



The American Red Cross IHL Youth Action Campaign Presents:

The 2024 International Humanitarian Law Essay & Art Competition

From Ukraine to Sudan and beyond, armed conflict unfortunately continues to be a major part of our world. The American Red Cross International Humanitarian Law Essay and Art Competition is hosted by the American Red Cross IHL Youth Action Campaign and is meant to encourage learning about International Humanitarian Law and the critical role it plays in reducing the destructive effects of war and in protecting the innocent during times of armed conflict.

What Is IHL?

International Humanitarian Law, commonly referred to by its acronym “IHL,” is the body of international law that governs how armed conflicts are fought. It is based on an extensive set of international treaties, agreements, and longstanding customs, all of which aim to reduce suffering during times of armed conflict by offering key protections to people and places in harm’s way.

Competition Age Categories

The competition is open to all U.S. citizens, regardless of location, and foreign nationals residing in the United States, overseas U.S. military bases or U.S. territories. Essay and art entries will be accepted from the following categories:

- (1) Junior High (8th grade)
- (2) High School I (Grades 9-10)
- (3) High School II (Grades 11-12)
- (4) Undergraduate Students
- (5) Law school or Graduate School Students (Masters, L.L.M., PhD, etc.)





Deadlines

- Submissions will be accepted **beginning on Monday, November 13, 2023.**
- **The deadline for submission is 11:59 pm (Eastern Standard Time) on Friday, January 26, 2024.**
- The American Red Cross will contact all winners by end of February 2024.
- The winners will be publicly announced during a ceremony as part of the 11th Annual Clara Barton International Humanitarian Law Competition on March 22, 2024 in Washington, D.C. Winners may be asked to appear virtually during the ceremony to accept their award and speak briefly about their entry, or to record a short video acceptance.

Competition Theme

Each year, entrants are challenged with creating thoughtful and insightful entries around a specific IHL theme. This year's theme is **Nuclear Weapons and Armed Conflict**, including the role of IHL in helping protect humanity from the devastating effects of these weapons. Although the nature of each essay or art submission is up to the creator, entrants are encouraged to explore topics within the theme, such as how IHL addresses the use of nuclear weapons, the threat to humanity posed by these weapons, the role of social media in spreading awareness about nuclear weapons, the dangers of nuclear weapon testing, and the role of education and awareness campaigns in educating the world about these weapons of mass destruction.

Essay Competition Standards

- Maximum word count of 1,500 words, excluding title page, footnotes, and bibliography.
- Include a title page with an essay title, author's name, pronouns, competition age category, Red Cross region (if applicable), school name, grade (for high school), year (for undergraduate), or graduate degree program type, email, city, and state.
- Essays must be written solely by the candidate and cannot have been previously published.
- Only one essay submission will be accepted per person. Essay entrants may also submit a separate entry for the art portion of the competition (art competition entries must adhere to the art competition standards).





- Entries must be submitted via email to IHLYouth@redcross.org with the subject “**IHL Essay Competition Entry, [Insert Last Name, First Name]**” by the deadline. Late entries will not be accepted.
- Essays must be typed, and published as PDFs written in English, and submitted with proper, consistent citations and a bibliography. MLA- or APA-style citations are acceptable. Consider saving original as an editable file (word doc, etc.).
- The competition committee reserves the right to disqualify any entry that does not meet the above competition standards.

Essay Competition Evaluation and Prizes

Winning entries will be chosen by a panel of IHL experts selected by the American Red Cross. Essays will be evaluated on the following criteria:

- Critical thinking and analysis (25%),
- Argument supported by evidence (25%)
- Presentation and clarity (25%)
- Relevance to the theme (25%)

First place entries from each Essay Competition Age Category will receive **\$100** and a special American Red Cross recognition certificate for their efforts. Additionally, winners, including those recognized as finalists, will be eligible to have their entry published in a special American Red Cross digital magazine that is published widely to the public.

Art Competition Standards

- Pieces must be in the form of visual art within one of the following categories: drawing, painting, abstract, photography, or digital art.
- Include a title page with name of piece, author's name, pronouns, competition age category, Red Cross region (if applicable), school name, grade (for high school), year (for undergraduate), or graduate degree program type, email, city, and state.
- Must include a **brief written description** of the piece no longer than 200 words, which explains the entry and how it relates to the theme.





- Submit, in PDF, or other digital image file format (e.g. PNG or JPEG), either the image itself (for digital art) or a clear photo of the piece (for all other art).
- Pieces must be created solely by the candidate and cannot have been previously published.
- Do not use any copyrighted images or elements in your piece.
- Only one art submission will be accepted per person. Entrants **may not** submit entries from multiple art competition categories. Art competition entrants may also submit a separate entry for the essay competition (essay competition entries must adhere to the essay competition standards).
- Entries must be submitted via email to IHLYouth@redcross.org with the subject “**IHL Art Competition Entry, [Insert Last Name, First Name]**” by the deadline.
- The competition committee reserves the right to disqualify any entry that does not meet the above competition standards. Late entries will not be accepted.

Art Competition Evaluation and Prizes

Winning entries will be chosen by a panel of IHL experts selected by the American Red Cross and its co-sponsors. Art will be evaluated on the following criteria:

- Creativity and originality (25%)
- Quality of artistic composition (25%)
- Overall composition (25%)
- Interpretation of and relevance to the theme (25%)

First place entries from each Art Competition Age Category will receive **\$100** and a special American Red Cross recognition certificate for their efforts. Additionally, winners, including those recognized as finalists, will be eligible to have their entry published in a special American Red Cross digital magazine that is published widely to the public.

