



**DIVERSITY, EQUITY  
AND INCLUSION**

The University of Alabama at Birmingham

**DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.  
“WORD FROM THE MOUNTAIN TOP” ORATORY CONTEST**

Campus and Community Engagement, a unit of the Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion at the University of Alabama at Birmingham is proud to announce our inaugural Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. *Word from the Mountain Top* oratory contest. The purpose of the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. *Word from the Mountain Top* oratory contest is to recognize and give students the opportunity to reflect on the words of Dr. King while connecting his message to issues facing our nation in the 21st century. In addition, participants are provided an opportunity to display and enhance their own writing and communication skills through oration.

**Prizes**

First Place \$500  
Second Place: \$300  
Third Place: \$200

**ELIGIBILITY:** To be eligible all participants must be a middle school student currently enrolled in a Birmingham City School. Participants must also be residents of Birmingham, Alabama.

**HOW TO ENTER:** Students must submit one copy of the completed typed- written speech (title included). This information should be delivered no later than December 22nd, 2023, at 12:00 p.m. Speeches can also be submitted electronically to [inclusion@uab.edu](mailto:inclusion@uab.edu) with the subject line: **2024 MLK Speech**.

**ENTRIES ARE TO BE DELIVERED TO:**

Aquilla Stanback  
Division of Social Justice and Racial Equity Suite 203  
710 20<sup>th</sup> St. N.  
Birmingham, AL 35203

**CONTEST REGULATIONS:** All speech content must comply with the following contest rules before submission:

- Each speech must reflect the contestant’s own ideas, research, writing, and original thinking.
- Only one (1) speech may be submitted by each contestant.
- Speeches must be typed double space, 250 words minimum to 500 words max.
- Speeches must require a minimum three minutes but not more than five minutes for delivery.
- The cover page and bibliography are not counted in the four pages.
- Each speech must include a title page, not considered text, with the following information:
  - Speech
  - Author’s name
  - Physical Address
  - Email Address
  - Telephone number
  - School name
  - Total number of pages

The title of the speech MUST appear on the top of the first page of speech text. References should be included and clearly identified. Speeches will not be returned to the author; they become the property of the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at UAB. We may reprint the speeches in educational publications, future promotional material, and use them at community education workshops. Appropriate citations will be given to the authors.

## THEME & GUIDELINES

The theme for this year's contest is based on the thematic focus of the King Center. This theme is "It starts with me; shifting the cultural climate through the study and practice of Kingian Nonviolence." As a theologian, Martin Luther King reflected often on his understanding of nonviolence. He described his own "pilgrimage to nonviolence" in his first book, *Stride Toward Freedom*, and in subsequent books and articles. "True pacifism," or "nonviolent resistance," King wrote, is "a courageous confrontation of evil by the power of love" (King, 80). Both "morally and practically" committed to nonviolence, King believed that "the Christian doctrine of love operating through the Gandhian method of nonviolence was one of the most potent weapons available to oppressed people in their struggle for freedom." (King, 79)

King also outlined his principles for nonviolence. These six principles are: "Nonviolence is a way of life for courageous people; nonviolence seeks to win friendships and understanding; nonviolence seeks to defeat injustice or evil, not people; nonviolence holds that unearned, voluntary suffering for a just cause can educate and transform people and societies; nonviolence chooses love instead of hate; and nonviolence believes that the universe is on the side of justice."

Today we still live with many injustices facing marginalized people and efforts to address those injustices are still a challenge. In our reflection of the legacy of Dr. King and the broader Civil Rights Movement's accomplishments, a renewal of Kingian Nonviolence provides an opportunity for the new generation of leaders to have a framework for combatting injustice. In keeping with the realization of this year's oratory theme "It starts with me; shifting the cultural climate through the study and practice of Kingian Nonviolence," participants are encouraged to use the King Center's resources found at their website [kingcenter.org](http://kingcenter.org) to serve as an inspiration to reflect and prepare a speech in which they discuss:

### WHAT STEPS SHOULD WE TAKE TO HONOR DR. KING'S LEGACY OF NONVIOLENT RESISTANCE AS A MEANS TO ADDRESS INJUSTICE?

**ASSIGNED TOPIC:** The assigned speech topic must not require less than three minutes or more than five minutes for delivery. The purpose of the assigned topic is to test the speaker's knowledge of the subject, the extent of his/her research, and the ability to discuss the topic as related to the basic principles of Dr. Martin Luther King's message.

**SELECTION:** Three finalists will be contacted and invited to perform their written speeches on January 19, 2024.

### ENTRIES ARE TO BE DELIVERED TO:

Aquilla Stanback  
Division of Social Justice and Racial Equity Suite 203  
710 20<sup>th</sup> St. N.  
Birmingham, AL 35203

## ORATORY RUBRIC<sup>1</sup>

	<b>5- Distinguished</b>	<b>3- Proficient</b>	<b>1- Novice</b>
<b>Delivery</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Relaxed, positive; appears confident and calm <input type="checkbox"/> Maintain eye contact with audience <input type="checkbox"/> Gestures enhance speech	<input type="checkbox"/> Some nervousness apparent; sporadic eye contact or only to one person <input type="checkbox"/> Some nervous gestures, stiff, tense, or too relaxed	<input type="checkbox"/> Delivery distracting; eye contact lacking <input type="checkbox"/> Gestures lacking or inappropriate for speech
<b>Vocal delivery</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Enunciates clearly with effective volume <input type="checkbox"/> Inflection conveys emotion and enhances meaning <input type="checkbox"/> Meaningful pauses build suspense or enhance interest	<input type="checkbox"/> Generally uses appropriate enunciation and volume <input type="checkbox"/> Ordinary inflection <input type="checkbox"/> Random pauses with gap fillers (um”, “er”, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/> Enunciation or volume a problem; difficult to hear or understand <input type="checkbox"/> Monotone <input type="checkbox"/> Frequent pauses and distracting fillers
<b>Pacing</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Delivery is engaging for audience, moving along at an interesting pace	<input type="checkbox"/> Delivery is somewhat uneven	<input type="checkbox"/> Delivery is rather too quick or slow, decreasing interest for audience
<b>Introduction and Closing</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Introduction captures audience attention and sets the mood <input type="checkbox"/> Closing is strong, leaving the audience with a clear message	<input type="checkbox"/> Introduction is evident but not outstanding <input type="checkbox"/> Closing is evident, but average	<input type="checkbox"/> Introduction is weak or lacking <input type="checkbox"/> Closing is weak or lacking
<b>Presentation Style</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Information presented in an engaging, compelling style <input type="checkbox"/> Presenter’s personality is effectively integrated into the presentation	<input type="checkbox"/> Presentation style effective, but not especially strong <input type="checkbox"/> Presenter’s personality is somewhat in evidence	<input type="checkbox"/> Presentation style does not inspire interest <input type="checkbox"/> No evidence of the presenter’s personality
<b>Point Total</b>			

<sup>1</sup> Speeches that do not adhere to the time allotment will be deducted 5 points.

**WRITTEN SPEECH RUBRIC<sup>2</sup>**

	<b>5-Distinguished</b>	<b>3-Proficient</b>	<b>1-Novice</b>
<b>Content is relevant to topic and personal life</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Clear purpose and subject; reference is made to the yearly theme Pertinent examples, facts, and/or statistics	<input type="checkbox"/> Has some success defining purpose and subject; only limited reference to the yearly theme <input type="checkbox"/> Some examples, fact, and/or statistics, support the subject	<input type="checkbox"/> Attempts to define the purpose and subject; no mention of the yearly theme <input type="checkbox"/> Weak examples, facts, and/or statistics, which do not adequately support the subject
<b>The speech adds value to the experience of those who hear it</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Message is original; speaker has made real contribution to the thinking of the audience <input type="checkbox"/> Message is meaningful and convincing	<input type="checkbox"/> Message is well-presented with new ideas evident; audience benefits from having heard the speech <input type="checkbox"/> Message has a clear point of view, but not presented in an especially convincing manner	<input type="checkbox"/> Message is run-of-the-mill; little originality evident of minimal value to the audience <input type="checkbox"/> Speech values to effectively convince the audience
<b>The speech has a good flow</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> There is a clear beginning, a middle, and end <input type="checkbox"/> Smooth and effective transitions are made between thoughts or sections <input type="checkbox"/> Ideas are conveyed in an original, insightful manner that holds the attention of the audience	<input type="checkbox"/> Average beginning, middle and end to speech <input type="checkbox"/> Adequate transitions <input type="checkbox"/> Audience is attentive	<input type="checkbox"/> Unclear or confusing flow to speech <input type="checkbox"/> Transitions are few or lacking <input type="checkbox"/> Audience does not remain engaged
<b>It is presented with attention to vocabulary and grammar convention</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Accurate, interesting vocabulary <input type="checkbox"/> No grammatical errors <input type="checkbox"/> Interesting and varied sentence structure	<input type="checkbox"/> Adequate but ordinary vocabulary <input type="checkbox"/> Some grammatical errors <input type="checkbox"/> Sentence structure is repetitive	<input type="checkbox"/> Poor vocabulary with little originality <input type="checkbox"/> Significant grammatical errors <input type="checkbox"/> Little or no attention to sentence structure
<b>Point Total</b>			

<sup>2</sup> If the content of the speech does not, in a judge's estimation, meet the criteria for the contest, a score of 0 should be awarded for content.