



American Battle Monuments Foundation ABMF 2024 Past is Prologue Essay Contest

Contest Details

Questions: essaycontest@abmf.org

The **ABMF Past is Prologue Essay Contest** invites students ages 11-12, 13-15, and 16-18 to compete within their age group with an original essay.

Topics relate to historical events associated with an American military cemetery or monument overseas, managed by the American Battle Monuments Commission. More than 233,000 American service members are buried or memorialized (remains missing) at ABMC hallowed sites. The [American Battle Monuments Foundation](https://www.abmf.org) (ABMF.org) is an independent, not-for-profit partner of the American Battle Monuments Commission. [abmc.gov](https://www.abmc.gov)

2024 DEADLINE TO SUBMIT ESSAYS AND PRIZES AWARDED

Apply online at [abmf.org](https://www.abmf.org) to receive your unique Participant ID number

Submit your essay no later than midnight (Mountain Time) on Friday, April 12, 2024

Winners will be announced by Gold Star Mothers and Families Day, September 24, 2024

PARTICIPANTS

Students compete within their age group: 11-12 years; 13-15 years; 16-18 years. Compete in the group based on how old you will be on April 12, 2024. All students are invited to participate – public, private, parochial, charter, military and homeschoolers welcome!

Each student, regardless of age, must have an adult editor, generally a parent or guardian. The adult editor helps steer research activities, supports the development of the essay theme, checks grammar, spelling and punctuation, and leads discussion of the two mandatory questions.

Both the student and adult editor must certify that the essay is an original composition. We check for the use of AI, and essays found to have been written with AI will be disqualified.

Consent to participate must be agreed to by the parent / guardian, regardless of the age of the student.

PRIZES

Prizes will be awarded for First, Second, and Third place *in each age group*.

Age groups 13-15 and 16-18: 1st Prize: \$10,000; 2nd Prize: \$5,000; 3rd Prize: \$2,500.

Age group 11-12: 1st Prize: \$5,000; 2nd Prize \$2,500; 3rd Prize: \$1,500.

Winners will be notified via a telephone call to the parent/guardian and/or with an email and hard copy letter sent via USPS.

All winning essays become the property of the American Battle Monuments Foundation and may, at the discretion of ABMF, be published on the ABMF website and promoted through its social media channels.

How to Participate

- Fill-out and submit the online Application Form. Both the student and the adult guardian must sign the Application Form.
- You'll receive a confirmation that your application has been received, and you'll be sent a unique Participant ID number.
- Using your unique Participant ID number, upload your essay no later than April 12, 2024 at midnight, Mountain Time. You'll receive a confirmation that your essay has been received. Early submissions encouraged. (This helps us confirm the number of judges and distribution of essays to be read.)
- Winners will be announced on Gold Star Mothers & Families Day, September 24, 2024.

TOPICS

For the contest in 2024, students may choose to write about one of these two topics:

- **WWII Operation Bodyguard Deception & Misdirection** *How were the innovative technologies and communications strategies used in Operation Bodyguard created and used?*
- **WWII Air dominance that enabled the D-Day invasions.** *Discuss the techniques used by the B-17 “Flying Fortress”, P-51 Mustang and gliders, in collaboration with each other, to achieve air dominance that none of them alone could achieve.*

Mandatory Questions: Whichever topic you choose, be sure to answer the mandatory questions. (There are no “right answers;” this shows how you see the relevance of the topic to your own life.)

- *What lessons from this specific event are useful for us today?*
- *What difference did it make to your own life today and for your future?*

COMPOSITION DETAILS

For the 2024 contest, only essays written in English will be considered. If English is not the first language of the student, that should be noted on the application form.

Minimum and maximum word-count: (References are not included in the word count.)

- Students age 11-12: 800 – 1,000 words
- Students age 13-15: 1,200 – 1,500 words
- Students age 16-18: 1,500 – 1,800 words

Essays must be:

- Typed, Double Spaced, 1-inch margins
- Font: Times New Roman; Size: 12 pt.
- Uploaded at the ABMF Essay Contest portal
- Include the unique Participant ID Number. (This is used to avoid any bias from the judges.)

Quoted material should be used sparingly and must include a citation of the author, publication and date. Source material must be listed at the end of the essay. Footnotes, references, and source citations are not included in the minimum and maximum word count.

RESEARCH MATERIALS

One excellent resource is the American Battle Monuments Commission www.abmc.gov. Wikipedia, Bing etc. may be starting points for general information about the topic, but they may not be considered authoritative and should not be included in your reference list, although verified sources linked on these and similar pages may point you to authoritative and useful resources for cited sources.

JUDGING CRITERIA

- Accuracy of historical events. Include relevant facts such as who, what, when, where, why, and how. Document your source material at the end of the essay.
- Composition and writing style. Correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation are expected.
- Originality. Essay submission should show imagination while not straying from the facts, and be of human interest.
- Two mandatory questions. There are no right or wrong responses, but they must be answered from the student's perspective.

JUDGES

Essays are identified to the judges with only the unique Participant ID number. Qualified judges in Round One will review the essays and recommend finalists in each age group. These essays go to Round Two of judging; their five top-ranked essays in each age group are then read by the Review Committee. The Review Committee selects the First, Second and Third place winners in each age group. They may also select an “Honorable Mention” in each age group. Such winners will receive a Certificate of Honorable Mention. The decisions of the Essay Review Committee are final.