



- Using the theme for the year the writer of the Essay **must** discuss ideas and thoughts about the following:
 - How did **Respect** affect our communities, at the local, state, national and world level, **in the past**?
 - How does **Respect** affect our communities, at the local, state, national and world level, **in the present**?
 - How will **Respect** affect our communities, at the local, state, national and world level, **in the future**?
 - How does, and will, **Respect**, affect you personally **now and in the future**?
- Judging will be on the following: 10% on the Application form, 80% on the Essay, and 10% on the FCE Knowledge Quiz.

- A scoring guide and scoring rubric (included) will be used for the judging of the contest. Please read it over carefully for full details on scoring criteria.
- Judging of all forms, FCE Quizzes, and Essays will be done by at least 3 people.

Your State Contest Coordinator:
State: SW FCE (AZ, TX, NM)
Margaret Polen
6724 E 35th Place
Yuma, AZ 85365-8204
Cell phone: 928-726-7456
Email: margaretmai531@gmail.com

For questions, please contact:
National Contest Coordinator
Scott Teeples
4338 Arthur Street
Klamath Falls, Oregon 97603
Cell phone: 541-891-6456
Email: sfteeples@outlook.com

Strengthening individuals, families, and communities through continuing education, developing leadership and community action.

Membership in the National Association for Family and Community Education is open to all persons without regard to sex, race, color, ethnic background, or economic circumstances.

SFT 10-24-25 sft



2026 National FCE High School Age CHARACTER COUNTS!® Essay Contest

“RESPECT”

CHARACTER COUNTS!® and Six Pillars of Character®

are service marks of the CHARACTER COUNTS!® Coalition,

a project of Josephson Institute of Ethics

www.charactercounts.org

The Six Pillars of CharacterSM



Generic forms and instructions can be located at www.nafce.org

State forms and instructions can be downloaded from your State FCE website listed below.

www.swfce.org

The National Association for Family and Community Education (FCE) is sponsoring an annual essay contest for eligible high school aged students.



The National FCE High School Age CHARACTER COUNTS!® Essay Contest provides students the opportunity to write about the CHARACTER COUNTS!® theme for the current year while learning a little about the FCE organization. It also provides students with the opportunity to earn award funds by winning or placing at the state and national levels.

Each State Contest runs from March 1, 2025, to March 1, 2026. **All contest Applications, Essays, and FCE Knowledge Quizzes, must reach the State Contest Coordinator on or before March 1, 2026.** Late, or incomplete entries, will NOT be accepted. The winners and placers of the contest will be announced by April 15, 2026, or as soon as judging is completed.

State FCE monetary award funds will be of the following amounts:

- **State 1st Place: \$500.00**
- **State 2nd Place: \$300.00**
- **State 3rd Place: \$200.00**

The 1st place winners of each state must be submitted by **April 15, 2026**, to National FCE for judging in the National Contest.

National FCE monetary award funds will be of the following amounts:

- **National 1st Place: \$500.00**
- **National 2nd Place: \$300.00**
- **National 3rd Place: \$200.00**

The rules and guidelines for the National FCE High School Age CHARACTER COUNTS!® Essay Contest are as follows:

- The Essay Contest is open to all young adults that will be of high school age on the date of the contest deadline of March 1, 2026.
- The essay can be written at home, school, or other places that may be available.
- The essay must be written by the applicant and not by parents, guardians, teachers, friends, or others.

- The Application Form must be filled out and signed by all necessary signers.
- The Essay must be written about the current National FCE High School Age CHARACTER COUNTS!® Essay theme.
- The Essay must be properly formatted with name, title, etc.
- The Essay must be between 1,000 and 3,000 words.
- **Essays must be typed.**
- All Application Forms, Essays, and FCE Knowledge Quizzes, can be submitted via mail, email, or in person.
- All applicants must complete the Application Form, the FCE Knowledge Quiz, and the Essay, and must be submitted on or before the due date of **March 1, 2026**, to the State Contest Coordinator.