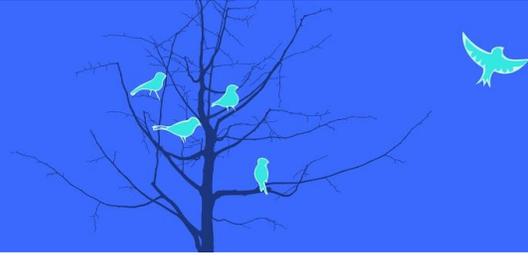


Student Voices:
To Kill a Mockingbird
in Today's world



Facing History Together Student Essay Contest FAQs

How does it work?

Students will be given a writing prompt in response to some of the questions Facing History raises on reading and experiencing *To Kill A Mockingbird* in today's world. The contest is open to students in the U.S. who are 13 years or older. Responses are to be submitted as 500 word essays.

Facing History will select finalists whose essays will be posted on Facing History's website, and public votes will help determine the winners. One U.S. high school senior will receive a **\$2,500 Upstander Scholarship** toward their college tuition in honor of international civil rights and peace advocate, Benjamin B. Ferencz. One student will be selected to receive the **Harper Lee Memorial Award & \$1,000 Scholarship**. Five **\$500 Upstander Awards** will also be given to students in 7th-12th grade.

One teacher of each winning student, as identified in the essay submission process, will receive a \$250 Classroom Award and free access to Facing History's, [Teaching Mockingbird](#) online course.

All scholarships and awards are made possible by the Planethood Foundation.

What's the timeline?

The contest submission period will run from 12:00 p.m. ET on February 16, 2016 to 5:00 p.m. ET on March 16, 2016. The Facing History Judging Panel will select the top essay submissions and notify those finalists on or around April 1, 2016. Public voting to help select the final winner will open on April 11 at 12 p.m. ET and close at 12 p.m. ET on April 20, 2016. Winners will be notified on or around April 25, 2016 and announced publicly on April 27, 2016.

What is the contest prompt?

In Harper Lee's classic novel, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, Scout Finch, a young white girl growing up in Alabama in the 1930s, is forced to question her community's spoken and unspoken rules when her father agrees to defend a black man falsely accused of a crime. She and her brother, Jem, struggle to define their identities in relationship to the values of their small, segregated

Southern town.

Like other coming-of-age stories, *To Kill a Mockingbird* invites readers to reflect on our own experiences, examining the forces that have shaped our identities as well as those of the characters.

How has the community you've grown up in influenced the person you are today? Has there been a moment when your sense of self has come into conflict with the norms in your community?

Who Is eligible?

This contest is open to U.S. students in 7th-12th grades. Only graduating high school seniors are eligible for the \$2,500 Upstander Scholarship. Students in 7th-12th grades are eligible for one of the five \$500 Upstander Awards or the Harper Lee Memorial Award & \$1,000 Scholarship.

Students must be residents of the U.S. and 13 years or older to participate.

What are the submission requirements?

Essay submissions are limited to 500 words and must be copied and pasted into the form field on the submission page. Students are required to submit their contact information, along with the contact information of their English Language Arts educator.

How will essays be judged?

Each submission must respond to the writing prompt and demonstrate thoughtful reflection on your own experience in your community. Judges will be looking for a strong personal voice in your essay, and a connection to themes found at the core of *To Kill a Mockingbird*, such as, but not limited to, justice, family, gender, race, and personal moral/ethical development.

All work must be original and unpublished. In addition, judges will consider grammar, organization, style, personal voice, originality, and clarity of content and ideas. We strongly encourage students to include personal examples and insights.

Who is Benjamin B. Ferencz?

The awards' benefactor, Benjamin B. Ferencz, has dedicated his career to the pursuit of international justice and world peace, including serving as Chief Prosecutor for the Nuremberg war crimes trials, where he prosecuted 22 German officers for their crimes in the Holocaust. An outspoken proponent of international justice, Ferencz's goal is to replace the rule of force with the rule of law. Learn more about [Benjamin B. Ferencz](https://facinghistory.org/for-educators/educator-resources/featured-projects/watchers-of-the-sky/benjamin-ferencz) at facinghistory.org/for-educators/educator-resources/featured-projects/watchers-of-the-sky/benjamin-ferencz.