



"Sapere Aude – Dare to Know through Reason!" Goethe-Institut USA Essay Competition

Calling all high school and college students in the United States! In honor of Immanuel Kant's 300th birthday, the Goethe-Institut invites you to take part in the essay contest "*Sapere Aude – Dare to Know through Reason.*" This motto, linked to Kant and the Age of Enlightenment, urges us to break free from ignorance and have the courage to think for ourselves. In a world that is becoming more complex by the day, filled with challenges and difficult moral decisions, Kant's message about looking inward and thinking critically is more relevant and important than ever.

Purpose of the competition

The goal of the competition is to encourage young generations to explore the relevance of the Enlightenment in today's context by considering how Kant's idea of "*Sapere Aude*" can help us make wise and ethically informed decisions in modern society. We encourage participants to delve into Kant's ideas and use them to address today's problems through innovative solutions and fresh perspectives.

Essay topics

Participants may choose one of the following topics:

1. Kant's ethics in modern society: how can the categorical imperative guide us in navigating current ethical challenges?
2. Epistemology in the era of information: How are Kant's ideas about knowledge and perception relevant in times of information overload and "fake news"?
3. Aesthetics and art today: What relevance do Kant's aesthetics have for today's understanding and appreciation of art?
4. Sustainable freedom: How can we use Kant's concepts of freedom and autonomy to develop a sustainable relationship with the environment and shape our individual freedoms in harmony with the needs of the planet?

Tune in to our upcoming September workshop series to help you brainstorm ideas for your essays!

Conditions of participation

- Participants must be high school or college students located in the United States
- Essays must be between 1500 and 2000 words in length
- Language: German or English
- Submission deadline: October 3rd, 2024, uploaded via the [essay competition website](#)

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Honor code

By participating in this essay competition, you agree to use AI tools like language models responsibly. You should only utilize them for brainstorming, research, and drafting and must acknowledge and cite any AI-generated content. Furthermore, you commit to academic integrity by avoiding plagiarism and ensuring that your work reflects your own critical thinking and creativity and cites all sources used. Violating this honor code may result in disqualification from the competition.

Evaluation criteria

Essays will be judged on the following criteria:

- Originality (5 points)
- Depth of philosophical analysis (5 points)
- Relevance and timeliness (5 points)
- Structure and clarity of arguments (5 points)
- Linguistic quality (5 points)

Prizes

Prizes will be awarded to the top three high school and top three college student essay submissions. In both categories, the prizes are the following:

- First place: Scholarship for a language course at the Goethe-Institut in Germany and an Immanuel Kant themed prize package
- Second and third place: Scholarship for an online German language course by the Goethe-Institut USA and an Immanuel Kant themed prize package
- All students who enter the competition will receive a certificate of participation

All prize winners (1st-3rd place) will be invited to Washington, D.C. for an award ceremony at the German Embassy. The Ambassador of the Republic of Germany will conduct the award ceremony. The best essay submissions will be published.

Jury

- Katharina Kraus, Associate Professor of Philosophy, Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, Maryland
- William Layher, German teacher, Ladue School District in Ladue, Missouri
- Desmond Jagmohan, Assistant Professor of Political Science, University of California in Berkeley, California

About "Sapere Aude":

"Sapere Aude", or "Dare to Know through Reason", is not only a call to education and enlightenment, but also a call to personal courage and integrity. In this spirit, we invite you to join the conversation of big ideas and help reignite the influence of Enlightenment in our world today.

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Questions? Contact: teacherservice-usa@goethe.de