

## SUGGESTED LESSON PLAN

### TO INTRODUCE THE ESSAY CONTEST

#### Teaching Goals:

1. To discuss and describe the local community in terms of human/cultural relationships, geographical characteristics, government, economic factors, and personal satisfaction.
2. To write an essay that describes one's personal feelings about the local community and its positive influence on the writer. Utilize pre-writing, development of a rough draft, editing for content and correct grammar, spelling and usage, production of a final copy, and presentation of that copy to peers, teachers, or family prior to submitting the final document for judging.

#### Lesson Plan:

1. Introduce the activity by explaining that the student will write an essay about one's community. Discuss what an essay is and how it presents one's views about a topic.
2. As part of the pre-writing process, discuss what makes a description interesting, e.g. descriptive words, comparing and contrasting, telling what one likes and why. Make a list of things that could describe one's community. Students could generate words that describe family, home, community activities, friends, community leaders, ways in which we help each other, geographic features, business activities, celebrations, etc.
3. When students have had an opportunity to brainstorm ideas about the community, give them time to develop a rough draft. Let students work in pairs to critique each other's ideas, and then give students time to revise their rough drafts into a final document.

*NOTE: If this is going to be an optional activity, the teacher may wish to go through the brainstorming process, and then allow students to complete the writing activities as a homework project. They should be reminded that rough drafts must be edited before submission.*

# ESSAY CONTEST

**The Utah League of Cities and Towns** wants to encourage the youth of our state to become more aware of their communities. For this reason, ULCT will sponsor its annual “Why I Like My Community” essay contest. The contest is open to students in fourth and seventh grades. Some teachers have commented that the contest enhances the social studies curriculum for these two grades by giving students an opportunity and some encouragement to look at their communities in new ways. Others have used the contest as a concrete way to have students use the writing process. For whatever reasons, we want to hear what your kids think of their communities.

Cash prizes will be awarded to students and their schools. First place winners will receive \$100, and the school will receive \$1,000; second place winners will receive \$75, and the school will receive \$750; and third place winners will receive \$50, and the school will receive \$500. In addition, the two first place winners will be invited to read their essays at the fall conference of the Utah League of Cities and Towns. Past winners have had their photographs taken with the governor.

Official guidelines, deadline information, lesson plans, and an entry form follow. Please duplicate these materials and see that they get to the appropriate teachers.

Thank you for your assistance.



Tom Godfrey, ESSAY COORDINATOR

## GUIDELINES

### Utah League of Cities and Towns “Why I Like My Community Essay Contest”

**Purpose:** This contest is sponsored by the Utah League of Cities and Towns to encourage fourth graders and seventh graders to learn and to write about the communities in which they live.

1. Students in grades four and seven are eligible to participate.
2. Students are to write essays about their communities or neighborhoods and what living in those places means to them. Possible areas that could be discussed are the following:

<i>geography</i>	<i>community activities</i>	<i>uniqueness</i>	<i>neighborhood/family history</i>
<i>economy</i>	<i>people</i>	<i>annual events</i>	
3. Although it is not required, it is suggested that this be used as a classroom writing assignment and that the writing process be applied.
4. Length: Fourth Grade—between 250-450 words; Seventh Grade—not to exceed 750 words.
5. Essays will be typed or written in blue or black ink.
6. The essays will be judged on the following criteria:
  - A. Content relates to the community and the students’ views.
  - B. Essay has a logical development, and ideas clearly build on each other.
  - C. Mechanics such as usage, punctuation, capitalization, sentence structure, etc.
  - D. Adherence to the guidelines.
  - E. Descriptive quality.
  - F. Student voice (Does it sound like a student, not a parent, wrote it?)
7. Each essay must have an entry form attached.
8. **ONLY ONE ENTRY PER CLASS WILL BE ACCEPTED!** (If there are three fourth grade classes in a school, then the school may submit only three entries.)
9. Essays are due at the office of the Utah League of Cities and Towns by **March 1**.
10. First place winners on each grade level will receive \$100, and the school will receive \$1,000; second place winners, \$75, and the school will receive \$750; and third place winners, \$50, and the school will receive \$500.

*The ULCT Review Committee will make its final selections no later than May 1.*

**Utah League of Cities and Towns**, 50 South 600 East, Salt Lake City, Utah 84102, Telephone: (801) 328-1601 or 800-852-8528

**ENTRY FORM**

# Essay Contest

## **WHY I LIKE MY COMMUNITY ESSAY CONTEST**

SPONSORED BY  
**THE UTAH LEAGUE OF CITIES AND TOWNS**

Student's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) \_\_\_\_\_

School \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) \_\_\_\_\_

Principal \_\_\_\_\_

Student's Teacher \_\_\_\_\_

Each essay must have an entry form attached, and **all entries must be at the League office by March 1.**

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Salt Lake City, Utah 84102  
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