

ABENY, INC.
ASSOCIATION OF BLACK EDUCATORS OF NEW YORK
Nora Barnes, President
Dr. Sheilah Bobo, Education Chair

The Association of Black Educators of New York
Black History Month Essay Contest 2019

Topic: “African-American Activists in the Struggle for Social Justice and Equity.”

Throughout American history, schools have served not only as vehicles for the transmission of academic knowledge, but also, as places where youth can learn about the society in which they are growing up, how they might engage in society productively, and how they can fight for change when change is warranted. The fight for social justice and equity for all has been a well- documented struggle in our country, and is a challenge, even today. In the goal of helping students continually re-imagine the kind of society they would like to live in, the 2019 ABENY Black History Month Essay topic is: **“African- American Activists in the Struggle for Social Justice and Equity.”** Students are asked to research an African-American activist who overcame great odds in order to advance a more just and equitable society for all ethnic groups. Select a person of African–American ancestry, research this person, and tell his/her story. Some examples are, as follows:

18th/19th Century: Octavius Catto, Norris Wright Cuney, Frederick Douglass, Mary and Emily Edmonson, Ida B. Wells, Harriet Forten Purvis.

20th Century: Ralph Abernathy, Malcolm X, Dr. Martin Luther King, Marcus Garvey, Dorothy Height, Angela Davis, Huey P. Newton.

There have also been many African-American entertainers who fought for social justice and equity, including Lena Horne, Ruby Dee, Ossie Davis, Harry Belafonte, and Josephine Baker.

Several helpful websites to begin search/research are below:

- <https://www.thefamouspeople.com/civil-rights-activists.php>
- <https://theundefeated.com/features/the-undefeated-44-most-influential-black-americans-in-history/>
- <https://www.globalcitizen.org/en/content/9-black-activists-who-are-fighting-injustice-and-f/>
- https://www.loc.gov/rr/print/list/083_afr.html (list of activists - additional research required)
- <http://www.crf-usa.org/black-history-month/75-remarkable-african-americans> (list of activists - additional research required)

Be sure to include in your essay:

- Important facts about the person’s early life and influences.
- Significant achievements of this individual in the fight for social justice and equity.
- What you have learned from doing the research on this topic.
- How reading about this topic has influenced you.
- A list of references.

Guidelines: Students in the NYC Public Schools are invited to participate, as follows:

- Students in Grades 2 and 3 should write 300 words or more.
- Students in Grades 4 and 5 should write 350 words or more.
- Students in grades 6, 7 and 8 should write 400 words or more.
- Students in Grades 9 and 10 should write 500 words or more.

Essays will be judged based on the following criteria:

accuracy of content, presentation, originality, neatness, quality of research, adherence to topic, proper use of language conventions, proper use of punctuation and grammar. (See the attached rubric).

In addition, all entries must:

be typed or neatly written using dark blue or black ink on 8 ½ x 11 paper with margins; have a cover sheet that includes: the title or topic of the essay, school, district, borough, student's first and last name, grade, class; the teacher's first and last name and email address, the principal's first and last name and email address, and parent's full name, home address, and email address.

Important: Provide citations of references. A bibliography must be included. Essays which do not include references will not be considered. Essays written in pencil will not be considered.

Only three (3) entries per school will be accepted. Entries will not be returned.

DEADLINE:

All entries must be postmarked by Friday, January 4, 2019.

PRIZES:

- Each winner will receive a certificate of achievement and a \$50 Barnes and Noble gift card at the ABENY "Bridge from Africa" ceremony during Black History Month, Saturday, February 2, 2019, at the Brooklyn Historical Society, 128 Pierrepont Street, Brooklyn, NY 11201.
- Principals or their designees will be notified by email of the winners.

If there are questions, contact Dr. Sheilah Bobo at sheilahbobo@gmail.com, sbobo@schools.nyc.gov, or call her at 917-412-9099.

Please mail essay entries to:

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