

NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL ESSAY CONTEST



Now in its 22nd year, the American Foreign Service Association (AFSA)'s National High School Essay Contest encourages students to think about how and why the United States engages globally to build peace, and about the role that the Foreign Service plays in advancing U.S. national security and economic prosperity.

The U.S. Institute of Peace (USIP), a sponsor of the contest, has developed this short resource in partnership with AFSA to provide information to help students and teachers get started.

PRIZES: The winner will receive a \$2,500 cash prize, an all-expenses paid trip to Washington, D.C. to meet U.S. Department of State and USIP leadership, and a full-tuition paid voyage with Semester at Sea upon the student's enrollment at an accredited university. The runner-up will receive a \$1,250 cash prize and a full scholarship to participate in the International Diplomacy Program of the National Student Leadership Conference. Honorable mentions will receive a Certificate of Recognition from the sponsoring organizations.

2020 National High School Essay Contest Topic

How do members of the Foreign Service work with other civilian parts of the U.S. Government to promote peace, national security and economic prosperity?

Your essay should focus on a specific challenge to U.S. peace and prosperity and must include one example of the work of the Foreign Service and one or more examples of collaboration between America's diplomats and other civilian (i.e. non-military) U.S. Government agencies or organizations.

Useful Resources

Here are some core resources that might be helpful as you start your research.

- *Inside a U.S. Embassy: Diplomacy at Work:* This AFSA publication shows you what it is like to work in an embassy through profiles of actual FSOs and their experiences around the world.
- USIP.org: USIP's website is your go-to source for information on peacebuilding in practice, including real examples interagency cooperation and of conflict management programs around the world.
- *The Foreign Service Journal*: This journal covers foreign affairs from an insider's perspective, providing thought-provoking articles on international issues, the practice of diplomacy & the U.S. Foreign Service.
- Council on Foreign Relations Global Conflict Tracker: This interactive guide to ongoing conflicts of concern to the United States covers nearly thirty conflicts with background information.
- The MLA Style Center: Per the essay contest rules, your citations and bibliography should follow the MLA Style. The Modern Language Association's website has a quick guide to works cited, guidance on using notes, and samples papers using MLA Style.

2020 National High School Essay Contest Rules

Length: Your essay should be at least 1,000 words but should not exceed 1,250 words (word count does not apply to the list of sources). The word count must be included on the document you submit.

Content and Judging: Submissions will be judged on the quality of analysis, quality of research, and on form, style and mechanics. **Successful entries must answer all aspects of the prompt and demonstrate an understanding of the Foreign Service.** The top 5 essays from each U.S. region will advance to the final round of judging to determine the winner, runner-up, and honorable mentions. All decisions of the judges are final.

Sources: Standards of content and style from current edition of the MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers will be expected for (1) documentation of sources in the text of your memo; (2) the format of the list of works cited; and (3) margins and indentation. A bibliography following the MLA Handbook must be included. Essays should use a variety of sources—academic journals, news magazines, newspapers, books, government documents, publications from research organizations. At least three of the cited materials should be primary sources (a document, speech, or other sort of evidence written, created or otherwise produced during the time under study). Please note: general encyclopedias, including Wikipedia, are **not** acceptable as sources. Essays citing general encyclopedias in notes or bibliography **will be disqualified**. Websites should not be the only source of information for your essay; when you do use online sources, they must be properly cited.

Submission:

- Fill out the registration form. All fields on the online form are required, including uploading a Microsoft Word (.doc or .docx) file of your original work with a title, in English, which should include a comprehensive list of sources consulted. Entries must be typed, double-spaced, in 12-point Times New Roman or an equivalent font with a one-inch margin on all sides of the page.
- Teacher or Sponsor: Student registration forms must have a teacher or sponsor name. That person may review the submitted essay and act as the key contact between participants and AFSA. It is to the student's advantage to have a coordinator review the essay to make sure it is complete, contains all the necessary forms, is free from typographical and grammatical errors, and addresses the topic.
- Do **not** place your last name or your school's name on any of the pages of the essay. Only the registration form should include this information.
- Faxed submissions will **not** be accepted.
- Your essay will be disqualified if it does not meet the requirements or is submitted after the submission date of 11:59 p.m. EDT on April 6, 2020.

Eligibility: Students whose parents are not in the Foreign Service are eligible to participate if they are in grades nine through twelve in any of the fifty states, the District of Columbia, the U.S. territories, or if they are U.S. citizens/lawful permanent residents attending high school overseas. Students may be attending a public, private, or parochial school. Entries from home-schooled students are also accepted. Previous first-place winners and immediate relatives of directors or staff of the AFSA, the U.S. Institute of Peace, Semester at Sea and National Student Leadership Conference are not eligible to participate. Previous honorable mention designees are eligible to enter.

Your essay will become the property of the American Foreign Service Association once it is submitted, and it will not be returned to you.