



Utah's Chapter of the National Association of Multicultural Education

2020 Student Essay Contest

For all students in Grades 6th-12th

**Conference Theme: Reclaiming our Voices through
Counterstories: We Shall Overcome**

“Stories matter. Many stories matter. Stories have been used to dispossess and to malign, but stories can also be used to empower and to humanize. Stories can break the dignity of a people, but stories can also repair that broken dignity.”

-Chimamanda Adichie

We all have stories that illustrate our lives. Some stories are given to us as a gift. Some stories are forced upon us. The author, Chimamanda Adichie, talks about the “danger of a single story,” the single, one-sided, stories one that limit people to just one view of themselves or another. This commonly leads to stereotyping; it never leads to hearing or learning the whole truth about a person or a people.

Please write a personal essay (500 words or fewer) in response to the following prompt:

In your experience, is there a single story that people sometimes assume about you? These single stories are often related to ethnic, racial, or sexual identity. What stories would you add? What stories would help people get to know the real you?

- ❖ To understand this prompt, and what the sponsors are looking for, we *strongly recommend* that you listen to Chimamanda Adichie’s ideas about the stories that define us in her engaging TED talk [Danger of a Single Story](https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_ngozi_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story).
https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_ngozi_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story

*If you are having difficulty viewing the video;contact us and we will assist you.

The additional questions below may be helpful in preparing your essay:

- *How can “single stories” be dangerous?*
- *What is the relationship between “single stories” and stereotypes?*
- *How do stories impact understanding of ourselves and others?*
- *How do “single stories” impact the choices we make?*
- *How can we challenge and change the “single stories” that are placed on us?*
- *Have you been represented in the stories you encounter in school textbooks? Historically, it has been common to see the stories of Europeans and White Americans dominate textbooks, mentioning other groups in a single story, if at all. How has this been a factor in your education?*

Essays should be no more than 500 words and should be double-spaced. They may be written in the language of your choice and must be submitted via email (along with the attached entry form) to utahnameessaycontest@gmail.com(with NAME Essay Contest in subject line) by:

5:00 pm on Thursday, January 31, 2020

Scoring

Personal Essays will be scored on a point scale of 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest) on how well the essay addresses the following criteria:

- Theme/Essay prompt
- Clarity
- Voice/authenticity

Student/Teacher Checklist

- Does the personal essay provide a clear description/discussion related to the conference theme and essay prompt question(s)?
- Is the personal essay double-spaced and no longer than 500 words?
- Is the entry form (below) attached to the personal essay?

Notification

Personal Essay Winners will be notified by **February 13th**. Notification will also be sent to school principal and parent/guardian listed on the entry form.

Award/Recognition Personal Essay Winners will receive a modest cash scholarship and be honored at the 2019 Utah NAME Conference Awards Luncheon on **Saturday, February 22, 2020** at Utah Valley University in Orem, UT.

- \$100 Scholarship awarded to Middle/Jr. High Winners
- \$500 Scholarship awarded to High School Winners

Sponsored by The Utah Chapter of the National Association for Multicultural Education
www.utahname.org.

Personal Essay Cover Sheet

Student name (first, last):

Student email:

Grade: _____ School: _____

Are you submitting this essay as part of a class assignment? If yes, list the name of your teacher and class:

Parent/Guardian name (first, last):

Parent/Guardian phone number:

Parent/Guardian email:

Principal name:

Principal email:
