



History Essay Contest

Norfolk Public Schools Students and Teachers

The MacArthur Memorial and General Douglas MacArthur Foundation are introducing a new essay contest open to NPS middle and high school students. This contest gives students a chance to flex their historical research and critical analysis skills while competing for a chance to win a cash prize, trophy, and invitation to an award ceremony at the General Douglas MacArthur Foundation Board Dinner. Teachers of winning students will also receive a gift card for classroom supplies.



2026 Essay Topic:

The Occupation of Japan, Success or Failure?



Students will be asked to craft a 2-3 page (500-750 words) essay exploring one aspect of the occupation of Japan under General Douglas MacArthur. The essay must argue whether the decisions made about this aspect contributed to a success or failure of civil affairs and a lasting peace. Arguments must be supported with historical research based on reliable resources. Winning essays will be eligible for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place awards with cash prizes of \$1,000-\$500.



The Allied occupation of Japan after World War II is considered the most successful occupation in history.



Contest opens January 26th, 2026
Deadline for submissions April 10th, 2026
Winners will be notified in May.
Award ceremony will take place in June.



Where did it succeed?

Where did it fail?



Learn more at macarthurmemorial.org or by scanning the QR code!



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