

# **LAWS OF LIFE**

*Student Essay Project*

***A joint project between I\*EARN  
and the John Templeton Foundation***

*A Teacher's Guide*

# *Note to Teachers*

## **Do What Fits!**

That's what teachers involved in earlier Laws of Life Essays have told us works best for them. Every school and classroom is different - and no one knows your classroom better than you. This Guide highlights some of the strategies and activities that teachers have used to encourage their students to participate in the project. However, one strategy is more important than all the rest - do what fits!

**Janis Collins**

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English Teacher  
Winchester Tennessee

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**Note:** This Teacher's Guide is a revised version of the Teacher's Guide developed for the original "Laws of Life Essay Contest." It has been revised with the permission of the John Templeton Foundation. This version made available for download on the internet differs only in format from the printed version.

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## *Letter To My Fellow Teachers*

Dear Colleague:

During an in-service before the beginning of the school year in 1987, all the English teachers in my high school had assembled for opening remarks from our department supervisor. After a few routine announcements, he informed us that our Superintendent was interested in having our students participate in a Laws of Life Essay Project. When the supervisor left the room, we all began to verbalize our feelings:

“The kids won’t do it - they just WON’T!”

“How am I supposed to find the TIME to talk about the essays?”

Sound familiar? But here I am over eight years later, along with my fellow teachers, enthusiastically eating those words. Working with my students on their essays has been a rewarding experience that I now look forward to each year. I believe wholeheartedly that this project has had a positive impact on the lives of my students and their families.

Teachers in my school unanimously support the Laws of Life Essays. We regard it as both an effective character-building tool and a beneficial writing project for students of all ability levels. The pride and satisfaction that I feel is immeasurable when a student tells me that he or she has been published - especially a student who months earlier told me “I don’t have ANYTHING to write about.”

It is my hope that this Teacher’s Guide will be helpful as you begin to encourage your students to participate in the project. Good luck and best wishes to you and all your students.

Sincerely,

JanisCollins, English Teacher  
Franklin County High School  
Winchester, Tennessee

## *How to Participate*

There are several ways to join this project.

I\*EARN projects generally take place on conferences or newsgroups. If you are a member of I\*EARN, and have access to the conferences via the WWW, you can go to the I\*EARN on-line conference <iearn.values> and register there by filling out a form, where the conference facilitator, Sarah Lucas, will welcome you and assist you with posting. Sarah can be reached at <slucas@us.iearn.org>.

If you don't have access to the conferences via the WWW, you can post and interact on the conference via email. In order to do this you must subscribe to the conference <iearn.values>. You can do this by contacting:

Sarah Lucas  
I\*EARN-US  
475 Riverside Drive  
Suite 540  
New York, NY 10115 USA  
TEL: (212) 870-2693  
FAX: (212) 870-2672  
slucas@us.iearn.org

If you don't have email or web access you can still participate by submitting your essay on paper, and mailing it to your country's project coordinator. In the USA it is Sarah Lucas. To get the name of the coordinator in your country please contact I\*EARN-US.

To get involved in other I\*EARN projects please email I\*EARN-US with your name, mailing address, email address and school to receive a "Project Description Booklet". This booklet describes the process of working on "conferences" such as <iearn.values>.

# About The Project

## How did the “Laws of Life” get started?

Sir John Templeton initiated the Laws of Life Essays program in 1987 to encourage young people to reflect and write about their own laws of life. Mr. Templeton is a world-renowned investment manager. I\*EARN, with support of the John Templeton Foundation, is now expanding the Laws of Life essays to our global family.

## What are the laws of life?

The laws of life are a set of rules, ideals, and principles by which one chooses to live. Literally hundreds of such laws exist - some are so clear that almost all people can agree that these laws are true. For instance, honesty and compassion rank high as values in all cultures and societies. If practiced by everyone, these laws of life would benefit us all and improve the world in which we live.

## What does the Project involve?

- Students learn about the project from their teachers.
- Teachers encourage their students to submit essays.
- Students post their essays on the on-line conference <iearn.values> OR email them to the project coordinator in their country who will post the essay for them on <iearn.values>.
- Students respond and interact electronically to each other's essays.
- Students may write essays in any of the project's seven languages (Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Hindi, Russian or Spanish).

## Who is vital to the success of the Project?

**TEACHERS!** Time and time again, we have seen that in schools where classroom teachers encourage (and even prod!) their students to write an essay, the number of essays submitted dramatically increases.

## What is the Project really about?

The Laws of Life Essay Project invites young people to express in their own words what they value most in life. The project is also designed to help teachers and principals/headmasters explore the “moral ethos” of their classrooms and schools through discussions on the values students hold dear.

## *Benefits of the Project*

**“Life is about building a resume, and the essay provides our youth with additional material for their college or workplace applications.”**

Paula Gavin, President  
YMCA of Greater New York

**“Character development does not occur by accident, but through reflection on life’s events. The Laws of Life Essay Project encourages such reflection and is a key component in a student’s character education.**

Dr. Theron Trimble  
Collier County School District. Naples, Florida

**“The Essays help my students to internalize the values that we emphasize in our school.”**

Alexis Fell, Lead Teacher  
East High School. Cleveland, Ohio

**“My students and I are looking forward to sharing our essays on the Laws of Life with students from other countries.”**

Adriana Vilela  
Foreign Language Teacher  
CPEM #3. Zapala, Argentina

**“I know that the essays my students write have evoked family discussions and improved relations among my students and their parents.”**

Roger Mahn, English Teacher  
Wayzata High School. Wayzata, Minnesota

**“I use the essay as a way to have a meaningful one-on-one discussion with each of my students.”**

Chris Carlson, English Teacher  
Franklin County High School. Winchester, Tennessee

**“I believe that sharing essays with students from around the world promotes understanding for different cultures.”**

Jill Copen, Program Development  
I\*EARN-US

## *Motivating Students to Write:*

### **What one teacher said to his class**

With everything going on in your lives - family activities, clubs, homework - sometimes you don't have the time to examine what is important to you, what you value, what you appreciate, what ideals you hold deep in your heart. . . or you don't take the time to compliment yourself for the things you do well. Don't we all need to take the time to reflect on what is really important in our lives?

I also think that writing is important. Writing is a valuable tool which helps us reflect on what is meaningful to us. It helps us to identify who we are!

You all have written essays in the past, but this essay is an opportunity to write about what YOU think is important in life. This essay will be submitted to an on-line conference on I\*EARN. Your essay will be read by students around the world and you will have the chance to read essays by students from other countries and write to them about what they have written. The essays will then be published for distribution to all participants and for use in classrooms around the world.

The essay you will be writing is called a Laws of Life Essay.

Okay, here's what the essay is about. Your personal laws of life are those rules and ideals that tell you how to live your life, like being honest...or trying your hardest at everything you do. Think about the people and experiences that have helped you form these laws. How many of you in the past three days have told someone whom you care about that he or she is important to you?

Your essay could be written about that person's role in helping to shape your values.

**I WANT TO ENCOURAGE YOU TO WRITE FROM THE HEART.**

I know that you all have so much to say. This is your chance to be heard!

## *Project Schedule*

- **November 1999 - May 15, 2000**  
Teachers request essays
- **November 30, 1999 - May 15, 2000**  
Student submissions, on-line interaction among students, editing
- **May 15 - June 15, 2000**  
Print multilingual Essay Booklets
- **June 31, 2000**  
Distribute booklets to participants, media, I\*EARN Coordinators throughout the world. Announce on international educational “listservs” that the booklets are available
- **July 10-16, 2000 -**  
Conduct workshop at the 1999 I\*EARN International Conference in Beijing, China on the project, including a reading of selected essays by participating students.

# Teaching Tips

## Encouraging and motivating your students

- Many students write about sensitive and personal experiences. Students will be more inclined to share these experiences with teachers whom they have come to trust and respect.
- Communicate to students that the essay is not an academic assignment; instead, stress that the essay is an opportunity for personal growth. The Project encourages students to examine and affirm their personal beliefs.
- Encourage all students to submit an essay. It is not uncommon for a student who started out believing that he or she had nothing to write about to write a wonderful essay.
- Be flexible. Students of all abilities and levels can complete their essays. Individualize your expectations for each student.
- Encourage your students to ask for your help with their essays.
- Be prepared to confer one-on-one with students who are having difficulty coming up with ideas for their essays. Some students may need a little prodding to help them arrive at a meaningful topic. Be patient!
- Encourage students to respond to other student's essays on the on-line conference <learn.values> so the conference will be interactive.

## Helping your students decide on their topics

- Explain clearly the meaning behind the phrase "laws of life." Some students may confuse legislative laws with the laws of life that are found in many cultures, religions, and traditions (e.g., the respect for human life).
- Before students begin to write their essays, use practice activities to generate ideas or topics. Teachers often use journal entries, famous quotations, short inspirational essays, and surveys/questionnaires. (see page 20 for a sample questionnaire.)
- Encourage students to use their personal experiences (either positive or negative) for generating ideas for their essays. Role models and historical or literary figures are also frequently used by students as supporting examples for their own laws of life.
- Discourage students from writing about their personal romantic relationships. These essays are frequently viewed as trite and full of hyperbole. (Furthermore, the "couples" usually break up before the essays are published.)
- Encourage your students to discuss their essays with others throughout the writing process. Family members and peers can be a valuable resource.

## **Integrating the essay into your teaching strategies**

- Prior to and during the time your students are writing their essays, integrate the laws of life concept in your class discussions, assignments, and other activities. There are always those “teachable moments” in which you may be able to recognize students or other people who exemplify a law of life.
- Have students write their essays in class whenever possible. Many teachers have commented that students are much more likely to complete their essays in an environment where help is immediately available.
- Allow time for students (who volunteer) to read aloud or exchange their working drafts. Teachers have commented that this process promotes understanding and empathy among their students.
- Consider providing extra credit (if the essay is optional) or a completion grade (if the essay is required) for students who hand in an essay.
- Please do not betray the trust that students place in you. Students discuss personal experiences with their teachers in confidence. Your compassion, sensitivity, and professionalism are essential.

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**“Of all the qualities and beliefs that my grandfather embedded in me, one stands out. My grandfather fought cancer for nine years and never once was negative. Although at times he was afraid, he never gave up... I believe that never giving up is the greatest law in life.”**

**- Heather, age 15**

**“It is only through perseverance that goals are accomplished, dreams become reality, and the impossible ceases to exist. Perseverance is a tool for survival, and it is also a law of life.”**

**- Alicia, age 17**

## **STUDENT ESSAY # 1**

**NOTE TO TEACHERS:** *This essay is an example of a high school student who was encouraged by his teacher to use a personal experience as the core of his essay. The first two paragraphs of a 5-paragraph essay have been reprinted below.*

If a person wants to become successful in life, then he must have particular values by which he lives. These values are called laws of life. The advantage of having these laws is that in practice, one becomes a better person by observing and living by these rules. Because these laws make a better more rounded person, I have chosen three laws to form my life. The laws I have chosen for my life are love, perseverance, and honesty.

My primary law of life is love. This is an emotion present in only the closest of relations and friendships, and I am glad that I have the privilege to love someone and be loved in return. When I was entering third grade, my family and I moved from Coffee County to the town of Cowan. I was insecure being in a new school and community. I did not know anybody and felt awkward. In the winter of that year I started having excessive headaches and soon the cause was discovered. I had a brain tumor that was putting pressure on my brain, thus the headaches. I was informed that I would need brain surgery. I was devastated! Just to think something so terrifying could happen to ordinary me was appalling. I had the operation in February and what an experience! While I was recovering in the hospital, I noticed that phone calls, flowers, cards, and balloons started to pile up in my hospital room. They were from my classmates, neighbors, teachers, church members, and family. It was then that I realized that the people of my community really did care deeply for me. At that point, I started trying to make an effort to be loving towards the people around me.

One of my English teachers once had each person in the room tell what they thought of every other person in the class. My classmates commented that I was caring, nice, loving and cheerful. I believe this to be the direct result of the transition I made in my attitude toward life as a result of the operation. At first when I thought of the surgery I started feeling a tightening and knotting in my stomach. But after remembering the love shown me I only felt peace and love in my heart.

## STUDENT ESSAY # 2

**NOTE TO TEACHERS:** *The author of the essay below took one law of life and wrote about three people who exemplified that law.*

The famous writer Phyllis Wheatley, the athlete Wilma Rudolph, and neurosurgeon Dr. Deborah Hyde all have several things in common. Yes, they are all African-American women. Yes, all three achieved a great level of success. However, the strongest thread that binds these three women together is their immeasurable amount of perseverance.

The well-known scientist Charles Darwin wrote “only the strong will survive.” This statement is indeed true. As individuals we must learn to overcome obstacles and overlook naysayers when trying to achieve goals. If we allow the negative opinions of others to stop us, we will never reach our full potentials. This is why perseverance is one of the important laws of life.

At a time when most African-Americans were not even allowed to glance at a book, Phyllis Wheatley was reading. When most women were confined to child-rearing and household chores, Phyllis Wheatley was writing poetry. Not only was it amazing for this African-American woman to be reading and writing in the 1700's, but who could ever conceive that a scholarly poem dedicated to President George Washington entitled “To His Excellency” could be the work of one young person.

Phyllis Wheatley did not allow the facts that she was a teenager and an American during the revolution to bother her. Being a woman and an African-American did not deter her either. She overcame all of these obstacles. Phyllis Wheatley persevered.

Champion Wilma Rudolph suffered from polio as a child. This crippling disease could easily discourage anyone from thoughts of walking even at a moderate speed. The thought of running would be out of the question.

Wilma Rudolph was not just anyone. She was one who hoped, one who dreamed, and one who achieved. Once she decided that running was the goal she wanted to accomplish, nothing could stand in her way, not even polio. Wilma sailed by her opponents in every race she entered. Along with a blaze of dust, Wilma left her adversaries shocked, amazed, and inspired. Wilma Rudolph persevered.

Neurosurgeon Dr. Deborah Hyde was told by a medical school professor that she had no chance of succeeding. After all, it was assumed that students of small Tougaloo College in Mississippi could not possibly compete with graduates of prestigious Ivy League universities. These doubts surpassed Dr. Hyde. She went on to become the only female in her elite specialty and is now one of only four African-American female neurosurgeons in the nation. Dr. Deborah Hyde persevered.

At that moment when we are told that something is impossible, our hearts feel shattered and our momentum is decreased. The disappointment seems almost unbearable. This is when it becomes necessary to take the negative emotions we feel and turn them into positive energy. This positive force should then motivate us to work even harder. This mental cycle of converting doubts into motivation must occur each time we encounter obstacles, no matter how difficult these obstacles may seem. It is only through perseverance that goals are accomplished, dreams become reality, and the impossible ceases to exist. Perseverance is a tool for survival, and it is also a law of life.

### STUDENT ESSAY # 3

**NOTE TO TEACHERS:** *This essay was written by an eighth grade student/13 years old. It is a good example of a personal story that captures perfectly a law of life.*

It was a hot July morning in Estill Springs, Tennessee. My mother and I got up very early to pick tomatoes. It was my summer job, and my mother was good enough to help me. Every other morning she and I would enter Sak-n-Pak Convenience Market to sell several gallon buckets of tomatoes.

We were very busy sorting the tomatoes and hardly noticed a salesman as he entered the store. The salesman was very well-dressed, and he made his rounds back and forth throughout the store. As he made his way, he spoke to everyone in the store except my mother and me. Several times as we were sorting our tomatoes, the salesman passed us. It was obvious to me that he thought my mother and I were beneath him and not worthy of a "hello."

After we finished our sorting, we walked to the counter where the manager paid me for the tomatoes. The salesman was now behind the counter talking to the manager. He asked to speak to the owner of the store. At that point my smiling mother, barefoot because our shoes were dirty, was introduced to the salesman. The salesman, was very embarrassed. The one person who he thought was beneath him was the one with whom he needed to do business.

As life goes on, I will always remember this incident. No one is any better than anyone else. Never judge someone by the clothes he or she wears or the job he does. From this experience I have learned to judge all people equally, not by their outward appearance. This is one of my major Laws of Life.

## STUDENT ESSAY # 4

**NOTE TO TEACHERS:** *The high school student who wrote this essay focused on the importance of making the right decisions in life. The essay is a good example of how the contest encourages young people to reflect and write about personal issues and conflicts that arise during adolescence.*

I was talking to my dad about this essay contest and I thought that I really just lived day to day and I didn't really have any law to go by and then he said this to me - "There comes a time when one must decide which bridge to cross and which one to burn and leave behind." He asked me to think about that for a minute. After I thought about it, this is what it meant to me. I think it means in my life that you have to choose which path to take and which friends to leave behind and which to take with you.

It is all about making decisions. That is really what life is all about. You make decisions everyday either at school or at work. A lot of people at school do drugs and there's a lot of violence. Most of my friends are into stuff like that. You really can't find someone who does something good. I decided to take a stand and find someone who did. She got me back in church and I'm very involved in that now. My life has changed for the better. My other friends know that I have made changes, and they got mad because I didn't feel comfortable around all that stuff. So, I took a stand and changed my life and chose which bridge to cross and which one to burn.

My next law of life would be about making a difference in today's world. This kind of coincides with my other law of life. A lot of people say that we're going to make a difference in the world. Today most people live off drugs and it is mainly violence. I don't see how we could change the world when people are scared to say something to someone. They're afraid that they will get hurt.

I want to help make a difference somehow. I'm still young so I really don't know what I could do to make a difference but when I'm an adult and I look back on my life, I want to be able to say that I helped change that person's life. That would be something that I could really treasure.

I would like to be like my dad because he seems to know what to say whenever my brothers or sister or I have problems or questions. I know he has made a difference in all of our lives one way or another.

Our parents have always taught us to get a good education first, then try different things. That way if we don't make it at one thing we will have something to fall back on. That is the way that he has made a difference in my life. By encouraging me to do what I believe in and being there for me and making me go for the best even if I don't think it is at that moment. I think that he can now look back and say that he changed someone's life - his children. I think that is a great accomplishment.

# *A Ten-Day Sample Lesson Plan*

## **NOTE TO TEACHERS:**

I currently use this plan in my English classes, which are composed of students of all abilities. I share it with you simply as one model of how to implement this project in a classroom. ***Please feel free to develop your own plan and model.*** We recognize that this was developed for English language speakers. I believe the Lesson Plan provides my students with additional direction and experience in writing a multi-paragraph essay. Because some of my students lack confidence and skill in their writing, I encourage them to write the majority of the essay in class.

The ten days in the plan do NOT have to be consecutive. Students turn in a rough draft for optional peer editing before my final check of their papers. Then they rewrite the final draft for posting on the conference. Because I have been checking their progress and most papers have been peer edited, the final drafts are relatively free of errors and, consequently, easy to check.

- Janis Collins

## **Day One: Announcing the Project** (see page 8)

I stress the opportunities the project provides: a chance for students to touch base with their values and ideals, interact with students in other countries, and improve their writing skills. On this day, I identify and give some information about the project and the <learn.values> on-line conference. Next, I give examples of laws of life found in students' personal experiences, beliefs, or examples from famous personalities and well-known literary characters. I briefly describe topics used by students in the past and explain that many of these written by students who first thought they had nothing to write about. I emphasize my commitment to the project. Finally, I ask them to begin thinking about their topics.

**Teacher Tip:** I often point out examples of a law of life from current events or a recent reading assignment.

## **Day Two: Prewriting Activity**

I distribute the student questionnaire (see page 20 for a sample questionnaire) and tell my students that the questionnaire will help them identify their "laws" and possible topics. I explain that I will read their responses to the questionnaire and assist them with a topic. I briefly explain each question before the students begin. I allow at least forty-five minutes for completion; some students request and are given extra time to complete the questionnaire at home. As I look over their responses, I mark those that might be used as a basis for their essays.

**Teacher Tip:** Be sure to allot yourself time between day two and day three to read your students' responses.

## **Day Three: Discussing the Opening Paragraph**

Having first made general comments about their responses, I then return the questionnaires and reassure my students that many of them have had similar feelings and experiences. Students are then asked to take notes on suggested types of introductory paragraphs. I give examples to illustrate how each approach can be developed into an essay, and I encourage them to decide on a topic. I also tell my students that I will have an individual meeting with each of them before they start writing. The following types of introductions work well for the Laws of Life Essay:

- **Personal Anecdote or Example** -  
"Although my brother is severely retarded, he has been my teacher."

- **Role Model Character Sketch** -  
“My grandmother has taught me many things.”
- **Analogy** -  
“Having a strong set of personal laws is like having a strong foundation for a new house.”
- **Direct Statement of Topic** -  
“My essay is about having hope, faith, and charity.”
- **Use of a quotation** -  
“Life is making stepping stones out of stumbling blocks.”
- **Commenting on a Story or Parable** -  
e.g., The boy who cried wolf; The Good Samaritan

### **Day Four: Writing The Introduction**

I have students get out their questionnaires; then I ask those who have ideas to begin working quietly while I confer with each student who is undecided on a topic. To help students

who think they have nothing to write about, I have them look through my collection of Quotable Quotes from Readers’ Digest, Bartlett’s Familiar Quotations, or collections of inspirational essays (one excellent resource is the book *Chicken Soup for the Soul*. Check out these web sites for stories and quotes from this book; [www.chicken-soup.com](http://www.chicken-soup.com) and [www.soupserver.com](http://www.soupserver.com). I encourage each student to complete his or her introductory paragraph.

**Teacher Tip:** Be patient. This is the hardest day for you and your students. A great idea may be born today in your class!

### **Day Five: The Supporting Paragraphs**

I review the use of transition of sentences and the mechanics for incorporating quotes. Then I suggest the following methods for developing the supporting paragraphs can describe a different “law”; each can describe the importance of the same law in three different areas of their lives; each can be about three different experiences or famous individuals who exemplify a law; each paragraph can continue the development of an analogy. Advanced students who are doing a philosophical treatment will not be limited to these methods of development. While students are writing, I check completed introductions and work with students who need help. I ask my students to complete their first support paragraph by the next time we work on their essays.

**Teacher Tip:** Point out grammar and mechanical errors as you check; this significantly reduces errors on the rough draft.

## **Day Six: Completing The Supporting Paragraphs**

I briefly review pronoun-antecedent agreement and pronoun case and remind my students to avoid the impersonal “you” in their writing. I also tell my students to check their papers for pronoun errors. While they continue to work on their supporting paragraphs, I circulate and help students on a one-on-one basis.

**Teacher Tip:** I encourage students at this point to exchange what they have written so far with another student to peer-check for errors in pronoun usage.

## **Day Seven: The Concluding Paragraph**

I remind my students that the concluding paragraph should parallel the introduction. Students can refer again to the role-model, experience, or analogy. They can also make a concluding statement about each of the supporting paragraphs or use and relate a quote to their topics. I remind my students to be thinking of a title for their essays. Students write their conclusions while I continue to check for errors and offer suggestions. I tell my students that their rough drafts should be written on every other line for peer-editing purposes.

## **Day Eight: Peer-Editing The Rough Draft**

I provide students the opportunity to work in small groups of their choosing (no more than three to a group) to proofread and edit each other’s essays. I furnish each student with a peer-editing guide (a copy of this guide is on page 23). Students can make corrections and revisions using the in-between lines on their rough drafts. Most students want to work in groups; however, allow those who do not wish to participate in the peer-editing process to revise and edit their own papers with your help and support.

Peer-editing allows students to share their experiences and feelings, as well as their writing. Many of my students at this point want their friends to read their essays aloud, and I encourage everyone to share their essays. However, I also respect the wishes of students who do not want to have their essays read by other classmates. I also remind my students of the due date for their rough drafts.

**Teacher Tip:** Allow yourself plenty of time between day eight and day nine to check papers.

## **Day Nine: Writing The Final Draft**

I return the rough drafts on which I have marked errors and made general suggestions for improvement. Students are instructed to either type or rewrite the final paper. Students post the final draft of their essay on <learn.values>.

## **Day Ten through end of Project/May 1999**

Students respond to the essays of other students and interact on the on-line conference <learn.values>.

- Giving feedback to students from other countries
- Asking for clarification of words and phrases
- Expressing encouragement to others

## Student Questionnaire

**NOTE TO TEACHERS:** *The following questionnaire can be an effective tool to help students determine what they may want to write about in their essays.*

1. Describe an incident or event from which you learned a lesson “the hard way”.
2. What could you change about yourself to become a better person?
3. What three qualities do you value in a friend; a teacher; a parent?
4. Who is someone that you admire? List three qualities that you admire about that person.
5. Describe a situation in which you went out of your way to help someone else.
6. Has life been good to you? Explain.
7. Describe a situation in your life in which someone went out of his or her way to help you.
8. Name three things for which you are thankful.
9. Who has been most important in your life in helping you establish your values? Explain.
10. Do you have a responsibility to help those who are less fortunate? Explain.
11. When you become a parent, what are the three most important values that you hope your children will have?
12. Should community service be compulsory for all students as part of the K-12 school curriculum?

# Sample Submission Form

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

AGE: \_\_\_\_\_

SCHOOL: \_\_\_\_\_

TEACHER: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

Please include this information with each student essay

.....

## Peer Editing Guide

**NOTE TO TEACHERS:** I am a strong believer in the benefits of the peer-editing process. I tell my students that this is a great opportunity for them to improve their essays. Although I encourage every student to share his or her essay with a friend or classmate, I support the decision of students who decide not to exchange their essays at this time.

I start the peer-editing process by handing out the “Peer Review Checklist” below. I go over each question to make sure that the peer reviewers understand the kinds of “constructive feedback” they can provide to the essayist. I emphasize that they should read the essay first without highlighting any error to find out what the essayist is trying to tell the reader. I encourage peer-reviewers to focus and respond to the main ideas of the essay.

I then ask that students check their classmates’ essays. When they find an error, I ask them to either circle it, put a question mark (?) by it, or write a short note somewhere on the rough draft. I remind them to look carefully for errors in spelling, capitalization, punctuation, verb usage, pronoun case, and agreement.

- Janis Collins

### Peer Review Checklist

- Is the content interesting and thoughtful?
- Is the main idea clearly stated?
- Is there enough supporting information?
- Is the support relevant and well-organized?
- Is the conclusion effective?
- Are sentences clear?
- Are sentence length and structure varied?
- Is the paper free of punctuation and spelling errors?
- Is the final version of the paper neat and legible?

**I\*EARN** (The International Education and Resource Network) is utilizing its worldwide, educational telecommunications network to mobilize the views of students in key countries in the world to create an International Laws of Life Essay Project, building on and expanding the work of the “Laws of Life Essays” to new levels. Through telecommunications technology, the scope and impact of this project can and will be expanded exponentially.

### **JOHN TEMPLETON FOUNDATION**

The **John Templeton Foundation** ([www.templeton.org](http://www.templeton.org)) was established in 1987 by international investment manager Sir John Templeton.

The Foundation is committed to advancing a broad spectrum of activities, including studies, award programs and publications that promote the character development of young people in secondary schools, colleges, and universities.

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