

Genesee Academy and Flint Islamic Center  
proudly present the 10<sup>th</sup> Annual

# Michigan Sira Conference

*“And we have sent you (O Prophet ﷺ) not but as a Mercy to the worlds.” (Quran 21:107)*



**TOPICS AND GUIDEBOOK**

[SIRA.GAFLINT.ORG](http://SIRA.GAFLINT.ORG)

Assalamu Alaykum,

It is our pleasure to invite you to the 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Michigan Sira Conference. Due to the increased number of presentations and event categories the conference will be split into two days. The conference dates are: January 10<sup>th</sup> and February 7<sup>th</sup>. The entire community is invited to participate in both events.

***In Love of the Prophet (pbuh)***

**Saturday – January 10, 2015**

**Art & Poetry**

**Quiz Bowl**

**Nasheeds**

***Sira Competition***

**Saturday – February 7, 2015**

**Sira Papers &**

**Presentations**

**Award Ceremony**

**Deadline for Art & Poetry:**

**Friday, January 2, 2015**

**Deadline for 6<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> Grade:**

**Friday, January 2, 2015**

**Deadline for High School Papers:**

**Friday, January 9, 2015**

**Deadline for College Abstracts:**

**Friday, January 9, 2015**

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**All submissions (except Art) should be emailed to:**

**[sira@gaflint.org](mailto:sira@gaflint.org)**

Sira Committee  
Flint Islamic Center  
Genesee Academy

## SIRA COMPETITION TOPICS

### MIDDLE SCHOOL

**6<sup>th</sup> Grade** – Mercy for the Universe (pbuh) (Quran 21:107)

- What inspires you most about the character of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh)?
- You may chose or several character traits which you find most impressive about the beloved Prophet (pbuh).
- How can you adopt these characteristics in your life?

**8<sup>th</sup> Grade** - Hijra and Nusra - Choose from: Experience of the Muhajireen or Experience of the Ansar.

Muhajireen –

- Expressions of love by Ali and Abu Bakr
- Allah’s protection of the Prophet (pbuh)
- Sacrifices made by the Muhajireen.

Ansar

- Welcoming of the Prophet (pbuh) in Madina
- Establishing Brotherhood

### HIGHSCHOOL

**9/10<sup>th</sup> Grade** - Prophetic Way of dealing with Adversity and Tribulations

- The beloved Messenger encountered much difficulty in his life spreading the message of Allah. He was an orphan, lost his mother at a young age, he was mocked by the people of Mecca, he was abused by the people of Taif, and he lost close family members. Yet despite this he kept pursuing his goals in a deliberate and principled manner. Allah describes him as of “tremendous character.” (Quran 68:4). How did maintain such beautiful character in the face of such oppression?

**11/12<sup>th</sup> Grade** - Remaining Hopeful - Keeping Trust in Allah.

- The Prophet (pbuh) never lost trust in Allah. During the migration, during the battles with the Meccans and on other occasions – victory for the believers was not clear. Yet he was firm in his conviction that Allah, and not his enemies, are in charge. How did he (saw) manage to plan for his mission in this world, yet keep trust in Allah?

## PAPER GUIDELINES

**Purpose:** The underlying goal is to inspire the reader to love, revere and follow the Messenger of Allah (SAW).

**Submission:** Paper must be submitted via email to: [sira@gafint.org](mailto:sira@gafint.org)

**Deadline:** see above for deadlines

### Paper Format:

1. Title page includes: title of essay, student name, **student ID number**, grade level, and email/phone. (**NOTE:** Student's name should appear on the title page *only*)
2. Title of essay should be included both on the title page and on the first page of the paper.
3. Running Header: Your **student ID number** followed by the page number
4. Paper length – not including the title page and works cited:
  - a. 6<sup>th</sup>- 8<sup>th</sup> Grade: 4-6 pages
  - b. High School & College: 5-7 pages
5. One inch margins
6. 12 point font (Times New Roman)
7. Double spaced; no extra space between paragraphs

### Content / Organization of paper:

1. Introductory Paragraph is clear and contains a well-built thesis statement or claim
  - **Thesis Statement:** Statement(s) found in the end of introduction that clearly present your central argument and main points
2. At least three *main* reasons / examples to support your original thesis

3. Use supporting Arguments, Examples, Stories, Hadith, Quran, Scholarly views etc.
4. Address the question: How would you apply the lessons learned to our daily life?
5. All ideas relate to the essay's topic and thesis

### Sources:

1. **Four** sources minimum.
2. Works cited or references page
3. All the sources are appropriate and credible
4. Use of in-text citation
5. All sources on works cited are referenced in text of paper; and all sources cited within paper are on the works cited.

### Plagiarism is absolutely forbidden. The following constitute as plagiarism:

1. There are no internal citations within the paper (in-text citations).
2. Student has copied entire paper from an outside source and submits it as his/her own work.
3. Student has cut and pasted from several works and called the product his/her own work.
4. Student has faked citations.
5. The student has rearranged the author's original words (this is not paraphrasing because the student did not put the original words in his or her own words—just merely rearranged them)
6. Failing to put quotation marks around directly quoted material.
7. Placing quotation marks around directly quoted material and ending the quotation prematurely. (Continuing to copy from the source word for word without putting the rest of the quote in quotation marks.)
8. Sources on the Works Cited page are not used within the paper
9. Sources used within the paper are not on the Works Cited page

### PAPERS WILL BE GRADED IN THE FOLLOWING CATEGORIES:

**Thesis  
Critical Thinking  
Topic Development**

**Research Integration  
Organization & Coherence  
Fluency**

**Citation  
Mechanics & Grammar**

## CLASSICAL ESSAY STRUCTURE

### INTRODUCTION

1. Begin with an attention-getting strategy  
ex. Hadith, anecdote, question(s), startling facts or statistics
2. Identify the focus/purpose of your essay
3. Lead into a clear, focused **thesis statement\***
4. Your introduction should also include a background section in which you orient the reader, place your argument in context, and provide any necessary information that is relevant to your argument. You may decide to include this information in a paragraph(s) following your thesis.

\*In your paper, you are assuming a position in response to your specific question/issue and you will be supporting this position with subarguments and supporting points. A **thesis statement** is a complete sentence that clearly and briefly states your position and the *argument/claim* you will be making in your essay.

### BODY

The purpose of your essay's body is to persuade your audience of the claim that was made in your thesis.

1. Focus on about 3 main points to support your claim.
  - a. Your thesis will briefly introduce these points.
2. Develop each point separately (in one or more paragraphs)
  - a. Each paragraph has a main focus
  - b. The discussion and development of *each* main point must be introduced with a topic sentence.
    - Begin with a **topic sentence** that clearly identifies your main point and its connection to your thesis.
  - c. Provide the evidence to prove this main point. Appropriate evidence includes specific details, examples, subarguments, facts, statistics, quotations, etc.
  - d. Make use of *transitions* to create necessary links between ideas and supporting points.

### Reflections

Your reflections are a key element of your argument. These reflections include:

1. Application to personal life
2. Application to our society and/or community today
3. Implications
4. General and specific insights

This portion of the essay should be included where you think it would be most appropriate and most effective in terms of your argument. You may include paragraph(s) that are entirely devoted to these types of reflections after your introduction and thesis and/or before your conclusion.

However, your reflections *should* be integrated throughout your paper with each particular supporting point.

### Counterargument

Address a counter-argument to the thesis:

1. Identify the main points of the opposing view
2. Refute, answer, or respond to one or two major objections to your point of view.
3. This portion of the essay may appear directly after the introduction and thesis or directly before the conclusion. It may be appropriate to include counterarguments throughout the essay as they relate to each particular supporting paragraph.
4. This section may not be applicable to all topics and questions. However, high school and college students *are* expected to incorporate aspects of this into their essays.

### CONCLUSION

The concluding paragraph ties the argument together

1. Restate your thesis, summarize your argument and supporting ideas
2. What is the significance of your argument?
3. Identify wider implications and/or future directions.

**po·et·ry/ 'pōətrē/**

Literary work in which special intensity is given to the expression of feelings and ideas by the use of distinctive style and rhythm; A quality of beauty and intensity of emotion are regarded as characteristic of poems.

The poetry category will contain some structure guidelines this year. Please note the changes:

Islam has a rich tradition, wealth and culture of poetry. The noble prophet Muhammad, prayers and peace be upon him, honored the great tradition of poetry writing enlisting poet ambassadors in the spread of the message of Allah. He utilized all the tools and spoke to his contemporaries in the language they understood and with which they were most comfortable and familiar. One of the avenues he chose was poetry. Poetry is still an important and valued part of our modern culture, and in light of this, students may choose to write about any of the following topics but must limit themselves to only these topics and forms:

**Forms:**

Sestina
Sonnet
Haiku (a collection of 3, 5 or 7)
Ghazal
Ballad
Pantoum
Sapphic

**Topics:**

The Sira as a timeline – looked at from a historical perspective (from the birth of the Prophet through his time in Mecca, the battles, Madina, etc)
An exploration of a story of an exchange between a someone and the Prophet.
An expounding on a story of the Prophet in how he dealt with a difficult situation.
Paint a poetic picture of the Prophet, his physical and his nonphysical characteristics.
Alternatively, students may choose to use any of the questions and topics in their age category.

One further option is a writing exercise called **Five Easy Pieces:** (adapted from Richard Jackson)

About the Prophet:

1. Describe his hands.
2. Describe something he is doing with his hands.
3. Use a metaphor to say something about the place he is.
4. Mention what you would want to ask him in the context of 2 and 3.
5. He looks up or toward you.

## **SIRA ART EXHIBITION**

The Michigan Sira Conference invites you to participate in its first Sira Art Exhibition  
The theme this year is the beloved city of ***Madina Al-Munawarra***

**Due Date: January 2, 2015**

*For questions or more information email: [sira@gafllint.org](mailto:sira@gafllint.org)*

### **ELEMENTARY - COLORING CONTEST**

Children between the ages of 2-5, 6-10 will be given a picture of Madina. They will be asked to color and submit. The submission will be displayed and the best picture will receive a prize.

### **MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL – ART CONTEST**

Participants are asked to create a painting or drawing that represents their love of Madina. Submissions will be displayed and one will be chosen and used as the invitation for next year's Michigan Sira Conference.

### **ART EXHIBITION- ALL AGES**

Participants are asked to submit a piece of artwork that expresses their love for the city of Madina.  
This can be done in various ways:

1. Submission of a picture of Madina – many have traveled to Madina, we would like you to share a few of your pictures to be displayed.
2. A painting or sketch of Madina.
3. You may have a painting or picture in your house that you would like to display.
4. A creation of your own: t-shirt, mug creation, book cover, bumper sticker, button, story book, album cover or a creation of your own.

## College Conference: CALL FOR PAPERS

### Creating an American Muslim Identity: From Madina to Michigan

February 7, 2014 – Flint Islamic Center | Michigan Sira Conference

Muslims have become part of the fabric of American society, yet we are often defined by others and identified with foreign cultures. As the Islamic community in America grows it will inevitably develop its own character and traditions, which will be unique to its local environment. Muslims in America must appreciate the history and context of their presence in America. American Muslims have an important role to play in giving back to this country.

We invite you to submit to abstracts for presentation at this conference. The theme should be interpreted broadly.

#### Topics can include:

- Ideas for Muslim engagement in American society such as political, charity, or educational work.
- Ideas for public service or community involvement projects.
- History of Islam in America
- History of Islam in other countries where Islam spread and flourished (e.g. Spain)
- Explore the connection between “Muslim American Identity” and “Islamic orthodoxy.”
- What does it mean to be an “American Muslim?”
- How can the character and life of the beloved Prophet (pbuh) guide American Muslims in creating their unique identity?

#### PROPOSAL SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Please submit a 250-word abstract (or project description) and author information to: [sira@gaflint.org](mailto:sira@gaflint.org) by the deadline of **January 9, 2015**. Those selected to present shall be notified no later than January 30, 2015.