

Rotary

District 7390



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Four-Way Test Essay Contest

2026-27

Essay Submission Deadline: March 13, 2027

Rotary's Four Way Test - How it Can Impact Your Everyday Life

What Are We Looking For?

Rotarians across the world apply the “Four-Way Test” to their professional and personal relationships by asking themselves the following:

Of the Things we think, say, or do:

Is it the truth?

Is it fair to all concerned?

Will it build good will and better friendships?

Will it be beneficial to all concerned?

In 1932, Herbert Taylor, a Rotarian from Chicago, penned the Four – Way Test as a guiding principle in his efforts to rescue a near-bankrupt aluminum company from complete financial collapse. He succeeded in his task and ever since that time Rotarians across the world have adopted Mr. Taylor’s Four Way Test as one of Rotary’s core values.

While 9th graders may not be confronted with rescuing a failing business, we are interested in reading an essay about how the 4-Way Test can impact challenges and situations they may face in their everyday life.

HISTORY

The Four-Way Test Essay contest in District 7390 was initiated in 2006-07 by the Rotary Club of Mechanicsburg-North in the 9th grade at Cumberland Valley High School. The winner of their 2007-08 contest presented her essay at the District Conference and was well received.

The 2008-09 District Governor challenged other Clubs to have contests in their local schools and agreed that if multiple Clubs did have contests, he would have their winners vie for District honors and prizes. While only 3 clubs participated in 2009, the number has increased since then. The first place winner presents their essay at the District Conference.

ADMINISTRATIVE INSTRUCTIONS

Eligibility: Ninth Grade Students.

Format: The essay should be submitted in .pdf format and suitable for printing on 8.5 x 11.0 paper. The text should be double spaced in 12-point font (Arial or Times New Roman are preferred). Do not insert identifying information such as a name or school on any sheet except the cover sheet. Do not insert graphics.

Essay Length: The entire essay with title MUST NOT exceed 1500 words in length.

Original Work: The essay must be the original work of the student submitting the essay for competition. Team writing, parental participation, and the use of works written by other sources, even if properly cited, is not authorized. Participating students are required to sign a pledge on the included Cover Sheet stating that the essay is their original work.

Cover Sheet: A cover sheet must be attached to each essay. See the attached format for the Cover Sheet.

Club's Winning Essay Submission(s) Instructions: Rotary Clubs will e-mail their winning essay in Word or .pdf format to the District Office – office@rotary7390.org which should include the fully completed and student signed "Rotary Four-Way Test Essay Cover Sheet." *Club chairs without e-mail capability should mail their winning essay and cover sheet to the district office. If clubs typically sponsor students from more than one school, an essay from each will be accepted.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE ROTARY CLUB

1. Agree to sponsor the contest.
2. Identify and communicate with a point of contact in the public and private schools in your geographic service area. Also consider home-schooled students or students at cyber-schools.
3. Appoint a committee to evaluate the best essays submitted from the students to your club. Consider either having the schools submit the essays to you through a contact teacher or have the students submit their essays directly to you.
4. Select the Club winner(s) and submit the winning essay(s) from each school that has submitted essays to the District office by March 13, 2027. ***Only one entry per Club will be accepted, but if a Club sponsors more than one school, only one entry per school will be accepted***
5. Recognize your winner(s), parent(s) and teacher(s) with award certificates/prizes at the discretion of your Club.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE ROTARY DISTRICT

1. Appoint a committee to evaluate the winning essays submitted by the Clubs and select the District winners.
2. Invite the winner, their parents, and teachers to the District Conference where he or she will read their essay.
3. Display the winning essays on the District website.
4. Provide monetary awards: First Place - \$500, Second Place - \$300, Third Place - \$100 and a district citation to the three winners.

CRITICAL DATES AND SUGGESTED ACTIONS

Below is a suggested calendar for you to use in the conduct of your contest. The dates and times **in bold** are critical dates that must be adhered to. The remainder are suggested time deadlines but your club can

exercise discretion in how it conducts its contest and chooses its winner that is submitted to the district contest.

Late Summer/ Early Fall 2026: Organize your Club's contest. Set deadlines, recruit a judging panel and introduce the Contest to the schools (public, private, and home-schools). Find a point of contact at the school who will work with you to introduce the contest to ninth graders. Principals, Guidance Counselors and contacts in the Ninth Grade English Department are suggested resources.

Late January – Early February 2027: Set a deadline at some time during this time period for student submission of essays to your Club.

February 2026- Pick a date (preferably prior to March 13, 2027) to honor your Club's winning essay writer(s), his or her parents and teacher.

*Be sure to space the deadline for essay submissions and the Club meeting to give yourself, and your judging panel, sufficient time to evaluate the essays and notify the winner(s).

*** March 13, 2027 Last date for essays to be submitted to the District Office.**

Late March 2026 District Four-Way Test Committee announces and notifies Contest Winners.

*** April 17, 2027 at the District Conference (DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel in Reading- 701 Penn Street, Reading, PA 19601) – Winner will be invited to read his/her essay at the morning session..**

CONTEST EVALUATION GUIDE

Functional Area Score Highlights of the Functional Area

FOCUS 20% - How the author displayed awareness and understanding of the purpose

CONTENT DEVELOPMENT 20%- How the student displays the story consistent with their focus.

ORGANIZATION 20% How well the author presents a skillful pattern on the narrative key points.

STYLE 20% How well the student controls language/literary devices/sentence structure.

SUBJECTIVE ASSESSMENT 20% Evaluator's overall assessment of the essay.

TOTAL: 100%



Rotary Four-Way Test Essay Cover Sheet

(This sheet should be attached to every essay submitted)

Rotary's Four Way Test - How it Can Impact Your Everyday Life

Student's Name _____

Student's Teacher _____

_____ Student's
School _____ Local

Rotary Club Sponsor _____

Student's Home Mailing Address _____

Authorized E-mail (may be student or parent/guardian) _____

Student's Home Telephone

Number _____

I declare that this essay is my own original work and its ideas are mine and mine alone. I understand the Rotary Club of _____ and Rotary District 7390 may publish this essay in whole or in part and I consent to their so doing. I further release the use of my image and name in any publicity and marketing materials relating to this contest which are developed and published by the Rotary Club or District 7390.

There are _____ words in this essay.

Student Name (print)

Student Signature

Date

Parent/Guardian Name (print)

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

ESSAY CONTEST EVALUATION WORKSHEET

Student's Name: _____

Evaluation Score (maximum of 20 points per element):

FOCUS: _____

CONTENT DEVELOPMENT: _____

ORGANIZATION: _____

STYLE: _____

EVALUATOR'S ASSESSMENT: _____

TOTAL: _____

ESSAY CONTESTANTS FINAL TABULATIONS

Student's Name Evaluation Scores & Rank

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____
11. _____
12. _____

For Immediate Release

Rotary Club of _____

Contact _____

Telephone _____

E-mail _____

SAMPLE PRESS RELEASE

The Rotary Club of _____ is pleased to announce the winners of its annual Four-Way Test essay contest for ninth grade students. The Four-Way Test is a set of four questions that Rotarians use to assist in the conduct of their personal and professional lives. The questions are: "Is it the truth? Is it fair to all concerned? Will it build good will and better friendships? Will it be beneficial to all concerned?" The theme of this year's contest was "***Rotary's Four Way Test - How it Can Impact Your Everyday Life.***"

The Club recognized three students from _____ High School who were recognized and presented with monetary awards of _____, _____ and _____.

The winners are: 1st place – List Name

2nd place – List Name

3rd place – List Name

With 1.2 million members in more than 200 countries and geographic areas, Rotary International and the Rotary Foundation support local and international projects that help people in need and promote understanding among cultures. For more information about the Rotary Club of _____, and to read the winning essays, visit www.rotary7390.org.

Suggested Photo Caption:

The Rotary Club of _____ awarded prizes to the winners of the Four Way Test Essay contest and recognized their teachers. From left to right: _____