

UIL Essay Contests: How to Become a UIL State Finalist

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UIL Essay Contests

ACADEMIC CONTESTS

Overview

Contest Materials

Accounting

Computer Applications

Current Issues & Events

Essay Contests

Literary Criticism

Ready Writing

Social Studies

Spelling & Vocabulary

ESSAY CONTESTS
CONTACT INFO



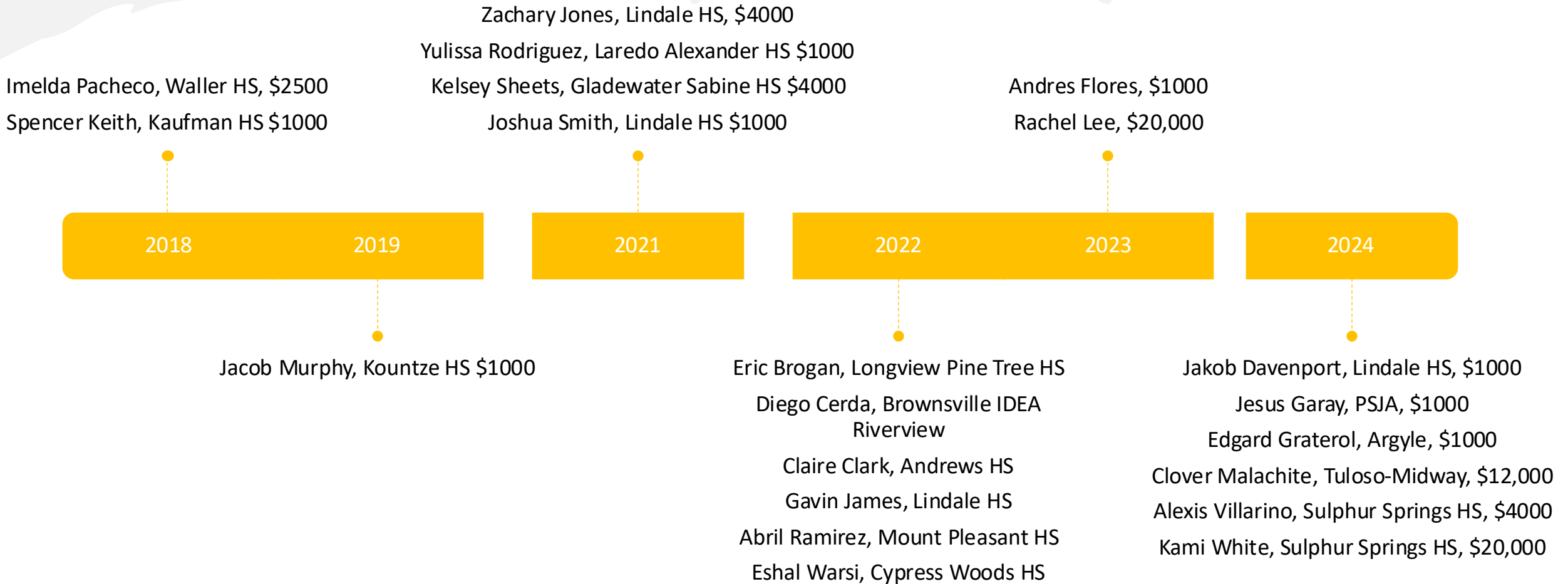
UIL Essay Contest Information

[https://www.uiltexas.org/
academics/essay-contests](https://www.uiltexas.org/academics/essay-contests)

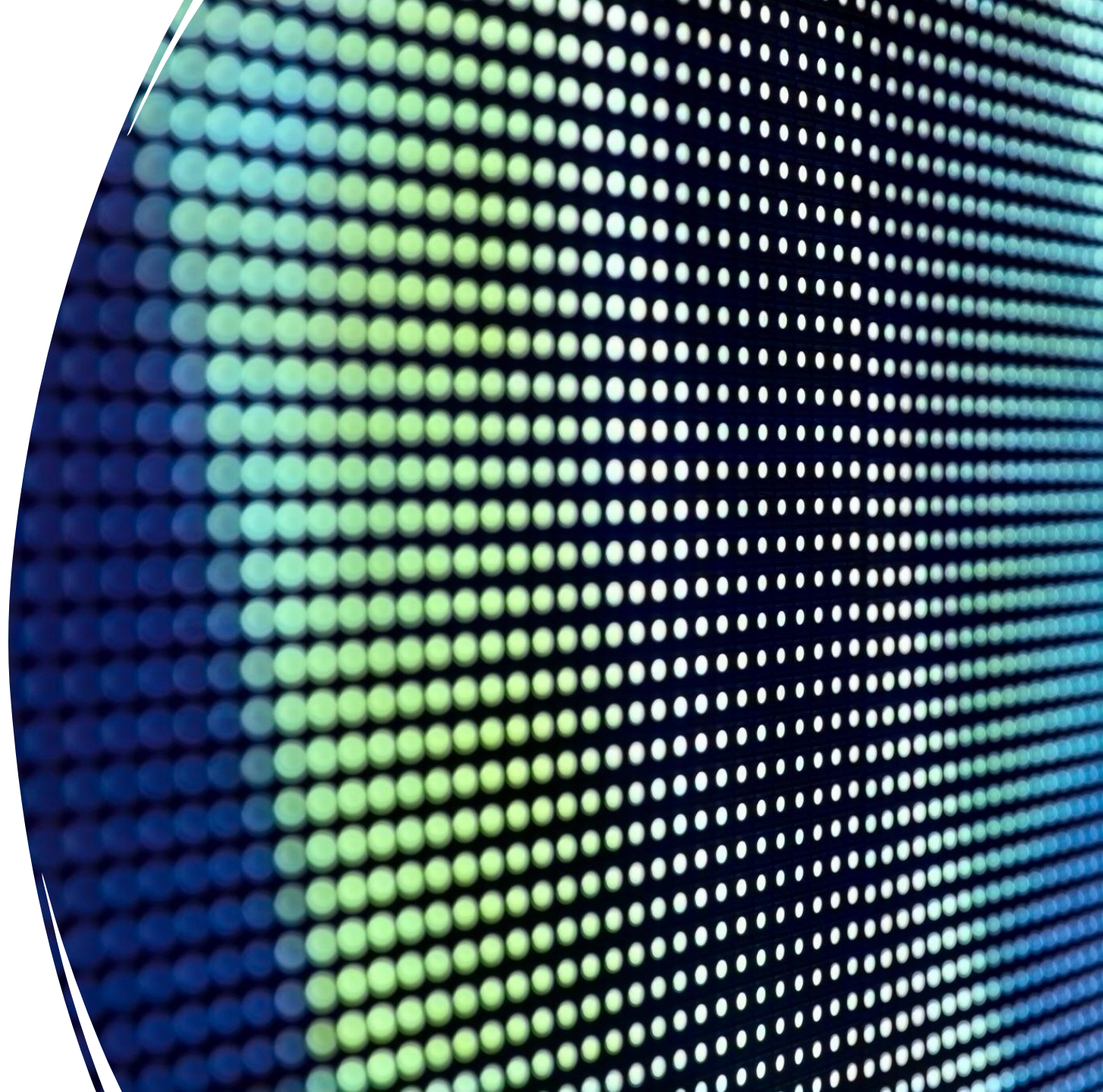
Why you should enter...

- Learn about an incredible person/group/movement
- Become a state finalist through ONE essay
- Earn your campus sweepstakes points
- Have your paper become a part of Texas history
 - Dolph Briscoe Center for American History (Barbara Jordan essays)
 - Benson Latin American Collection (Latino essays)
- Become eligible for TILF scholarships

Money, money, money, money (scholarship eligibility)...



It's All
Online



2 Essay Competitions

Barbara Jordan
Historical Essay
Competition

Latino History
Essay
Competition

Barbara Jordan Historical Essay Competition

African Americans in Texas: Past and Present

Essays should focus on **individuals or groups who are not well-known figures** but who have made **significant contributions** to African American history or culture in **Texas**. Students should look first to their local communities for possible essay topics.

Latino History Essay Competition

Historical and cultural legacies of Latinos in Texas history

Essays should focus on a **prominent** or **relatively unknown** Latino individual, organization or movement in Texas history. **How has the subject of the essay significantly influenced today's Latino communities?**

What makes a research paper effective?

Thesis statement is easily found and well worded

Tangibility

Quality sources

Citation method- MLA, APA, etc...

Parenthetical citations

Concise

General Guidelines

- Essay with a word count between 1,500 and 2,500 words.
- Research paper format - [MLA format](#) or [APA format](#) recommended
- Source citations and bibliography required
- Essays should display *original* research; use of [primary sources](#) and interviews strongly encouraged

How to write a winning paper



Topic selection



Consider your own community



Reach out to those who might help with topics

Family members

Teachers

Librarians

Local genealogists

Members of the clergy

Community leaders

Local government officials

How to write a winning paper



Research conventions

Thesis statement

Citations

Concrete detail and commentary



Polished paper

Concrete Detail & Commentary

- Concrete detail
 - Quotes
 - Paraphrases
 - Summaries
- Commentary
 - Your thoughts/opinions
 - Analysis

- **Jane Schaffer**
- **method**

How to write a winning paper



- Conventions of effective writing
 - Diction
 - Sentence variety
 - Voice
 - Taken from Geof Hewitt, Vermont's Writing Consultant to Secondary Schools on voice:
 - "The mind working alone produces thought; the heart produces feeling; the tongue makes speech and the hand makes scribble: all four together create voice. And all four create a successful writer."



University Interscholastic League
Essay Evaluation Form

PLEASE RECORD THE ENTRY NUMBER IN THE SPACE ABOVE!

Instructions: Judges evaluate each essay about the following criteria: thesis statement, research, paragraph construction, grammar, and parenthetical citations and bibliography. The sections below are intended for judges to provide brief constructive comments for contestants based on those criteria — strengths of the essay, areas needing improvement, and some suggested ways to improve.

Strengths of the Essay	
Select all that apply:	
<input type="checkbox"/> Paper effectively addresses the essay prompt	<input type="checkbox"/> Commentary bolsters key ideas
<input type="checkbox"/> Thesis statement is effectively proven about far-reaching topic	<input type="checkbox"/> Paper moves beyond a summary of the subject's life
<input type="checkbox"/> Purposefully utilizes a variety of sources including primary sources	<input type="checkbox"/> Contains very few grammatical mistakes
<input type="checkbox"/> Paper is clear, well organized, and coherent	<input type="checkbox"/> Citation method utilized is mostly correct
<input type="checkbox"/> Concrete details (quotes, paraphrases, summaries) are effectively incorporated	<input type="checkbox"/> Essay is memorable
	<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
Additional comments:	
Areas Needing Improvement	
Select all that apply:	
<input type="checkbox"/> Thesis statement is ineffective and/or not proven	<input type="checkbox"/> Commentary about research is lacking
<input type="checkbox"/> Topic is not far-reaching and/or no clear connection to Texas	<input type="checkbox"/> Paper needs to be carefully proofread
<input type="checkbox"/> Paper does not move beyond a biography	<input type="checkbox"/> Awkward sentences and/or word choice
<input type="checkbox"/> Paper needs more source variety	<input type="checkbox"/> Citation method is missing or has multiple errors
<input type="checkbox"/> Lack of clarity, organization, and/or coherency	<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Concrete details are ineffective	
Additional comments:	
Constructive Comments and Suggestions for the Contestant:	

• Judge Evaluation Form

Example Winning Paper

What works?

How does the student
fulfill the essay
requirements?

Additional sample winning papers

Barbara Jordan
Historical Essay
Competition

Latino History
Essay
Competition



What questions do
you have?

Additional Resources

- [Essay Contest Webpage: https://www.uiltexas.org/academics/essay-contests](https://www.uiltexas.org/academics/essay-contests)
- [YouTube Video by Lisa Parker: https://tinyurl.com/4zazsnbj](https://tinyurl.com/4zazsnbj)
- [YouTube Video by Gail Herman](https://tinyurl.com/3aw2dzvw), a UIL essay contest coach who has repeated success with the competitions:
<https://tinyurl.com/3aw2dzvw>

Enter the Contest(s)!

- **Deadline is Wednesday, February 12**
- **<https://rb.gy/qm7psx>**