

**The Richard Stone Essay Contest
for the Discovery of Diverse Youth Voices**

Welcome! This is the first Richard Stone Essay Contest. We hope to begin small, learn how to do it better, and then offer the contest again next year to more teens (12 to 18 year olds). Good luck with your pre-writing, drafting, revising, and editing. Enjoy your collaboration with parents and teachers in this writing adventure! Questions about this contest may be directed to Fresno Center for Nonviolence Writing Contest: contact Dr. Beti at e.a.leone@zoho.com and put your first name + “essay contest” in the subject line. **Thanks for joining the Diverse Youth Voices Essay Contest! See p. 4 for details!**

Background Readings. To get started, we have selected seven readings for you to enjoy a few weeks before you begin drafting. They include diverse voices on diverse topics: 1) Amazonia people’s dream for humanity; 2) race and economic justice; 3) what is (and why) nonviolence; 4) white supremacy & global terrorism; 5) Jewish-Christian-Islamic *trialogue*, a conversation among the three major religions; 6) news from New Zealand & a U.S. movement organizing for gun safety; and, 7) access to clean water and basic human rights. The purpose of the readings is to give everyone the same material for a “jumping off place,” for a tiny bit of the recent discussion about violence and non-violence around the world in 2019.

Readings: Thinking about Nonviolence in 2019

Article #1: from Pachamama Alliance website

Title: Vision and Mission

“I think the most important decision we make is whether we believe we live in a friendly or hostile universe.” Albert Einstein. The vision that informs the Pachamama Alliance’s work is of a world that works for everyone: an environmentally sustainable, spiritually fulfilling, socially just human presence on this planet—a New Dream for humanity. The mission is to empower indigenous people of the Amazon Rainforest to preserve their lands and culture and, using insights gained from that work, to educate and inspire individuals everywhere to bring forth a thriving, just and sustainable world.

Article #2: from ACLU website (American Civil Liberties Union) aclu.org

Title: Race and Economic Justice

“For much of the country’s history, formal and explicit racial restrictions prevented people of color from accessing the mainstays of economic life, including employment and homeownership. Focusing especially on issues relating to credit and homeownership, the Racial Justice Program uses litigation and other advocacy to remedy deeply entrenched sources of inequality and ensure that access to opportunity is not allocated according to race.”

“Though explicit racial classifications were outlawed by the civil rights statutes passed in the 1960s, yawning disparities in wealth, income, and other economic opportunities remain, preventing us from achieving true racial justice in America. These racially disparate outcomes reflect a combination of covert discrimination, structural inequality, and implicit biases, and they have become more severe in the continuing aftermath of the economic crisis of 2008.”

“Focusing especially on issues relating to credit and homeownership, the ACLU uses litigation and other advocacy to remedy deeply entrenched sources of inequality and ensure that access to opportunity is not allocated according to race. Because, as Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., put it, “What does it profit a man to be able to eat at an integrated lunch counter if he doesn’t have enough money to buy a hamburger?” ”

Article #3: from “Pace e Bene” website

Title: Why Nonviolence?

“Nonviolence means avoiding injury to anything on earth in thought, word or deed,” Gandhi once wrote. We believe with Gandhi and Dr. King, that the words “love” and “peace” can be used by the culture of violence to justify the world’s wars, injustices and violence, so with Gandhi and Dr. King, we use this clumsy word “nonviolence” to talk about a new way of life, a new spiritual path, a new methodology for social, political change, and a new way to organize through grassroots movements as the best hope for humanity.

“We can change the world if we do it nonviolently,” Cesar Chavez said. “If we can just show people how they can organize nonviolently, we can’t fail. Nonviolence has never failed when it’s tried.”

“Nonviolence is a powerful method for challenging and overcoming violence without using violence; for creatively transforming and resolving conflict; and for fostering just and peaceful alternatives. People around the world are using active nonviolence in grassroots nonviolent movements to build more democratic societies, to champion human rights, to challenge racism and sexism, to struggle for economic justice, and to safeguard the planet. Recent quantitative research has demonstrated that [nonviolent strategies are twice as effective as violent ones.](#)”

“We have to make truth and nonviolence not matters for mere individual practice but for practice by groups and communities and nations. That at any rate is my dream. I shall live and die in trying to realize it.” — MOHANDAS GANDHI

“Dr. Martin Luther King’s Principles of Nonviolence

1. “NONVIOLENCE IS A WAY OF LIFE FOR COURAGEOUS PEOPLE.”
2. “NONVIOLENCE SEEKS TO WIN FRIENDSHIP AND UNDERSTANDING.”
3. “NONVIOLENCE WORKS TO DEFEAT INJUSTICE, NOT PEOPLE.”
4. “NONVIOLENCE HOLDS THAT VOLUNTARY SUFFERING CAN EDUCATE AND TRANSFORM.”
5. “NONVIOLENCE CHOOSES LOVE INSTEAD OF HATE.”
6. “NONVIOLENCE BELIEVES THAT THE UNIVERSE IS ON THE SIDE OF JUSTICE.”

Article #4: from Southern Poverty Law Center website

Title: New Zealand Attack Shows White Supremacy is global terrorist movement

“The atrocity in New Zealand shows us, once again, that we’re dealing with an international terrorist movement linked by a dangerous white supremacist ideology that’s metastasizing in the echo chambers of internet chat rooms and on social media networks.”

[“This hatred](#) is even being [amplified by our own president](#), who speaks of an [“invasion of our country.”](#) The killer’s manifesto bears the unmistakable fingerprints of the [so-called alt-right](#), both in tone and reference. It celebrates the [Norwegian terrorist Anders Breivik](#) as well as [Charleston terrorist Dylann Roof](#). It speaks of “invaders” who will “replace” white people. This is the very same kind of language used by Roof and numerous other [white supremacists](#) who have committed or attempted acts of terror. On his weapon, the killer wrote the white supremacist slogan known as the 14 words – “We must secure the existence of our people and a future for white children” – coined by the infamous [neo-Nazi terrorist David Lane.](#)”

“In this case, a killer attacked Muslims worshipping at two mosques. In October, [a killer massacred Jews at a synagogue in Pittsburgh.](#) Though the victims were different, and the attacks came in different parts of the world, the terrorists shared [the same ideology of white supremacist hate.](#)”

“We – and that includes policymakers and the law enforcement community, in particular – must begin to view what we call “domestic terrorism” through a global lens, just as we do the threat of groups like ISIS, because the growing white supremacist movement represents a clear and present [threat to democracies across the world.](#)” <https://www.splcenter.org/news/2019/03/15/>

Article #5: From Children of Abraham: United we Prevail, Divided we Fail

Title: A Call for Interfaith Trialogue (Chap. 11)

“Throughout history, relatively few religious leaders and scholars have endorsed a triologue of Abrahamic interfaith partners, who would learn about each other’s religion in an atmosphere of openness and fairness. It is of vital importance that Jewish, Christian, and Muslim religious leaders and scholars work toward peace and reconciliation by overcoming bigotry and ignorance. In America, the Judeo-Christian dialogue must step up to the challenge of turning itself into a Judeo-Christian-Islamic triologue, not for the purpose of conversion but in reverence of each other’s faiths and traditions.”

“The three faiths share elements of a common theology. All three worship the same God and affirm that He is One. All concur that God rewards virtue, punishes sin, and governs the fate of all humanity. All believe that God sent prophets to mankind. All three are based on books revealed by God — the Torah,

the Bible, and the Qur'an. All three share a common heritage of narrative contained in the scriptures, lessons told through stories. Moses is a prophet in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Abraham and Sarah are parents of a lineage that gave us Moses and Jesus, while Abraham and Hagar are the ancestors of Muhammad."

Article #6: From the Prime Minister of New Zealand; from "We are every town for Gun Safety"

Prime Minister JACINDA ARDERN: "The terror attack in Christchurch (New Zealand) on Friday (March 15) was the worst act of terrorism on our shores. It was in fact one of the worst globally in recent times. It has exposed a range of weaknesses in New Zealand's gun laws. The clear lesson from history around the world is that to make our communities safer, the time to act is now."

Prime Minister JACINDA ARDERN: "I want to also acknowledge, you know, when Australia found itself tragically in a similar position to what we find ourselves now, they took 12 days to make the decision. We have taken 72 hours. There are still some details that need to be worked through. I want to do that but still move as quickly as we can."

"As Prime Minister Ardern went out to comfort the mourners, she wore a hijab. She also promised swift action to change the nation's gun laws. As New Zealand mourns, she strives to place the focus on the 50 victims, on their names, on their lives. Speaking in the New Zealand Parliament Tuesday, she said of the shooter, "You will never hear me speak his name." She opened her remarks, "As-salamu alaykum. Peace be upon you, and peace be upon all of us." (from Democracy Now, 3/21/19)

"Everytown" is a movement of Americans working together to end gun violence and build safer communities. Gun violence touches every town in America. For too long, change has been thwarted by the Washington gun lobby and by leaders who refuse to take common-sense steps that will save lives. But something is changing. More than 5 million mayors, moms, cops, teachers, survivors, gun owners, students and everyday Americans have come together to make their own communities safer. Together, we are fighting for the changes that we know will save lives. Everytown starts with you, and it starts in your town."

Article #7: From Food and Water Watch website

"Safe water is non-negotiable. Access to affordable (water) service is non-negotiable. Clean drinking water is a human right, and people should not have to worry about whether their water is safe to drink. We need dedicated funding to keep our water systems up-to-date and affordable, protecting our drinking water for generations to come. Senator Bernie Sanders and Representatives Brenda Lawrence (MI) and Ro Khanna (CA) introduced legislation that will help fix our aging water systems and ensure that every person has access to safe and clean water."

"I'm 26, so my peers and I have only known a dysfunctional Congress that forced multiple government shutdowns and whose members cared more about their billionaire donors than the people in their districts. During my time as an organizer, I've operated under the assumption that ambitious federal legislation was necessary to address social, racial, environmental, and economic injustice, but that it would be nearly impossible to actually pass and implement. My colleagues at Food & Water Watch have helped introduce legislation like the "Off Fossil Fuels Act" and the "WATER Act," both visionary bills that would move our country to 100% clean energy and invest billions in critical water infrastructure improvements." (FWW website)

WRITING CONTEST RULES

Authors will be in two age groups: 12-15 and 16-18. All essays must be written by computer, but contact us ASAP if computer access is an issue. Minimum 400 and maximum 500 words. We will be partially guided by CA English Language Arts Standards for Writing, but very strong content is essential. Students from any school district may enter the contest. Please review these standards with your teachers and parents, who may guide you in this contest as well. All writers must submit signed Application-Release form, co-signed by a teacher & one parent, giving permission for FCNV to read & print your essay, in the event that you're a winner or runner-up. Your application-release forms must be mailed April 1-25 via U.S. mail or dropped off at FCNV, 1584 N. Van Ness Ave., Fresno, CA 93728. **Application period: April**

1-30, 2019. Mail to FCNV. Extremely-late date: April 30. Mail the application by April 25, to be sure!

CONTEST AWARDS: The FCNV will present Award Certificates and unique FCNV prizes to the top 3 writers in each of the two categories. There will be six winners total in 2019. And each writer will receive an “honorable mention/participation” certificate, which could be useful later for job & college applications. Top winners will also receive a monetary award — amount to be determined.

WRITING PROMPT: Each essay must address prompt, guided by writing rubrics similar to those you use in school. your writing classes and other classes (social studies, government, literature, science, etc.)

Background readings. After reading and thinking about all the articles, please address the prompt question below. Take time to discover **your own** ideas & feelings, supporting details, organization, grammar, and vocabulary. Allow enough time to chat with others about nonviolence, and invite your teachers and others who are interested in nonviolence to brainstorm with you. However, in the end, all writing must be completely your own. We are looking for essays that are clear, coherent, focused, organized, and unified. Your own voice, your ideas, your style will be evident and shine through.

Prompt Question: If someone proposed that Fresno be “A Nonviolent City,” what would this mean to you? What would it look like? Describe and support with clear, powerful, and engaging prose, what vision you have for a “Non-Violent Fresno.” Imagine you are talking to the people of Fresno, including the Mayor, City Council, children, friends, parents, government, and business, and that you need to explain to them what Fresno should be like, if we want Fresno to be called a “Nonviolent City.”

Guidelines. Although you may consult the internet for ideas, be careful that your essay is 100% your own creation. We do not want you to rehash another person’s ideas. It must be totally original in order to be read by the Essay Contest Reader Committee. For your benefit, we will give each writer a short note explaining the score we give it. We encourage you to seek the advice of your teachers and writers, and the advice of those who care about Fresno becoming a non-violent city.

Thanks for your interest in the “Richard Stone Essay Contest for Diverse Youth Voices,” sponsored by the Fresno Center for Nonviolence. We look forward to receiving your essay by the deadline posted. Remember: *“It’s often said that writers learn best from reading widely and writing every day.”* ([the reviewreview.net](http://the-reviewreview.net))

Essay deadline: June 3-6, no later than June 6, 2019, 2:00 p.m. at FCNV, SE corner of McKinley & N. Van Ness, across from Fresno City College. E-mail essay as WORD doc to Beti: e.a.leone@zoho.com & also U.S. mail a typed “hard copy” (paper) to FCNV at address above. Your Application+Release form must be completed, signed, and mailed in by April 30, 2019, sent by U.S. mail to FCNV or dropped off.

Format. All essays must follow this format: 1) typed by computer, in black ink, with at least 1-inch margins on all sides; 2) title centered on top of page one, page numbers in upper right, but no name on essay pages; 3) 400 words min., 500 words max; 4) blank cover page with name & title only; 5) 12-point type size, Helvetica or Arial. Application-Release form must be signed by all persons listed on the form.