



Cornell University

Cornell Club of Greater Buffalo Book Prize

2009-2010

The competition is open to all eleventh grade high school students in the greater Buffalo area. The Cornell Club believes that participation in this contest will aid students in the development of their critical thinking and writing skills. Development of these skills is vital to the maturity of a well-rounded life-long learner and will make one a much more attractive applicant during the college admissions process.

The Grand Prize will consist of \$100, a certificate, a letter of award and a limited edition copy of Cornell University's Reading Initiative book of the year, "The Grapes of Wrath" by John Steinbeck and. Each Second Prize and Honorable Mention prize will consist of: a certificate, a letter of award and a limited edition copy of the "Grapes of Wrath." There will be one first prize awarded, and as many second prizes honorable mentions as the Club sees fit.

The Cornell Club of Greater Buffalo offers the prize; winning or placing favorably in the essay contest in no way implies a favorable admission decision by Cornell University.

Background

One of the most important skills that you will continue to develop during the balance of your high school years and in college is the ability to thoughtfully evaluate opposing viewpoints - in other words, to think critically. This skill is important not only for students and scholars, but also for nearly every occupation you might choose, as well as for your personal growth and maturity.

The Rules:

1. The contest is open to any High School Junior at any public or private High School as well as home-schooled students in their penultimate year of schooling in the Western New York or Southern Ontario region.
2. Answer the prompt below as completely as you can in 1000 words or fewer.
3. There are no limits to the range of your response, but it should give a picture of your personality and beliefs, and should imaginatively include your own life experiences including, but not necessarily limited to: reading, school, travel, work, personal successes, personal failures, sense of humor, current events, family history, etc.
4. If you refer to another author's work in a manner that would require citation, you may include footnotes or end-notes in any commonly accepted format. These citations will not count toward your 1000 word limit.
5. Finally, on the last page of the document include:
 - a. Your name
 - b. Your parents' or guardians' names
 - c. Your home address, telephone number, and e-mail address where we may contact you
 - d. The name of your school
 - e. The name of your English teacher with his/her school phone number
6. Please **do not** include any identifying information (your name, your teacher's name, etc.) on any page other than the last page.
7. All entries must be in Microsoft Word format or text format.
8. Submit your essay as a **single email attachment** to the following email address: c.sasiadek@gmail.com with the subject line "Cornell Club Essay Competition."
9. *All entries must be e-marked no later than **April 1st, 2010.***

PROMPT:

There are some who argue that the purpose of higher education is to train individuals in immediately practical skills with an eye toward fulfilling the perceived needs of society and the economy-- by training students in fields such as agriculture, medicine and engineering. There are others who argue that the purpose of higher education is to develop general learning skills and to develop human knowledge, regardless of its immediate impact. They believe that fields such as art, philosophy and the classics are more important than practical fields of study.

What is your opinion regarding these two educational philosophies?