeal of the Missouri Compromise threatened to allow slavery to spread into the territories, he believed he had an obligation to fight it and re-entered the political arena.

Engage in some research to identify the personal qualities Lincoln developed during his lifetime that led him to act and made him so effective.

You don't need to be a Lincoln to make a difference. You need to care and you need to act.

About what wrong in need of righting, or what opportunity to make a difference, do you feel passionately enough to try to do something to make your community, your state, your country or even the world a better place? As you answer this question, compare and/or contrast the values that motivate you to those that motivated Lincoln.

Dear Teachers, Librarians, and Homeschool Instructors:

For the past five years, Hildene has sponsored the Lincoln Essay Competition focused on President Lincoln. It is open to all eighth graders in the state of Vermont, whether they enter as part of a class assignment or on their own. We hope this year's essay question will spark some great discussions and inspire written responses. Essays will be judged on the student's understanding of the subject, as well as her or his ability to convey that understanding through good writing.

Winners receive certificates and cash prizes, as follows:

First Place: \$1,000

Second Place: \$750

Third Place: \$500

Plus up to ten Honorable Mentions: \$200

This means that up to thirteen students can win prizes.

In addition, each winner is invited to an awards luncheon, along with their parents and teacher as our guests. In order to receive their checks and certificates, the first, second and third place winners **must** attend the luncheon and read their essays.

Please note: The deadline for the competition is Lincoln's Birthday, February 12, 2012. We hope this will give you ample time to work the content into your curriculum. All winners will be notified by the end of March. This year, the celebration will be at Hildene on Sunday, May 20, 2012, following a tour of The Lincoln Family Home.

We consider this competition to be one of the most important things we do. Not only does it reinforce the importance of research, critical analysis and good writing, but it also promotes awareness of civic responsibility using Lincoln's legacy as touchstone.

The following materials are enclosed: the essay topic and competition guidelines and an application form. We have also included the Assessment Rubric our judges will use which you and your students might find helpful. You may also download these from our website at www.hildene.org/schools.html. Please don't hesitate to call me if you or your students have any questions.

Sincerely,



Stephanie Moffett Hynds, Programming Director
stephanie@hildene.org

GUIDELINES

Mission:

The goal of Hildene's Lincoln Essay Competition is to promote awareness in the minds of a young generation of Americans of the contributions of this nation's 16th president, Abraham Lincoln. Through this process we also hope to instill an awareness of the responsibility each of us has to do our part to make our community, our state, our country and even our world a better place.

Eligibility:

The competition is open to all eighth grade students who live in Vermont or go to public, private, or home schools in the state of Vermont. Each entrant is permitted to submit one entry.

Essay Topic:

Lincoln felt passionately that slavery was evil. When the repeal of the Missouri Compromise threatened to allow slavery to spread into the territories, he believed he had an obligation to fight it and re-entered the political arena.

Engage in some research to identify the personal qualities Lincoln developed during his lifetime that led him to act and made him so effective.

You don't need to be a Lincoln to make a difference. You need to care and you need to act.

About what wrong in need of righting, or what opportunity to make a difference, do you feel passionately enough to try to do something to make your community, your state, your country or even the world a better place? As you answer this question, compare and/or contrast the values that motivate you to those that motivated Lincoln.

Essay Requirements:

- Must not exceed 500 words
- Must be written in English
- Must be typewritten
- Must have page numbering
- Must not have name or any other identifier of applicant on essay
- Must submit by mail or by hand to: Attention: Lincoln Essay Competition
Hildene, The Lincoln Family Home
PO Box 377
Manchester, VT 05254
- Essay must be the original work of the submitting student
- Editorial comment or guidance from the teacher or parent is permissible as long as the actual writing is the student's own work

Essay Submission Deadline:

Essay and application form **must arrive** by mail or by hand at Hildene on or before President Lincoln's Birthday, Sunday, February 12, 2012, by 4:30 pm (Hildene is open 9:30am to 4:30pm daily).

Criteria for Evaluation:

Essay will be judged on content, style, composition, factual accuracy and grammar; refer to the Judge's rubric.

Prizes:

First Place \$1,000

Second Place \$750

Third Place \$500

Up to ten Honorable Mentions of \$200 each

Use of Submitted Entries:

Hildene reserves the right to use all submitted pieces in future publications and there will be no compensation to the author for such use.

Announcement of Winners:

Winners will be notified by March 31, 2012. Announcements to the press will be made in early April. In order to receive their prizes, the top three winners **must attend** the awards luncheon and read their essays aloud. The winners, their parents and their teachers will be Hildene's guests at this special event held annually to honor Abraham Lincoln's legacy. The awards luncheon will be at Hildene on Sunday, May 20, 2012, following a tour of The Lincoln Family Home.

Application Form and Background Materials Attached

Application and materials are also available online at www.hildene.org/schools.html.

Contact Information:

Stephanie Moffett Hynds

Programming Director

Hildene, The Lincoln Family Home

802.367.7960

stephanie@hildene.org

Hildene, The Lincoln Family Home was the summer residence of Robert Todd Lincoln and his wife Mary Harlan Lincoln. Mr. Lincoln was the only child of President and Mary Todd Lincoln to survive to adulthood. Between 1905, when they moved in, and the death of their granddaughter Mary Lincoln Beckwith in 1975, more Lincolns (three successive generations) lived at Hildene than any other place in the United States. Our mission is to "advance the Lincoln legacy through education, commitment to community and active stewardship of the family's home and land."

Lincoln Essay Competition

APPLICATION FORM

Applicant's Name: _____

Date of Birth: _____ Current Grade: _____

Home Telephone Number: _____ Email Address: _____

Home Mailing Address: Street: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Name of School: _____

School Telephone Number: _____

School Mailing Address: Street: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Teacher's Name: _____ Email Address: _____

Principal's Name: _____ Email Address: _____

Essay Topic: *...Lincoln felt passionately that slavery was evil. When the repeal of the Missouri Compromise threatened to allow slavery to spread into the territories, he believed he had an obligation to fight it and re-entered the political arena.*

Engage in some research to identify the personal qualities Lincoln developed during his lifetime that led him to act and made him so effective.

You don't need to be a Lincoln to make a difference. You need to care and you need to act.

About what wrong in need of righting, or what opportunity to make a difference, do you feel passionately enough to try to do something to make your community, your state, your country or even the world a better place? As you answer this question, compare and/or contrast the values that motivate you to those that motivated Lincoln.

By signing below, I certify that I live or go to school in Vermont and that the submitted essay is my own work. I authorize Hildene to use my work in all future related events and publications without compensation and I understand that I must attend the luncheon and read my essay to receive my prize.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Print your name: _____

Parent's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Print your name: _____

Submission Deadline: Sunday, February 12, 2012. Essay must arrive at Hildene before 4:30 pm

How did you hear about Hildene's Lincoln Essay Competition?

___ Parents ___ Newspaper ___ Teacher (Teacher's Name) _____

___ Librarian/Library: _____ ___ Other: _____

THE QUESTION

Lincoln felt passionately that slavery was evil. When the repeal of the Missouri Compromise threatened to allow slavery to spread into the territories, he believed he had an obligation to fight it and re-entered the political arena.

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Your Job: Research, think, and compose.

Read about Lincoln, from his early life to young adulthood; his time in the Illinois legislature and his term in Congress; his time as a lawyer, his re-entry into politics following the repeal of the Missouri Compromise and his time as president. Think about the qualities that brought him from abject poverty to the presidency. An example of this might be his determination to make something of himself, but there is much more. Think about the value system under which he operated. Justice comes to mind, but, again, there is much more. Spend some time really learning and understanding who Lincoln was.

Think about yourself and what it is you want to accomplish in your life. Think about the things you care about and what it is, in particular, you might want to engage in for the betterment of your community, your state, your country, or even your world. Do some research to make sure you understand your issue.

Write an essay answering the question asked above. Essays will be judged on a combination of understanding the material and good writing. So start early. Check your punctuation and make sure your tenses are consistent. It may require several rounds of editing and rewriting to produce the best essay. This is the essence of good writing.

HILDENE

Lincoln Essay Competition - Judges Assessment Rubric

Place an "X" on the number that best describes this work.
Grading: 1 - 4 (1 = Low Score, 4 = High Score)

Essay # _____

A Answering the question	Answers the question fully. _____4	Answers the question satisfactorily. _____3	Only partially answers the question. _____2	Doesn't answer the question. _____1
B Understanding of the subject matter	Demonstrates deep, insightful understanding with very good use of relevant details; assertions are logical, persuasive and well-defined. _____4	Demonstrates good, occasionally insightful, understanding with mostly good use of relevant details. _____3	Demonstrates some, less than insightful, understanding with mix of relevant and irrelevant details. _____2	Demonstrates little understanding, many unrelated details and illogical statements. _____1
C Focus on topic	Clear and effective focus on topic throughout; central idea well-established in opening and is subsequently supported. _____4	Good focus on topic; most paragraphs develop central idea. _____3	Topic is addressed but not fully developed; many digressions. _____2	Limited awareness of topic, unfocused and meandering. _____1
D Logical progression of essay	Careful, logical, progression with clear beginning, middle and end; transitions help flow and conclusion is substantiated. _____4	Logical progression with some awkward transitions; conclusion is substantiated. _____3	Gaps in logical progression; some redundancy and conclusion not fully supported. _____2	Random or weak progression; lacks clear beginning, middle and end. _____1

Over

