



# JA Careers with a Purpose<sup>®</sup>

## 2008-2009 Essay Competition

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### **Purpose**

The JA Careers with a Purpose Essay Competition is designed to work in conjunction with *JA Careers with a Purpose* and is based on program activities that prompt students to reflect on personal maxims. Maxims, or wise sayings, are important to a society. By discussing general truths or rules of conduct, students can articulate the core values that might guide them when choosing a career goal or conducting a job search. The *JA Careers with a Purpose* program engages students in discussions and reflective thinking through activities that help them pursue careers or jobs that align with a purpose in their lives.

Volunteers motivate students to write an essay about their personal career choice and what inspired them to select a particular career. The essay goals are as follows:

- Encourage students to review the content of materials presented.
- Motivate students to write about their thoughts and ideas regarding careers with a purpose.
- Encourage students to conceptualize their career views and ideas.
- Engage students who are reluctant writers to participate. Content, not writing skills, is the focus.
- Formalize student ideas, use maxims, and build critical-thinking skills.
- Build relationships with local area volunteers, students, teachers, and JA Members.
- Encourage that writing skills vary from person to person, and, just as career choices vary, each author is unique.

### **Essay Competition Rules**

- The competition is open to students who currently are participating in the *JA Careers with a Purpose* program or who have completed the program during the current 2008-2009 academic year.
- One submission is allowed per participant.
- The participant's essay should express their personal career choice and what has inspired them to select that particular career. Their essay should discuss each of the seven concepts presented in the *JA Careers with a Purpose* program (see judging criteria for details): life roles, maxims, values, jobs vs. career, career clusters and pathways, decision-making process, and personal ethic.
- The essay should be between 500 and 1,000 words in length, and should be submitted online at <http://ethics.ja.org/gbees/submissions/default.aspx?cc=576736>.
- Participants must submit their essay in English, as the official language to be used at all stages of the competition is English. Any essay submitted in a language other than English will not be eligible to compete in the competition.
- The essay submission must be the original work of the participant and submitted under the participant's name.
- An essay may be written in any word processing program. The participant may then copy and paste the essay into the essay submission page. It is the participant's responsibility to verify that all grammar and spelling are correctly pasted into the submission page.
- Participants are required to retain a copy of their submitted essay, including the essay's title.
- In addition to the essay, it is required that participants must submit the following information into the essay submission page: student name and email address; parent/guardian name, email address, and telephone number; school name, telephone number, mailing address, and country; teacher name and phone number; JA volunteer name; and essay title.
- Winners submitting essays in the United States of America must provide a Social Security Number or tax id prior to receiving a monetary prize. Withholding this information will disqualify the winner from being awarded the monetary prize.
- Essays will not be returned and become the property of JA Worldwide, to be used at their discretion, including written or online publication.
- Judges decisions are final, irrevocable and not reversible.

## Process

Essays for this competition will be submitted electronically through the JA Worldwide Essay Competition Portal. Participant essays will advance through a three tier elimination process. A maximum of 120 points may be awarded at each level of the competition, as is outlined in the judging criteria. JA Worldwide strongly encourages students to review the judging criteria before writing their essay and again before submitting it through the JA Worldwide Essay Competition Portal. Winners selected to advance beyond the 1<sup>st</sup> tier must receive a minimum score of 60 (50% of total points). Winners selected to advance beyond the 2<sup>nd</sup> tier must receive a minimum score of 72 (60% of total points). Cash prizes will be awarded for all essays selected to advance, as outlined in the prize structure below.

To ensure impartiality, the final evaluation will be carried out by judges selected by JA Worldwide Headquarters. JA Worldwide competition protocols will be followed in notifying all interested parties of winners. All essays will be treated equally, and the same grading rubric used at each level of the competition. All essays must be received by Wednesday, April 15, 2009. Winners will be announced based upon the competition timeline and the judges' decisions are final. The top three essayists will receive public recognition through the [www.ja.org](http://www.ja.org) website and by JA Worldwide Marketing and Communications.

## Prizes for the 2008-2009 Academic Year:

Distribution at the local level will be a local decision. Cash prizes will be awarded for all essays selected to advance beyond each level of the competition. Three scholarship prizes will be awarded to first, second, and third place. The JA Careers with a Purpose Essay Competition prizes will consist of:

- Awards at the local level will be determined and distributed by the JA Member Office.
- 30 Cash prizes of \$50 USD for participants who receive a minimum score of 60 (50% of total points) or above during the first-tier judging.
- 18 cash prizes of \$200 USD for participants who receive a minimum score of 72 (60% of total points) or above during the second-tier judging.
- Three scholarship prizes of \$1,500 USD for first place, \$1,000 USD for second place, and \$500 USD for third place for the third-tier winners.

## Competition Timeline

October 2008	Announcement of competition and invitations to judges.
October 2008 – April 15, 2009	Student essay submission. Students must submit their essay through the link provided to the JA Member Office. Students who attempt to submit their essay after the deadline, Wednesday, April 15, 2009, will not be eligible to compete in the competition.
April 16 – May 17, 2009	First-tier judging.
May 18 – June 7, 2009	Second-tier judging.
June 8 – June 30, 2009	Third-tier judging.
July 2009	Top three finalists announced.

## Role of JA Member Offices

- Review the student and essay goals with teachers and volunteers participating in the *JA Careers with a Purpose* program.
- Announce the start of the competition. The student writing period should begin at the beginning of the *JA Careers with a Purpose* program, if possible. At the end of each session, consider engaging students in reflective thinking about the topics covered. Explain that the concepts discussed in a session might be considered as the basis of an essay.
- Provide the essay submission link to all participating students, teachers, and JA volunteers for distribution in local *JA Careers with a Purpose* program classes.
- Communicate the deadline, prize structure, and competition details to all participating students.

## Teaching Tips for Volunteers

How do I engage students in the essay competition?

- Inform the students what the competition is about.
- Recognize the sponsor, and inform the students that they are participants in a competition.
- Use examples from the program curriculum. Individual lessons will help students identify their own careers with a purpose.
- Explain that many prize-winning essays have been written by students who initially thought they had nothing to write about. Students need not be poet laureates to be winners.
- Assure students that their names will be protected by confidentiality, as each essay submission is processed through a software piece.



- Remind students that the deadline for the essay submission is Wednesday, April 15, 2009, prior to starting each session.
- Announce that essays must receive a minimum score from the judges to advance beyond each level of the competition. JA Worldwide strongly encourages students to review the judging criteria before writing their essay and again before submitting it through the JA Worldwide Essay Competition Portal.
- Inform students that a cash prize will be awarded for participant essays that advance through each tier of the competition. Reference prizes for information about the total amount awarded.

### **Pre-writing activities**

Discuss each session within the *JA Careers with a Purpose* program and apply the concept. The seven concepts are: life roles, maxims, values, jobs vs. career, career clusters and pathways, decision-making process, and personal ethic.

Present a student questionnaire to assist with theme selection:

- Whom do you admire?
- What kind of career do you admire?
- What kind of qualities do you admire in a career?
- Have you experienced a situation in which you could help someone with the correct training or job involvement?
- Have you faced challenges that you would like others to avoid or learn from?
- Are you responsible for someone less fortunate?
- What are some important values you think a job or career should have?

Opening idea or concept:

- Encourage the use of a maxim.
- Point out that a personal anecdote or example can be a good starting point for an essay.

Opening paragraph or introduction:

- Explain that a personal discussion or exploration of ideas can serve as a good introduction.

Supporting paragraphs:

- Emphasize that the essay tone should be personal. This will help students write about a theme that is close to their aspirations.

Concluding paragraph:

- Remind students that the concluding paragraph should be a summation of a career choice and the overall motivation for its selection.

Final editing:

- Students may choose peer editing, but this should be left to the individual student's discretion.
- Possible peer review checklist:
  - Is the content interesting?
  - Is the main idea clearly written?
  - Does the supporting information relate to the main idea?
  - Are the paragraphs pertinent to the discussion?
  - Are the ideas connected?
  - Do sentence length and structure vary?
  - Has the essay been checked for punctuation, spelling, and grammar usage?
- Supervisory editing should be minimal.

Final draft:

- Essays entries should be typed, with no names attached to them.
- An electronic form of the essay is required.
- The essay software will prompt the user for required information. The final essay submission form will allow for direct input, or students may choose to cut and paste from any standard word-processing program. It is highly recommended that each student use a word-processing program prior to submission, as the software package does not provide word-processing tools.

### **Submission of Essays**

- Student participants must submit essays through the JA Careers with a Purpose Essay Competition Portal, no later than Wednesday, April 15, 2009, by using the following website: <http://ethics.ja.org/gbees/submissions/default.aspx?cc=576736>.

## Judging Criteria:

A maximum of 120 points may be awarded at each level of the competition. JA Worldwide strongly encourages students to review the following criteria before writing their essay and again before submitting it online.

Note: Each criterion is assigned a maximum amount of points. If a student perfectly expresses a criterion, he or she will be awarded its maximum point value. If the student does not include a criterion at all, zero points will be awarded. Judges may award partial points if a criterion is only partially performed.

### Essay Content:

The author must include and correctly apply all seven (7) of the required concepts in the essay. (7 concepts times 10 points maximum each = 70 points). To view the complete Judging Rubric visit the JA Portal at

<http://portal.jahub.org/servlet/portal/explorer/listfolder/36435>.

1. The author clearly articulates the distinction between different life roles and discusses where he/she fits into society. The author clearly expresses specific personal skills, interests, and values.  
10 points maximum.
2. The author clearly articulates and defines personal values. The author clearly articulates a scenario in which his/her values have been tested and specifies how these values helped him/her arrive at a final decision.  
10 points maximum.
3. The author clearly articulates the difference between a job and a career and fully defines a career with a noble purpose. The author desires to develop skills, interests, and values to align with multiple career options.  
10 points maximum.
4. The author clearly articulates an understanding of the structure of the world of work. The job or career the author wishes to pursue, and how it relates to a career cluster, is clearly expressed. The author has analyzed the skills, interests, and values needed for that career.  
10 points maximum.
5. The author clearly articulates an understanding of making decisions and problem-solving in a real-world environment by creating or referencing an original example for discussion. The author also provides justification for the solution.  
10 points maximum.
6. The author clearly articulates a personal maxim he/she may choose to live by or has been affected by.  
10 points maximum.
7. The author clearly articulates how personal ethics affect business decisions using specific examples. The author clearly expresses what he/she feels is good, right, and proper.  
10 points maximum.

### Essay Structure

8. The author included an introduction that expressed the overall topic, theme, or thesis, and provided a preview of the essay's content.  
10 points maximum.
9. The author provided at least two well-developed body paragraphs, including a main idea and supporting details.  
10 points maximum.
10. The author included a conclusion that restated the overall topic, theme, or thesis, and summarized the essay's main ideas.  
10 points maximum.

### Essay Quality

11. The author clearly articulates the message of the essay and the essay is well written. Creativity and critical thinking is used, and the ideas are original to the author.  
10 points maximum.
12. There are no significant grammar or spelling errors.  
10 points maximum.