

Black History Month Secondary School Speech Competition

Official Speech Contest Rules

Contest Sponsors¹

The Black History Month Secondary School Speech Competition is sponsored by the U.S. Department of State and U.S. Embassy Bridgetown (**the “Contest Sponsors”**).

Description of Contest Objectives

The United States Embassy to Barbados, the Eastern Caribbean, and the OECS is pleased to announce its **Black History Month Secondary School Speech Competition** taking place on **Friday, February 22, 2019**.

Each February, Black History Month celebrates the contributions made by persons of African descent, and celebrates the defining moments in their history that have shaped society. The youth represents the future decision makers, innovators and leaders of a nation. They are a vital voice, who in the face of emerging unprecedented challenges, employ unique means to cope with and bring these challenges to light. By providing forums and opportunities for youth to share their perspectives, they can suggest solutions and options based on their distinct perspective and mobilize their counterparts to be active change agents.

In recognition of Black History Month 2019, U.S. Embassy Bridgetown invites interested **Barbadian** secondary schools to nominate one student (ages 14 to 16 years) to deliver a speech, not exceeding five (5) minutes, in response to one of the five prompts listed below. The student will also have four (4) minutes to respond to follow-up questions posed by the judging panel. The student will have the opportunity to win a fantastic prize package worth approximately \$1,000 USD for their school, faculty supervisor, and themselves.

Speech Prompts:

- 1. In January 2015, American activist April Reign launched the hashtag #OscarsSoWhite, in response to an all-Caucasian slate of acting nominations for the Academy Awards. This movement inspired calls for more diversity in the entertainment industry. In spite of the success of the 2018 release of *Black Panther*, evaluate whether the entertainment industry has done enough to encourage and showcase the cultural diversity of the United States in the years since the #OscarsSoWhite movement began.**
- 2. In recent years, there has been a growing trend to confront Caucasian public figures for cultural appropriation, “the act of taking or using things from a culture not your own, especially without showing that you understand or respect this culture.” Musician Justin Timberlake, reality star and makeup mogul Kylie Jenner, and fashion designer Marc Jacobs are a few of the celebrities who have been accused of appropriating Black and**

¹ Throughout the contest rules, the term “sponsors” is used to represent either single or multiple sponsors, where applicable.

African American culture. However, there has been less controversy surrounding the appropriation of Black culture by other ethnic minorities. Discuss whether cultural appropriation is morally wrong when carried out by other non-white individuals, for example Bruno Mars.

3. 2019 marks the 400th anniversary of the arrival of the first enslaved Africans brought to English North America, what is today the state of Virginia, in August 1619. A legal framework for hereditary lifelong slavery in Virginia developed throughout the seventeenth century, and continued until the United States abolished slavery in 1865. However, the 400-year history of African Americans is often relegated to two chapters in American History textbooks, and race is often too controversial to discuss in classrooms. To what extent should the classroom be used as a forum to discuss race and ethnicity?
4. In celebrating Black History Month in the United States, there is often a focus on the incredible work of a few pioneers, including Harriet Tubman, Frederick Douglass, Martin Luther King Jr., and Rosa Parks, many of whom either contributed to the Anti-Slavery Movement or Civil Rights Movement. Identify and justify the inclusion of more controversial African American figures who should be recognized for the contributions to Black History.
5. Several American literary classics, which are staples on school reading lists, have been criticized for their racist tones and/or racially offensive language, for example, Mark Twain's *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, Margaret Mitchell's *Gone with the Wind*, and Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Assess whether such classic works should be removed from school reading lists, or if there is merit in their continued inclusion.

Platform(s)

Events from this contest may be announced and promoted on various Social Media platforms including Facebook, Twitter, Flickr and the U.S. Embassy website, but contest entry and administration will take place through e-mail and in-person. Contest winners may also be announced on Facebook, Twitter, Flickr and the Contest Sponsors' websites; however, Facebook, Twitter and Flickr are not partners or sponsors of the contest. Contestants are reminded that by participating in the contest and uploading content to Facebook, Twitter, and Flickr, they are bound by these platforms' Terms of Service and any agreements contained therein.

How to Enter

Secondary schools should indicate in writing the student who will represent the institution in the Black History Month Speech Competition. The school must provide the name of the student, the speech prompt selected, the student's grade level, student's birthday, Participant Consent Form, school's contact information, and name and contact information for the faculty supervisor. The school should e-mail this information to BridgetownIRC@state.gov by **no later than Friday, February 9.**

Only one (1) student (14 - 16 years old) may represent their secondary school during the competition, and must be supervised by a teacher or faculty member from the institution. The student and supervisor must be available to attend the Speech Competition on **Friday, February 22, at 10:00 a.m.** to deliver their speeches at U.S. Embassy Bridgetown to the judging panel. In addition to the faculty supervisor, competing students are invited to bring one (1) parent/ guardian for support on the day of the competition. All guests must confirm their attendance via e-mail to BridgetownIRC@state.gov by **Friday, February 15**, to attend the competition at U.S. Embassy Bridgetown.

The student must select one (1) prompt/question from the list of questions below, and prepare a five (5) minute speech arguing their position. Speeches will be timed, and **must not** exceed five (5) minutes. The judging panel will then ask the student a series of follow-up questions regarding their argument. This follow-up discussion will not exceed four (4) minutes. The judges will assess the contestants and complete their rankings based on the general criteria listed on page 4 of this document. Sixty percent (60%) of the student's final score will be based on their prepared speech, and forty percent (40%) will come from their response to the follow-up questions. The judges' decision is final.

Participation in the contest is deemed as acceptance of these Official Contest Rules.

The contest commences on January 7, 2019 with an announcement on Embassy Bridgetown's Facebook page. The contest ends on **February 22, 2019**, at which time participants will deliver speeches at U.S. Embassy Bridgetown before a panel of judges. Judging will take place on-site at U.S. Embassy Bridgetown on **February 22, 2019**. The winner will be announced on the Embassy Facebook page, and the prizes presented to the winning student following the tabulation of results on the day of the speech competition.

Content Requirements

- a. Speeches must not contain obscenity, explicit sexual material, profanity, calls or incitement to violence, commercial solicitation or commercial promotion. Speeches must conform to local law and must not contain content that could be considered abusive, inflammatory, denigrating, or disrespectful to any of the Contest Sponsors, or to any groups, individuals or institutions. Speeches must adhere both in appearance and in fact to the norms of civil discourse. In other words, the content of all speeches must be suitable for a global, public audience.
- b. Speeches must be original content created by the contestant and must not contain any elements that are protected by someone else's copyright or otherwise subject to third party intellectual property or proprietary rights, including privacy and publicity rights (except as expressly permitted below in (d)). Contest Sponsors recognize no allowance for "fair use" of copyrighted material, nor do Contest Sponsors recognize allowance for use of licensed materials created or owned by a third party.
- c. Contest Sponsors reserve the right to disqualify, at their sole and absolute discretion, any speech that does not adhere to these criteria and to the intent and substance of these Official Contest Rules.
- d. In the event of any question or difference of views regarding compliance with, interpretation, or application of these content requirements or other provisions of these Official Contest Rules,

Contest Sponsors reserve the exclusive right to resolve such questions or differences of views in their sole discretion.

Eligibility

- a. Contestants must be between **14 and 16 years old** on the date of entry into the contest. Parental or legal guardian consent is required for individuals under the age of 18. Contestants must be residents of **Barbados**, and may not be U.S. citizens or lawful permanent residents.
- b. The individual participating in the Speech Contest will be considered the contestant and will be the only individual eligible to compete for the prize. Organizations are not eligible to compete for the prize, either as an entity, or through representation by an individual. In order to be eligible for the prize, the contestant must provide complete and accurate information.
- c. The following individuals are not eligible to participate in the contest: Employees, interns, directors, and officers of the Contest Sponsors, Facebook, Twitter, Flickr, or the U.S. Government; or any employees, interns, directors, officers of any agencies, companies or entities involved in the administration, advertising, judging, creation, development, execution, and/or fulfillment of the contest, and the immediate family members (defined as spouse, recognized partner, parent, child, sibling, and spouse or "step" of each) and those living in the same household of each such individual.
- d. Once a submission has been accepted for entry into the contest, the contestant's name and country may be publicly identified at the sole discretion of the contestants.

Selection of a Winner

- a. All speeches are subject to screening by Contest Sponsors to ensure compliance with these Official Contest Rules. Contest Sponsors reserve the right in their sole and absolute discretion to verify in the final analysis whether a potential finalist or potential winning speech has fully complied with these Official Contest Rules before posting to the contest site, awarding prize, recognizing as winner, etc.
- b. Judges: The contest jury is comprised of five (5) members of staff from the U.S. Embassy Bridgetown.
- c. Judging Criteria: The judges will use the following general criteria to assess the contestants, and determine a winner.
 - Elocution
 - Organization
 - Reasoning and Logic
 - Argument: Evidence, Examples and Expert Opinions used in support of ideas or conclusions
 - Grammar and Language
 - Originality
 - Quick-thinking in response to follow-up question
- d. Winners: Each winner and/or finalist will be required to sign and return to Contest Sponsors a statement of eligibility and liability/publicity release and provide a short bio (where applicable) and a brief statement about the speech; otherwise the winner and/or finalist will be ineligible for any prize. The inability of Contest Sponsors to contact a potential winner may result in

disqualification and/or selection of an alternate winner from among all remaining eligible submissions.

- e. Winners and runners-up will be notified via the e-mail address they provided upon entry. Winners and finalists may be announced on the Embassy website and/or social media pages. Winners and finalists may choose to use an alias instead of their real name and may request other identifying information be kept private.

Prize(s)

- a. Students have the opportunity to win an incredible grand prize package valued at **\$1,000 USD** for their school and themselves. Prizes will also be awarded to second and third place students.
- b. Any unused portion of the prize is not transferable, convertible, or exchangeable and cannot be taken as cash. All taxes on or in connection with any prize, and the reporting consequences thereof, are the sole and exclusive responsibility of the winner.

Liability and Rights

- a. Contest Sponsors do not endorse any submissions or messages expressed therein, and Contest Sponsors expressly disclaim any and all liability in connection with the submitted essays including disputes between collaborators related to a submission.
- b. The contest and its sponsors do not permit copyright infringing activities or infringement of any other intellectual property rights, and Contest Sponsors reserve the right to remove and disqualify any submission they deem to be in violation of another party's copyright or other intellectual property rights.
- c. Contestants retain sole ownership of their original work. The submission remains the intellectual property of contestant, and the Contest Sponsors and U.S. Government make no claim of copyright as to the work of any individual who enters the contest. Contestant specifically agrees to give the Contest Sponsors permission to use all content submitted for purposes of judging the contest. Finalists and/or winners will be required to grant Contest Sponsors, with proper attribution through whatever means they deem appropriate, a worldwide, non-exclusive, royalty-free, sub-licensable and transferable license to use, reproduce, distribute, prepare derivative works of, and/or display the submission in any media formats and through any media channels in perpetuity in connection with the activities and operations of the contest.
- d. Contestant assumes sole responsibility for the contest submission and the material contained in it, and for any consequences of submitting or posting it.
- e. Contest Sponsors reserve the right at any time to verify the validity of entries and of contestants and to disqualify any contestant or entry deemed not in compliance with these Official Contest Rules. Contest Sponsors also reserve the right to request further documentation, at their sole and absolute discretion, to verify eligibility and compliance with these Official Contest Rules.
- f. If a prize or any portion thereof is unavailable, Contest Sponsors, in their sole discretion, reserve the right to substitute the prize with another prize of equal or greater value and/or specification.
- g. Contest Sponsors reserve the right, at any time and in their sole discretion, to disqualify and/or deem ineligible any individual who they reasonably believe (i) has violated the Official Contest Rules; (ii) has violated the terms of use of platform, or (iii) is acting in a bad faith, or in an

unsportsmanlike or disruptive manner, or with intent to annoy, abuse, threaten or harass any other person.

- h. Contest Sponsors reserve the right to modify, suspend, terminate or cancel the contest at their discretion for any reason.
- i. Contestant agrees to indemnify and hold harmless Contest Sponsors, their parent, subsidiary and affiliated companies, officers, directors, employees, interns, and agents, from and against any and all claims, damages, obligations, losses, liabilities, costs or debts, and expenses (including but not limited to attorney's fees) arising from (i) violation of these Official Contest Rules; (ii) violation of any third party right, including without limitation any copyright, trademark, intellectual property, privacy, publicity, or other proprietary right in connection with the contest; or (iii) any claim that a contest submission caused any harm, including financial, to any third party. These indemnification and hold harmless obligations will survive indefinitely beyond the conclusion of the contest.
- j. The conduct, judging, and awarding of prizes will be carried out in full compliance with applicable U.S. law and host country law. In the event of a conflict between U.S. law and host country law, U.S. law shall apply.
- k. Contest Sponsors and the U.S. Government will take reasonable measures to protect privacy data, personally identifiable information, and other sensitive data of contestants. Contact information provided by contestants may be stored by U.S. Embassy Bridgetown and may be used to contact contestants for other purposes in the future. This information may be shared with the co-sponsor of the contest and/or be made available to third parties, to the extent permitted by law.
- l. Contest Sponsors assume no liability or responsibility for any loss or harm resulting from any user's participation in or attempt to participate in the contest or ability or inability to upload, download, or otherwise access any information in connection with participating in the contest. Contest Sponsors assume no responsibility or liability for technical problems, or technical malfunctions arising in connection with the operation of the contest, including: hardware or software errors; faulty computer, telephone, cable, satellite, network, electronic, wireless or Internet connectivity, or other online communication problems; errors or limitations of any Internet service providers, servers, hosts or providers; garbled, jumbled or faulty data transmissions; failure of any email transmissions to be sent or received; lost, late, delayed or intercepted email transmissions; inaccessibility of the contest site in whole or in part for any reason; traffic congestion on the Internet or the contest site; unauthorized human or non-human intervention in the operation of the contest, including without limitation, unauthorized tampering, hacking, theft, virus, bugs, worms; or destruction of any aspect of the contest, or loss, miscount, misdirection, inaccessibility or unavailability of an email account used in connection with the contest.
- m. Use of contest site is at user's own risk. Contest Sponsors are not responsible for any personal injury, property damage, or losses of any kind which may be sustained to computer equipment resulting from participation in the contest, use of the contest site or the downloading of information from the contest site. By participating in the contest, the contestant releases Contest Sponsors from any and all claims arising from or relating to such contestant's participation in the contest, whether directly or indirectly.
- n. Contest Sponsors are not liable in the event that any portion of the contest is cancelled or delayed due to weather, fire, strike, acts of war or terrorism, or any other reason.