

2025-26 STOSSEL IN THE CLASSROOM ESSAY CONTEST RUBRIC

1. Thesis or Introduction

20 Points – Excellent – Directly addresses the prompt or question; clear and coherent; focused; includes counter-claim.

15 Points – Good – Directly addresses the prompt or question; clear and coherent, but could have been better focused or missing counter-claim.

10 Points – Satisfactory – Does not directly address the prompt or question; or minimally acceptable, simplistic, and ignores counter-claim.

5 Points – Unsatisfactory – Does not directly address the prompt or question and is weak, unclear, or unfocused.

0 Points – Missing – Not evident or non-existent.

2. Well-Written

20 Points – Excellent use of grammar and syntax such as word order, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling; well-constructed, clear and concise sentences; logically organized and focused paragraphs.

15 Points – Good use of grammar and syntax such as word order, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling; mostly well-constructed, clear and concise sentences; mostly logically organized and focused paragraphs.

10 Points – Satisfactory use of grammar and syntax such as word order, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling; or sentences are not well-constructed, clear or concise; or paragraphs aren't logically organized or focused.

5 Points – Unsatisfactory/poor use of grammar and syntax such as word order, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling; and poorly written sentences; and unorganized and unfocused paragraphs.

3. Originality & Creativity

20 Points – Excellent – Original, interesting and very engaging; creative and/or novel presentation of topic.

15 Points – Good – Fairly interesting and engaging; shows some originality and creativity in presentation of topic.

10 Points – Satisfactory – Ordinary/routine presentation.

5 Points – Unsatisfactory – Uninteresting.

4. Research & Factual Accuracy

20 Points – Excellent – Includes thorough and relevant research that is cited and which supports the thesis; all facts are accurate.

15 Points – Good – Includes some cited and relevant research that supports the thesis; all major facts are accurate.

10 Points – Satisfactory – Includes little research, or the research is not cited; and insufficient research to support the thesis; most facts are accurate.

5 Points – Unsatisfactory – Insufficient research and/or includes significant factual errors.

0 Points – Includes no research or relies on assertion rather than research.

5. Depth of Understanding

20 Points – Excellent – fully addresses prompt or question; demonstrates in-depth knowledge of the topic; conclusion aligns with thesis.

15 Points – Good – directly addresses prompt or question; demonstrates substantial knowledge of the topic; conclusion aligns with thesis.

10 Points – Satisfactory – addresses prompt; goes beyond a superficial explanation; conclusion indirectly aligns with thesis.

5 Points – Unsatisfactory – does not address prompt or question; demonstrates only a superficial understanding of the topic.

0 Points – demonstrates a complete lack of understanding of the topic.