



AMERICAN BATTLE MONUMENTS FOUNDATION

PAST IS PROLOGUE ESSAY CONTEST

<https://www.abmf.org/past-is-prologue-essay-contest/>

2023 CONTEST DETAILS

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The *Past is Prologue* Essay Contest invites students ages 11-12, 13-15, and 16-18 to compete within their age group to write an essay about a specific battle closely identified with an American military cemetery or monument overseas, managed by the American Battle Monuments Commission.

The [American Battle Monuments Foundation](#) (ABMF) is an independent, not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organization and the official partner of the American Battle Monuments Commission. abmc.gov

2023 DEADLINE TO SUBMIT ESSAYS AND PRIZES AWARDED

Submit your essay no later than midnight (MDT) on May 31, 2023

Winners will be announced by October 2, 2023

PARTICIPANTS

The contest is open to students ages 11-18 who compete against others in their age group. (Must be no older than 18 on the essay submission deadline, May 31, 2023.) Public, private, parochial, charter, military, and homeschoolers welcome! Only essays written in English will be considered.

Each student must have an adult editor. This person may be a parent, teacher, young adult sibling, or other adult. The role of the editor is to help steer research activities, support the development of the essay theme, check grammar, spelling, and punctuation, and facilitate a conversation to answer two mandatory questions that must be addressed in the essay:

- What lessons from this specific event are useful for us today?
- How would your life and future be different if Americans had not fought and died during this operation?

The adult editor must certify that the student wrote the essay and that no artificial intelligence bots were used in the essay composition.

TOPICS

For 2023 contest students may choose to write about one of these two topics. See the website for details.

- **WW II Operation Husky.** The 1943 WW II Allied invasion was a pre-dawn, immense amphibious assault that began the successful liberation of Sicily.
- **WW II Dutch Life under Nazi Occupation and the Cost of Liberation.** Life under the Nazis was brutal and punitive, made worst by forced labor, starvation, and lack of fuel.

COMPOSITION DETAILS

For the 2023 contest, each essay must be written in English. 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, Size: Times New Roman, 12 pt.
- Save and send as a PDF

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 may be a starting point for general information about the topics, but it is not to be considered authoritative and should not be included in your reference list, although verified sources cited on Wikipedia may be useful resources for research.

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

Qualified judges will review the essays and recommend four semi-finalists in each age group. These essays will be reviewed by a committee appointed by the ABMF Board of Directors, who will select the First, Second and Third place winners in each age group. Judges and the Review Committee will not see the student's name, but will only see an alphanumeric identifier for each essay submission. The decision of the Essay Review Committee is final.

PRIZES

Prizes will be awarded for First, Second, and Third place *in each age group*. First Prize for 13-15 and 16-18 age groups is \$10,000; Second Prize is \$5,000; Third Prize is \$2,500. Prize money for 11-12 age group is First prize \$5,000, Second Prize is \$2,500, Third Prize is \$1,500. Winners will be notified via a telephone call to the parent/guardian 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 the Foundation, be published on the ABMF website and promoted through its social media channels. Any additional use of a minor winner's name or image is done so with the parental signature on the ABMF *Past is Prologue* Essay Contest Application.

APPLY AND SUBMIT AN ESSAY

Your essay is due no later than midnight MDT on May 31, 2023, but early submissions are encouraged and appreciated. An Application Form may be downloaded at [Past Is Prologue Essay Contest – ABMF](#). The application form is required to be submitted along with the essay. Essays received without the completed application will not be accepted.

Please send us an email as soon as possible to let us know you intend to participate. This will help us in scheduling our volunteer judges.

To submit your essay: digital via email OR hardcopy via USPS or FedEx. Along with your application, **include your first and last name and state on the first page only of your essay.**

- 1) Scan and attach your PDF essay and application to: essaycontest@abmf.org. We will confirm receipt.
- 2) Or, mail a hardcopy of your essay and application via USPS or postal service with tracking or via FedEx to: Sue Kenfield, Director of Youth Engagement, American Battle Monuments Foundation 9609 S University Blvd, #630665, Highlands Ranch, CO 80130