

# Required Essay Structure

## Your essay should have the following structure:

**Introduction:** Introduce the subject and state your *thesis*. The objective is to demonstrate that you understand the essay contest question and have formed a response to it.

**Body:** Develop your arguments and assertions using **research and analysis**. The process of analysis may include comparing and contrasting, differentiating among several ideas or events, critiquing a variety of perspectives, interpreting results, or drawing inferences. **Be sure to identify the sources of your information or ideas using a standard citation method.**

**Conclusion:** Summarize the research and analysis presented in the essay and set forth your **recommendations and conclusions**. Drawing on ideas already presented, you should demonstrate that your conclusions support the thesis you put forward in the opening paragraphs. Your aim is to convince the reader that your thesis, facts, and analysis are reasonable and valid.

**Credit the Sources of Information and Ideas:** Use a widely used **standardized method and style** such as MLA, New York, Chicago or APA to consistently give credit to the sources of the ideas and information used in your essay. Use *in-text citations, footnotes, or endnotes* to give credit to the sources of your information or ideas. Also include a *bibliography or a references list* for the works that you have cited in your essay or have consulted to write your essay.

Essays that use a variety of sources—academic journals, news magazines, newspapers, books, government documents, publications from research organizations—fare better in the contest. **General encyclopedias are not acceptable as sources. The USIP study guides are not acceptable as sources.** Essays citing general encyclopedias in notes or bibliography may be disqualified. **Web sites and Web pages should not be the only source of information for your essay.** When citing Internet sources, include the following information: author(s), title of work, Internet address, and date information was accessed.

## Your essay must:

- Address all parts of this year's contest question in English.
- **NOT** have your name, teacher's name, or school name anywhere on the essay;
- Be typed, double-spaced, on one side of white 8½ by 11 inch (letter size) paper with left and right margins at 1¼ inches each. Font must be no smaller than 12 point Times or similarly sized font;
- Have a title and page numbers;
- Have no more than 1,500 words. The word count limit includes all words in the text but does not include the bibliography and notes (you may exclude the words in the in-text citation from your word count);
- Follow accepted standards regarding attribution of quotations, arguments, and ideas of others;
- Include standardized citations and a bibliography with Internet sources listed separately.