

Black History Essay Contest 2025 Guidelines

Essay Theme

Representation Matters: Black Women in Political Leadership

Grade-Level Essay Prompts

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| Elementary (3-5): | After reading at least one source about a notable Black woman political figure, develop an essay that describes how/why this woman has inspired you and how they have impacted the lives of African Americans. |
| Middle School (6-8): | After reading at least two sources about a notable Black woman political figure, develop an essay that describes how/why this woman has inspired you and how they have impacted the lives of African Americans. |
| High School (9-12): | After reading at least three sources about a notable Black woman political figure, develop an essay that describes how/why this woman has inspired you and how they have impacted the lives of African Americans. |

Thesis Statement

Your thesis statement should explore the career of a Black female political figure and how they have inspired you and impacted the lives of African Americans. To satisfy this requirement, you must choose to write about one Black female political figure and how they have helped to improve the lives of African Americans through their service in an elected/appointed office in one or more of the following ways:

- Environment
- Culture
- Health
- Housing
- Business Development/Economics
- Behavior
- Educational Attainment
- Job Attainment
- Civic participation (such as voting or running for public office)

Sample Thesis Statements

1. Kamala Harris, the first Black female Vice President of the United States, highlights the importance of challenging stereotypes and systemic barriers for marginalized communities and women in leadership positions.
2. Ketanji Brown-Jackson, the first Black female Supreme Court justice, has greatly inspired the African American community through political leadership by advocating for social justice and equitable laws.

What Must Be Included in Your Essay

1. Provide the problems that make Black women in political leadership important. Include the context of what was or is happening in the country.

2. Describe how Black women in political leadership improve the lives of Black people. Did it help to prevent discrimination? Did it help to improve civic action? Did it help people get jobs, vote, or attend school? Include all the ways Black women in political leadership help improve the lives of African Americans.
3. If possible, describe Black women in political leadership's effects on the community.
4. Describe how Black women in political leadership affect you personally. You may include why you chose your topic, how it has made you feel, or what you will do differently now that you know more. **You must include this personal statement. It is mandatory.**
5. If you are in high school, you must also include one counter-argument. Why have people been opposed to black women in political leadership?

Examples of Topics

- You may write about any Black female political figure that has inspired you.
- You may write about how this political figure impacted the African American community through their service as an elected/appointed official.

Submission Guidelines

- All writing must be in your own words. No copying from text unless it is a direct quote or otherwise necessary to support an argument.
 - Elementary school students must have at least 200 words. Middle school participants must have between 200 – 400 words. High school participants must have between 500 – 700 words.
 - Presentations must be submitted as a PDF file.
 - Participants must include a Bibliography with all sources listed (at least one source for elementary, two sources for middle school, and three sources for high school).
 - Participants may send the “Intent to Submit” form by the deadline (see below). However, this is not required to participate in the contest.
 - High School students must have at least one counterclaim. A counterclaim is an opinion that rebuts yours.
 - Text must be in Arial, Calibri, or Times New Roman and at least 12-point font.
 - All essays must include a Cover Page that includes:
 - Name and Grade
 - School and Teacher(s)
 - Participant’s email address, if applicable
 - Home address, including zip code
 - Parent/Guardian’s name, phone number, and email address
 - Title of the essay
- *The Cover Page is not included in the word count.

Important Dates

January 13, 2025	Intent to Submit form due Email To: sdac.bhec@gmail.com
January 31, 2025	Essay Due Email PDF File To: sdacbhec@gmail.com
February 1 – 15, 2025	Scoring Period
February 17, 2025	Finalists Notified
February 22, 2025	Reception and Awards Program

**Black History Essay Contest
Intent to Submit
“Representation Matters: Black Women in Political Leadership”**

Filling out this form provides your intent to submit an essay for the 2025 Black History Essay Contest. This form will not be graded but will help you to think through your essay topic more carefully and ensure that it meets the guidelines of the contest. You will find important dates and contact information. Please mark your calendar so that you submit your essay on time.

Name: _____

Grade: _____

School: _____

In two sentences or less, tell us which political figure you will be writing about and why you selected this person:

Did this individual impact any of the following areas of American life? Check all that apply.

*Remember, you are required to write about the conditions before this political leader was elected/appointed and how they improved the lives of African Americans in each of the areas you check below.

Environment _____

Culture _____

Health _____

Housing _____

**Business Development/
Economics** _____

Behavior _____

Job Attainment _____

Educational Attainment _____