

**5TH ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL FORUM FOR PEACE, SECURITY & PROSPERITY
(IFPSP)
PALERMO, ITALY
MARCH 22nd TO 25th, 2026**

Register for the student contest at: [International Student Essay and Video Contest - PSP Forum \(psp-forum.org\)](http://International Student Essay and Video Contest - PSP Forum (psp-forum.org))

High School Student Contest Rules- 2026

OUR MISSION

To honour and remember, to learn from our past, to educate and inform future generations and to bring a heightened level of reasoning to the discussion of what achieves lasting peace, security, and prosperity in the digital age.

The International Forum for Peace, Security & Prosperity (IFPSP) is designed as an annual, international event to bring together high school students and officer cadets of military colleges and is supported by academics, military professionals, and peace officers, along with members of the public, policy makers, and business and community leaders, to explore how peace takes hold, who makes it happen, and what conditions enable peaceful societies to flourish.

ELIGIBILITY TO PARTICIPATE IN THE FORUM STUDENT CONTEST

The competition is open to students who are currently enrolled in Grades 10 – 12, or equivalent, from all NATO / EU member countries, along with any other country that has a Liberal Constitutional Democracy as its form of government.

TOPICS OF THE STUDENT CONTEST

"Learning from the Past, Navigating the Present, and Building Resilient and Ethical Futures in the Age of Artificial Intelligence."

Essay Topics:

- 1. Learning from Yesterday: Strengthening Personal Resilience through Character Strengths and Emotional Intelligence**
- 2. Youth as Future Leaders: Navigating Today to Shape Ethical and Resilient Communities in the Age of Artificial Intelligence**

3. Global Bridges: Using Historical Lessons to Build Cooperative, Ethical Futures with AI

Video Topics:

1. Past as Prologue: Stories of Character, Emotion, and Innovation
2. Designing Tomorrow: Youth Visions for Resilient and Ethical Futures with AI

CONTEST SUBMISSION FORMAT

As was the case with previous years' contests, students are invited to either submit a written essay or a video presentation. However, there is a slight change in the contest format, in that there will be a larger focus on having the submissions be more closely aligned with the above-mentioned panel topics.

It is the intent of the Forum's Academic Committee to require this year's entrants to directly present their submissions in a more disciplined manner, with emphasis on the quality of the work with reference to the selected topic. As such, the participants are expected to adhere completely to the *Contest Requirements* described in the document.

CONTEST DATE

The Student Contest will be launched forthwith. The deadline for essay and video submissions is Friday March 6th, 2026, at 23:59 hours EST. No submission will be considered if received after this date and time.

Finalists will be announced on or before March 18, 2026. Winners will be announced during the Forum in Palermo, which is being held from March 22 – 25, 2026.

ROLES AND RESPONSABILITIES

It is the responsibility of the individual student contestant to prepare their work in accordance with the rules and format requirements indicated.

It is the role of the contestant's school to select the essays and / or videos for submission to the IFPSP juries for consideration. Each school may submit up to a combined total of 3 essays and / or videos. Any additional essays and/or videos will NOT be considered.

It is the responsibility of each submitting school authority to ensure that the competing students have followed the rules regarding originality, previous publication and production without outside help. It is the responsibility of the school authority to ensure that the

accompanying affidavit is properly filled out, signed and bears the stamp of the school. Any submissions received without the accompanying affidavit will NOT be considered.

It is the responsibility of the school authority to provide a translation in one of the official languages for any essay or video that is produced in a language other than English, French, or Italian.

It is the responsibility of the school authority to ensure that the selected submissions are received by the IFPSP juries by the above-mentioned deadline.

It is the responsibility of the submitting school, in the event that one of their students is selected as a finalist to assist in the preparation of a maximum 2-minute video in mp4 format that introduces the finalist student(s), summarizes the work and provides an opportunity to thank any support received. The school authority is also responsible to ensure that a 1-2 slide PPT summary of the work accompanies the video.

It is the role of the IFPSP juries to evaluate the submitted entries in accordance with the contest criteria and to select 3 finalists for the essay category and 3 finalists for the video category.

It is the responsibility of the IFPSP juries to maintain impartiality throughout the selection process.

CONTEST REQUIREMENTS

Language of Submission

1. Initial version of the essays or videos can be produced in English, French or Italian. Specifically for the essay, it can also be written in the participant's native language, provided that an approved translated copy in English, French or Italian accompanies the presentation.
2. Videos may be submitted in the mother tongue of the entrant, however every video submission produced in any other language than English must have English sub-titles included.

Submission Length

3. The word count of the essay should be between 750 and 1,500, not including cover page, illustrations / photos, annexes, and bibliography. Texts must be saved as MSWord files and as PDF documents for submission.
4. Videos must be no less than two (2) minutes and no longer than three (3) minutes in length. Videos must be sent in MP4 format.

Selection Protocol

5. There is a three (3) stage selection protocol in place to ultimately determine the winners of the contest. It is as follows:
 1. Stage 1: Students produce the essay or video in accordance with the contest rules and criteria. The school authority will select up to a total of three (3) submissions for consideration by the IFPSP juries. This total includes the sum of essays and videos. Submissions must be received with the accompanying affidavits, in the proper format by the deadline date.
 2. Stage 2: All Italian language submissions will be evaluated by the Italian Jury to select the initial group to be considered as finalists. All other submissions will be initially evaluated by the International Jury in the same manner.
 3. Stage 3: The Italian and International Juries will jointly evaluate the selected essays and videos from Stage 2 and will determine the 3 finalists for each category of essay and video. The finalists' names will be announced not later than Friday, March 7, 2025, to allow the selected finalists and their respective school authorities to prepare the required video and Power Point. The Collective Jury's decision as to ranking of First, Second, and Third Place will be announced during the course of the Forum

N.B.: Based on previous Forum's experience, there will not be time allotted for in-person or on-line thank-you's by either the winning students or their teachers or other school authorities

Submission Criteria

6. Essays or videos must NOT have been published or considered for publication or have already been transmitted.
7. Students must write the essay or produce the video themselves, without outside help.
8. Each student can only submit one essay or video. Students cannot compete simultaneously in both categories.
9. Students can participate individually or in groups. If a group submission is chosen as a finalist, no more than 3 representatives must be selected for the presentation or to win the prize.

10. Essays must be accompanied by a cover and a signed affidavit from the School Director / Principal / Headmaster /n Superintendent based on the examples enclosed in annex to this document. Videos must also have a signed affidavit along with a similar cover page at the beginning of the video.

Format Requirements – Essay:

11. All submitted essays must include the following:

1. A cover page that follows the example in the Annex;
2. Preferred font is Times New Roman.
3. The essays must have the following structure
 1. Cover Page
 2. Table of Contents Page
 3. Abstract – Summary of the argument to be put forward
 4. Introduction
 5. Body of the Essay
 6. Conclusion
 7. Bibliography / Definition of any Abbreviations used
 8. Annexes, if any
 9. A signed affidavit as described in the annex.
 10. The table below describes the contents of each chapter.

Name of the chapter	Contents
Introduction	Should describe the essay concept – which problem should be solved? How would the author like to solve the problem?
Elaboration on the Topic	Describes what the author has done to elaborate the topic. Describes the details of the author's research. This chapter lists the results in a logical order.
Conclusions	This chapter leaves room for personal opinions of the author and concludes the essay. Pros and cons are mentioned.

4. Citations and acknowledgements will follow the rules established by the Modern Languages Association (MLA). Explanation and examples can be found at [MLA In-Text Citations: The Basics - Purdue OWL® - Purdue University](https://owl.psu.edu/owl/resource/563/5/MLA_In-Text_Citations_The_Basics/)

Essay Evaluation Criteria

12. The evaluation of the essays will be done according to the Table here below.

Field	Percentage and maximum points
Introduction to the topic	10
Clear elaboration of the topic	15
Clarity/robustness of the arguments	15
Concise and clear conclusion	15
Originality	15
Writing style – including language & grammar – main points, sub-points, elaboration on sub-points and format	30
Total	100

Format Requirements – Video

13. All submitted videos must:

1. Be submitted in MP4 format.
2. Not be shorter than two (2) minutes in length and not be longer than three (3) minutes, with a direct relevance to the chosen topic.
3. Be accompanied by a Power Point descriptive slide deck of not more than 3 slides, excluding cover slide, and bibliography / references, which is included to support the video's argument.
4. Be submitted with a signed affidavit as described in the Annex.

Video Evaluation Criteria

14. The evaluation of the videos will be done according to the Table here below.

Field	Percentage and maximum points
Relevance to the Topic / Theme	40
Respect for Format / Time Restrictions	15
Originality / Use of images to support topic	30
Use of Power Point Deck to Support the Video Points	15
Total	100

Other General Provisions

- All submissions of an entry and/or participation to the **High School Student Contest** shall be presented by the participant's high school **authorised personnel; no submission delivered directly by a student participant will be accepted by the IFPSP.**
- All submission of an entry and/or participation in the organisation of the competition/jury implies acceptance of the conditions of the competition by the High School authority on behalf of the participant
- The results of the competition may not be appealed. The jury's decisions will be final.
- The PSP Forum will keep all Power Point decks and videos submitted to it by the participating schools.
- The PSP Forum will retain the copyright for the winning submissions and may publish them.
- The PSP Forum may amend the timeline for essay and video submissions and the selection process.
- The PSP Forum bears no responsibility in the event of the competition being modified or cancelled.

ONLINE and IN-PERSON, MARCH 22nd to 25th, PALERMO, SICILY

The city of Palermo, Sicily is the location of the 6th Annual IFPSP. Peace related cultural and historical learning activities are offered for the in-person activities. In-person high school student participation is welcomed.

**REGISTER FOR THE FORUM AND STUDENT CONTEST at: [International Student
Essay and Video Contest - PSP Forum \(psp-forum.org\)](http://International Student Essay and Video Contest - PSP Forum (psp-forum.org))**

**FOR MORE INFO CONTACT: Steve Gregory 514-919-5858 or Steve@isaix.com
www.psp-forum.org John Hannan +1 514.945.5810 or
johnmacehannan@outlook.com**



ANNEX

Affidavit - Essay

I / we declare that I / we have written the present essay independently and on my / our own. I / we have clearly marked any ideas borrowed from other sources as not my own and documented their sources. The essay does not contain any work that I / we have previously handed in or have had graded as a research paper or essay.

I am / we are aware that any failure to properly cite sources constitutes plagiarism. Plagiarism is the presentation of another person's thoughts or words as if they were my own, even if I / we summarise, paraphrase, condense, cut, rearrange, or otherwise alter them.

I am / we are aware of the consequences and sanctions plagiarism entails. Among others, consequences may include nullification of the essay and exclusion from participation in the PSP Forum High School Student Writing Competition. These consequences also apply retrospectively, i.e., if plagiarism is discovered after the essay has been accepted and graded.

I am / we are fully aware of the scope of these consequences.

Signature(s)

.....
(First and Last Names)

Location, Country
Month 20XY

School Stamp

Signature

.....
(First and Last Names)
School Authority
Title



ANNEX

Affidavit - Video

I / we declare that I / we have created the present video independently and on my / our own. I / we have clearly marked any ideas borrowed from other sources as not my own and documented their sources. The video does not contain any work that I / we have previously handed in or have had graded as a video.

I am / we are aware that any failure to properly cite sources constitutes plagiarism. Plagiarism is the presentation of another person's thoughts, images, or words as if they were my own, even if I / we summarise, paraphrase, condense, cut, rearrange, or otherwise alter them.

I am / we are aware of the consequences and sanctions plagiarism entails. Among others, consequences may include nullification of the video and exclusion from participation in the PSP Forum High School Student Writing Competition. These consequences also apply retrospectively, i.e., if plagiarism is discovered after the video has been accepted and graded.

I am / we are fully aware of the scope of these consequences.

Signature(s)

.....
(First and Last Names)

Location, Country
Month 20XY

School Stamp
Signature

.....
(First and Last Names)

School Authority
Title

ANNEX

Essay Cover Page / Video Cover Slide

<p>Essay created for the International Forum for Peace, Security & Prosperity High School Student Essay Competition</p> <p>Author: First Name Family name Age: XY years E-mail: XY Student of the (add the name of your school) (Add your country) Postal Address: (Add the postal address of your school) (Add your city), Month 20XY</p>
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