

## **HOLOCAUST ESSAY CONTEST GUIDELINES 2026 (Grades 9-12)**

### **Power of Memory: Holocaust Stories and the Stories We Carry**

- 1) The essay contest is open to all high school students in TN and surrounding states.
- 2) One entry per student.
- 3) All entries must be typed and double-spaced in 12-point font.
- 4) Entries may not exceed 600 words.
- 5) Entries must include name, address, phone number, e-mail address, name of school, teacher's name, and grade.
- 6) Essays must be electronically submitted to [HolocaustEssayMJF@gmail.com](mailto:HolocaustEssayMJF@gmail.com) by **4 pm on Monday, March 23, 2026**.
- 7) The essay should explore the following topic: **The Power of Memory: Holocaust Stories and the Stories We Carry**.
- 8) When thinking about this topic consider:
  - Memory keeps history alive and gives meaning to who we are today.
  - History informs us and stories transform us, influencing our values, choices, and sense of responsibility.
- 9) In your essay, explore the role of memory in both the Holocaust and your own family and include the following:
  - Select a **Holocaust victim, survivor or witness** whose story has been preserved through written testimony, oral history, artwork, music, film, or another artistic medium.
  - Explain how their story is preserved.
  - Describe how the individual's story enhances your understanding of the Holocaust.
  - Share a story (treasured memory passed down through generations or a new story being written today) from your family and discuss what this story means to you and why preserving it matters.
  - Reflect on the following in your essay: What does Holocaust storytelling accomplish? What does family storytelling accomplish? How do both shape

identity, responsibility, the transmission of values across generations, and moral courage for the future?

- 10) Idea not your own and/or quotes must be referenced.
- 11) Judging will be based on the following criteria: originality, creativity, passion, message conveyed, connection to them, accurate historical detail, and proper use of language.
- 12) First Place cash prize of \$250; Second Place cash prize of \$125. Gift cards for Honorable Mention. Contest awards provided by the Kaethe Mela Family Memorial Fund of the Jewish Foundation of Memphis. Kaethe, her husband Paul and their 17-year-old daughter Doris, lost their lives in Auschwitz.
- 13) First Place essay will be published in the program booklet for Memphis Jewish Federation's annual community-wide Yom HaShoah/Holocaust observance on Tuesday, April 14, 2025. All winners will be officially recognized at the commemoration.
- 14) Winning essays will be published in print and digital publications.
- 15) Please direct questions to Carrie Richardson at [crichardson@jcpmemphis.org](mailto:crichardson@jcpmemphis.org).

#### **Suggested Resources:**

- [Yad Vashem. The World Holocaust Remembrance Center](#)
- Yad Vashem: Survivor Testimonies [www.yadvashem.org/collections/testimonies.html](http://www.yadvashem.org/collections/testimonies.html).
- [United States Holocaust Memorial Museum](#)
- US Holocaust Memorial Museum - Survivor Reflections and Testimonies  
<https://www.ushmm.org/remember/holocaust-reflections-testimonies>
- [USC Shoah Foundation](#)
- [Simon Wiesenthal Center](#)
- [Facing History and Ourselves](#)
- <https://www.rondarobinson.com/index.php/journalism/holocaust/108-75-years-after-the-holocaust-a-violin-returns>
- <https://www.rondarobinson.com/index.php/journalism/holocaust/91-the-ballerina-of-auschwitz>

- <https://www.rondarobinson.com/index.php/journalism/holocaust/95-hiding-in-a-vegetable-bin-saved-their-lives>
- <https://www.rondarobinson.com/index.php/journalism/holocaust/82-a-magic-trick-in-auschwitz>

Revised 12.08.2025.