



2020 ESSAY CONTEST RULES

What's this all about?

The Humanist Canada Essay Contest is intended to engender the critical thinking and communication skills that are valued by humanists. Humanism is a non-theistic philosophy of life that encourages the use of science, logical reasoning, and critical thinking in defining goals and seeking solutions. It affirms the inherent dignity and worth of each human being as well as the ethical principles of truth, fairness, and compassion necessary to govern human actions for the improvement of our world. Humanists are heartened by the increasing number of young people adopting secular humanism as a life philosophy.

Who can enter?

This contest is open to anyone who is 16 to 19 years old on September 30, 2020 and who is enrolled in a Canadian educational institution, located in Canada or abroad. You don't have to be a Canadian citizen.

If you are under 18 or 19 years old on September 30, 2020, your contest entry may have to include a signed Parental Permission and Waiver form.

What are the entry categories?

First Prize English Essay: \$1,000.

First Prize French Essay: \$1,000.

Second Prize English Essay: \$750.

Second Prize French Essay: \$750.

Third Prize English Essay: \$250.

Third Prize French Essay: \$250.

Up to five Honourable Mention English Essays: \$50.

Up to five Honourable Mention French Essays: \$50.

What do I submit?

1. Your essay must be 500 to 1,000 words in length, not including the title and any references. If you wish, you can include photos, drawings, diagrams, tables, charts or other non-text media in your essay.
2. Each essay must be entirely written by one author.
3. This contest is limited to one entry per author.
4. Your essay must start with a cover page containing the title of your essay, your full name, age, mailing address, phone number and e-mail address.
5. Your essay must be a single document. The header of each page, except the cover page, must include your name and a page number.
6. Essays must include references cited using the American Psychological Association (APA) style and grammar guidelines available at <https://apastyle.apa.org/>
7. Essays must be submitted via e-mail in .PDF format.

How and where do I submit my essay?

To be considered, a contest entry must consist of an e-mail message containing the following attachments:

1. Your essay (including cover page) in .PDF format
2. Your completed Application Form. The form is available here: <https://hc-contest.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Application-and-Guidelines-2020-V10.pdf>
3. Your signed Parental Permission and Waiver Form (if applicable, see Application Form Appendix).

Send in your contest entry by e-mail to info@hc-contest.ca. Essays submitted anywhere else will not be considered.

What's the deadline for submission?

You have until 11:59 p.m. local time where you live, Wednesday September 30, 2020 to e-mail your contest entry.

What does my essay have to be about?

Your essay should express your personal views and conclusions and why you have come to them. A wide spectrum of issues and values touch upon secular humanism. Freedom of thought and expression are a component of universal human rights protected not only in Canada but globally as well under international law. In Canada, despite what should be strong constitutional protections for freedom of thought and expression, significant religious privileges are in force, both nationally and in several provinces and territories.

In some provinces, publicly funded schools offer religious instruction without including a secular or humanist alternative. In the media, prominence is sometimes given to religious organizations or leaders on a discriminatory basis; in addition, religious groups control or strongly influence public or social services.

Several ongoing social issues fall squarely within the purview of secular humanism such as same-sex marriage, discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, abortion, medically assisted dying, privacy and civil liberties. Humanist Canada supports efforts to advance scientific, academic, medical and human rights, critical thinking, and education. We act as a resource for secular groups and causes across Canada and we strive to create a more tolerant world, where rational thinking and kindness prevails.

For more ideas on an appropriate essay topic, stop to consider your take on a few of the issues summarized here:

<https://fot.humanists.international/countries/americas-northern-america/canada/>

Who judges my essay?

An expert panel of Humanist Canada Essay Contest judges will read your essay and evaluate it using the judging criteria described below. To maintain fairness, judges will not know application form information until after their final decision.

What criteria are judges using to decide on a winning essay?

Entries will be judged on clear expression of ideas that progress in a logical fashion, the ability to support an argument with evidence, and understanding of humanist values and perspectives. When reading your essay, judges will ask:

1. **Essay Premise**: Does your essay make a specific case, assert a viewpoint, argue a position, or claim a conclusion that is clearly and concisely worded?
2. **Essay Justification**: Does your essay give reasons why your case, viewpoint, position or conclusion is reasonable, logically derived, or in the end convincing to you and should be convincing to others?
3. **Evidential Support**: Does your essay cite specific evidence, named sources, facts, or research to support the reasons outlined in your essay?
4. **Essay Defense**: Does your essay discuss the views and arguments of those who may disagree with your case, viewpoint or conclusion?
5. **Essay Clarity**: Is your essay free of spelling errors (especially for people's names) or grammatical errors, and does it accord with APA style for any cited references?

How will I find out who won?

Contest winners will be contacted directly and all results will be announced on www.humanistcanada.ca website in December 2020.

If I win, what happens to my essay?

Winning essays will be submitted for publication in a future edition of *Humanist Perspectives* magazine available at <https://www.humanistperspectives.org/>

By submitting your essay, you release undivided copyright in perpetuity to Humanist Canada, which may publish, excerpt, edit or otherwise use it, or any document based on it, for any legal purpose.

What if I still have questions about this?

For any questions about contest rules, please call our toll-free number: 1-877-486-2671 or send an email message to info@hc-contest.ca