Istanbul Rotary Club
3rd International Essay Competition on Peace

Purpose Statement

The Istanbul Rotary Club International Essay Competition is the third edition of a program launched in conjunction with the establishment of the Rotary International Peace Center at Bahçeşehir University and the Rotary International Presidential Peace Conference held in Istanbul in 2025.

The competition aims to inspire thoughtful dialogue, critical thinking, and meaningful reflection among high school students aged between 14–19. By bringing together participants from different countries, it provides a global platform for sharing ideas, perspectives, and practical solutions that contribute to building a more peaceful world.

This year's theme encourages participants to view peace not only as a global ideal but also as something that begins with the choices each of us makes every day.

Essay Prompt

World Peace Starts with Me!
My Daily Decisions and Actions Make Me Part of a More Peaceful World!

World peace is not achieved by governments and treaties alone. It is built through the small yet meaningful choices we make every day one person at a time, beginning in childhood.

In this international essay competition, high school students are invited to reflect upon how their daily decisions and actions can contribute to creating a more peaceful world. Participants should present three specific examples from their own lives that demonstrate how they consciously chose to foster peace in their everyday interactions.

Drawing on personal experience, reflection, and research, participants should identify and define the peace building competencies reflected in their examples and explain their significance.

Essays should present a clear and well-organized argument, combining personal reflection with thoughtful analysis to demonstrate how everyday actions can create meaningful and lasting contributions to peace.

Guiding Principles

1. **Originality:** We value fresh insights, authentic voices, personal experiences, and independent thinking. Participants are encouraged to demonstrate through three specific and personal experiences how their own choices and actions have contributed to a more peaceful environment and how these instances relate to broader principles of peace. The experiences may be positive or negative and may also include missed opportunities, with reflection on what could have been done differently.
2. **Inclusivity**: The competition is open to all eligible individuals, regardless of nationality, ethnicity, or background. We believe that diverse voices contribute to a richer dialogue.
3. **Expert Evaluation**: The Main Selection Committee, composed of women selected amongst the spouses of Istanbul Rotary Club members with relevant experience, will rigorously evaluate all submissions through a cross-checking process. Following this initial assessment, candidates selected for the final stage will be invited to one-on-one online interviews. The shortlisted candidates will then be presented to the Final Selection Committee, whose members, experts in International Relations, Literature, and Senior Management, will determine the top three winners. The composition of the Final Selection Committee will be determined by the Board.
4. **Youth Empowerment**: By engaging young writers, we empower them to be advocates for peace. Their words have the potential to shape policies, influence minds, and ignite positive change.

Timeline

- **Announcement**: 01.09.2026
- **Submission Deadline:** 01.12.2026
- **Announcement of Winners**: 15.03.2027
- **Award Ceremony**: To be determined

Participation

All high school students born between 1st January 2007 and 31st December 2012 are eligible to participate in the competition.

Recognition and Awards

- **First Prize:** A monetary award of 3,000 USD.
- **Second Prize:** A monetary award of 2,000 USD.
- **Third Prize:** A monetary award of 1,000 USD.
- **Two Special Recognition Awards:** The Main Selection Committee is going to grant awards of 500 USD each to two essays standing out with regards to their emotional depth, personal perspective and/or unique approach.
- The winners are invited to Türkiye for the Prize Ceremony. Flight tickets and accommodation for each winner and one accompanying parent will be provided by the club.

Essay Requirements

- **Word Limit**: Essays must be written in English and must not exceed 500 words. The word count does not include the essay title or submission information.
- **Format**: Essays should be typed, double-spaced, and submitted in PDF format.
- **Originality:** Essays must be original and unpublished**.**
- **Personal Experience:** Essays must include **three specific examples** drawn from the participant's own daily life and experience**.**
- **References and Quotations:** Any quotations, external content, research, statistics, or ideas drawn from another source must be clearly identified and properly referenced.
- **AI Use:** Submissions must be entirely written by the submitter; the use of generative AI tools is strictly prohibited. Submissions may be subject to AI assisted content screening as part of the evaluation and verification process.
- **Content Guidelines**: Submissions containing hate speech or social, racial, or sexual discrimination will be disqualified.
- **Complete Information:** Participants must provide all required personal and submission information. Incomplete submissions may not be considered.
- **Privacy:** Compliance with GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) is essential.

Essay Submission

- **Submission Deadline: 1st December 2026**
- The completed essay must be submitted in PDF format to the following email address: **PeaceEssay@istanbulrotary.org**
- **Please include your full name, address, mobile number, contact email, date and place of birth, school, and class/year level in your email**.
- For inquiries contact us via email: **PeaceEssay@istanbulrotary.org**
- For inquiries and updates visit website: **https://istanbulrotary.org/3rd-essay-competition-on-international-peace**

Together, let's write a future where peace prevails.

Eren Kuraner

Term President 2026-2027
Istanbul Rotary Club