

ISSSC High School Essay Contest 2006-7

The Institute for the Study of Secularism in Society and Culture (ISSSC) was established at Trinity College, Hartford, in 2005 to advance understanding of the role of secular values and the process of secularization in contemporary society and culture. Nonpartisan and multidisciplinary, the Institute conducts academic research, sponsors curriculum development, and presents public events.

As part of the Institute's curriculum development project, the current academic year is dedicated to the theme, Secular Traditions and the Foundations of the Natural Sciences. In this context, the Institute organizes an essay contest for high school students in the State of Connecticut.

The essay topic is:

Science and technology are an increasingly important aspect of our lifestyle today. Therefore, one might expect that the public's desire for a better understanding of science and its achievements should rise accordingly. However, there is evidence that there is no increase in the desire to study science at school or college.

Why, in your view, do so many young Americans today show little interest in science education?

Plan and write an essay in which you develop your point of view on this issue. Support your position with reasoning and examples based on your reading, studies, and personal experience.

Eligibility:

- All students enrolled in grades 9-12 in public, private and home schools.
- Students must submit original work and have a sponsoring teacher sign the contest Registration Form.
- Contestants may submit only one essay.
- Contestants must compose an original essay with limited guidance from others.
- The Sponsors will have the right to edit, publish or otherwise duplicate any essay entered into the contest without payment to the author.
- Each contestant must complete the Registration Form.
- Essays must be printed in 12 font Times New Roman characters, and double-spaced.
- Any quotations or copyrighted material used in the essay must be identified properly. Failure to identify non-original material will result in disqualification.
- Essays must be written in English.
- The decision of the contest committee is final, and no higher appeals will be recognized.
- There is no cost to enter the contest.

Format:

The essay should be 1000-1200 words and must include a separate Registration Form.

Entry:

Send all entries to Dr. Michael Ben-Chaim, Essay Contest Secretary, ISSSC, Trinity College, 300 Summit Street, Hartford, CT 06106.

Entry Deadline:

All entries should be postmarked by March 1, 2007.

Award procedure:

The essays that meet the above mentioned rules will be examined by staff members of Connecticut State Department of Education, Trinity College, and ISSSC. In an effort to conceal the identity of each contestant, each entry will be assigned a number by the Essay Contest Secretary. The assigned number will be placed on the Registration Form and on the first page of the essay. The Registration Form will then be detached and retained by the Essay Contest Secretary. The judges will be given the essay bearing only the assigned number.

Scoring of Contest:

Scoring procedures for all essays will be identical. The scoring criteria are:

1. Material Organization (Logical interpretation of the subject, adherence to topic): 40 points
2. Vocabulary and Style (Phrasing and continuity): 30 points
3. Grammar, Punctuation, Spelling: 20 points
4. Neatness: 5 points
5. Adherence to contest rules (prepared in the proper format): 5 points

Awards:

The authors of the three best essays will receive a prize of \$ 300.00 each. The authors of the ten highest scoring essays will receive letters of recognition, and will be invited, with their parents, to the Award Dinner at Trinity College on May 21, 2007.

Questions?

For further information contact Dr. Michael Ben-Chaim, Essay Contest Secretary, by phone at (860) 297-4227 or email at michael.benchaim@trincoll.edu.