



The News Literacy Essay Contest

April 2021

Student voice is a catalyst for positive change in schools and communities.

For this reason, Miami-Dade County Public Schools, in partnership with the News Literacy Project, is hosting a writing contest to empower students to be civically informed and engaged.

Context

News literacy is the ability to determine the credibility of news and other content.

Think about a widely reported current event and how news literacy skills could have been applied.



Now, write a 500-1000 word article about a local, national or international story where having news literacy skills would have prevented misinformation from being spread. Use reputable sources to support your claim. Articles will be judged by a panel of journalists for accuracy, readability and creativity.

Choose a prompt from the list that follows. *



CONTEST DEADLINE
May 15, 2021,
5 P.M. EDT.



AWARDS

for each grade band 6-8, and 9-12

FIRST PLACE

\$100 Amazon gift card (teacher and student)

SECOND PLACE

\$50 Amazon gift card (teacher and student)

THIRD PLACE

\$25 Amazon gift card (teacher and student)



Winners will participate in an official Pitch It! session where they will share their article and receive feedback from a journalist.

To Enter

Schools should submit their top two winning essays per grade band via email to:

Ms. Monica Valdes,
Miami NewsLit Ambassador,
mdvaldes@dadeschools.net

Eligibility

Only students in **grades 6-8, and 9-12** may participate with the support from a teacher.

Prompts *

- Explain how the First Amendment protects freedom of the press.
- How can citizens fact-check well-known figures (journalists, celebrities, influencers, athletes, etc.)?
- Citizens have responsibilities. Why would consuming or sharing reliable information be a responsibility?

Criteria

- Clearly addresses the prompt.
- Proofread.
- Observation of rules for standard English (grammar, punctuation, mechanics) in writing.
- Recognizable beginning (opening or introduction), middle and end (closing or conclusion).
- Make sure you open strong. Readers will use the first few sentences to decide whether they will read the whole article.
- Keep your paragraphs short. Popular articles tend to average three sentences per paragraph.
- Thoroughly thought-out, tightly focused essays.
- Originality.
- End with a "call to action." In the conclusion to your piece, encourage the reader to take some positive steps. For instance, if you've given readers a list of tips, prompt them to put some of the tips into practice.
- Proper citing of sources.



Article Format

- **500-1000 words**
- Essays must be the **original, unpublished work of one student.** Only the top two essays from each school for each of the permitted grade levels may be submitted. Schools should conduct their own essay contest to establish the top two articles for submission.
- All articles must have a **title.**
- All articles must be written in **English.**
- Articles should be easily readable, **12-point font** (such as Times New Roman), and **double-spaced with 1" margins and numbered pages.**
- **A cover page MUST be included** with the following information: Student name, student ID, grade level, complete student address, best student phone number, the school's name, the principal's name, the teacher's name, and best teacher's phone number.

Learning Goals

- Students who want to be part of the misinformation solution can use this contest to strengthen their news literacy skills.
- Students will analyze different types of misinformation and show the ability to think critically about what is and is not verifiable information.
- Students will have access to, and real-time feedback from, journalists in the field who report on these issues every day.

Learning Task and Essay Topic

Students will review local and/or national headlines. See resources from the M-DCPS – library which provides access to The New York Times, and articles on Proquest <http://virtuallibrary.dadeschools.net/#>. Or use any other available resources.

