



Student Guide

What do I have to write about?

Students in grades 4–8 write an essay about the following topic: *Reality shows have become commonplace on television. There is not a channel out there which does not feature a reality show. As with other programs, reality shows can either create prejudice and reinforce stereotypes towards people based solely on their race, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, body image, gender, or disability or can potentially serve to open our minds and hearts to others. There are many so-called reality TV shows now on the air throughout the world such as Big Brother, Survivor, The Real World, Big World, Little People, John and Kate Plus 8, The Mole, The World's Biggest Loser, American Idol, Dancing with the Stars, Project Runway, and many others.*

Write an essay addressing the following questions: *What is your opinion about these shows? Do they portray reality and/or do they perpetuate stereotypes? Which show changed your mind or can serve to change other people's minds, either positively or negatively, about a specific group of people? Would you recommend that others see this show? Why or why not? Please include the title of the show and give concrete examples to illustrate your opinion. Essays must not exceed 750 words, and must be typed or neatly written, clearly organized and answer all parts of the question.*

Students in grades 9–12 write an essay about the following topic: *The media are composed of many different parts: movies, television, radio, newspapers, the Internet and magazines. All of these media elements can serve to influence and give voice on a wide variety of issues to a wide range of people.*

Write an essay addressing the following questions: *As young people mature and are required to make tough decisions, sometimes those decisions include matters involving race, gender, religion, and sexual orientation. Do you think that the media focuses enough attention on giving young people a voice on the issues of prejudice and discrimination which confront them? What medium do you think might best provide a platform for the challenges that young people face on matters of race, gender, religion and sexual orientation? For your essay, please create a program that addresses one of these challenges. What issue have you chosen? What would the program's goals be? Why do you believe the media platform you've chosen is the most effective one? Essays must not exceed 1000 words, and must be typed or neatly written, clearly organized and answer all parts of the question.*

What should I include on the cover page?

- Your full name, address and telephone number (students are asked not to include any identifying information on the pages of the essay itself)
- Name, address and phone number of your school
- Name of your teacher and grade level

Where should I send my completed work?

Essays should be sent to:
College of Letters and Science
University of Wisconsin Oshkosh
Dean's Office, Attn: Karen Bowen
800 Algoma Blvd.
Oshkosh, WI 54901

When is the deadline for sending my essay?

All essays must be received by **December 12, 2008** (Early submissions are encouraged.)

For more information call: 424-0928 or send an e-mail message (bowen@uwosh.edu)

