



Student Holocaust Writing, Art, Multimedia Contest

“The Power of Words and Images: Truth, Propaganda, and the Courage to Speak Out”

The Jewish Community Relations Council (JCRC) of the Youngstown Area Jewish Federation invites students in grades 7–12 from Mahoning, Trumbull, and Columbiana Counties in Ohio, as well as from Western Pennsylvania, to participate in its annual Holocaust Writing, Art, and Multimedia Contest.

This contest is held each spring in conjunction with Yom Hashoah (Holocaust Memorial Day), a solemn day dedicated to remembering the six million Jews murdered during the Holocaust and the millions of other innocent victims of Nazi persecution.

The theme for the 2027 contest is “The Power of Words and Images: Truth, Propaganda, and the Courage to Speak Out.” This year’s theme is inspired by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum’s “State of Deception: The Power of Nazi Propaganda” poster exhibition, which explores how propaganda helped transform prejudice into persecution and ultimately genocide. A reproduction of this exhibit will be on display in the Thomases Family Endowment of the Youngstown Area Jewish Federation Art Gallery at the JCC of Youngstown from April 30–May 10, 2027.

Propaganda is more than misleading information. It is the deliberate use of words, images, symbols, and emotion to shape the way people think, feel, and act. During the Holocaust, the Nazi regime used propaganda to spread antisemitism, create fear, encourage conformity, and convince ordinary Germans to accept discrimination against their Jewish neighbors. Through newspapers, radio broadcasts, films, books, posters, classrooms, and youth organizations, Nazi leaders manipulated public opinion until hatred became normalized and silence became acceptance.

The Holocaust demonstrates that words and images have extraordinary power. They can dehumanize people, justify injustice, and encourage indifference. Yet words and images also have the power to educate, unite communities, inspire compassion, challenge hatred, and defend human dignity.

Today, information reaches us in ways unimaginable during the Holocaust. News stories, videos, podcasts, memes, influencers, and social media posts can travel across the world in seconds. While these technologies allow us to connect and learn from one another, they also make it easier for misinformation, stereotypes, conspiracy theories, and hateful messages to



spread rapidly. By understanding how propaganda operated during the Holocaust, we become more thoughtful consumers and creators of information in today's digital world. The choices we make about what we believe, what we share, and when we choose to speak out continue to shape our communities. The lessons of the Holocaust remind us that recognizing misinformation, defending truth, and upholding the dignity of others are responsibilities shared by us all.

Contest Prompt

Create an original work that explores the importance of questioning information, seeking truth, and using words, images, or actions to stand against hatred and misinformation. Draw upon lessons from the Holocaust to reflect on how individuals can recognize the techniques of propaganda, think critically, choose courage over silence, and consider the responsibility each of us has to seek truth, challenge misinformation, and speak out against hatred and prejudice.

Contest Guidelines

The writing component may be either a narrative composition or poetry, not to exceed 1,500 words, double-spaced, and submitted in Microsoft Word.

The art component should demonstrate originality and creatively interpret the contest theme using paint, pencil, charcoal, colored pencil, crayon, digital illustration, photography, or another appropriate medium on 8½ x 11-inch white paper or its digital equivalent.

Multimedia submissions, no longer than five minutes, may be submitted in the form of a short film, documentary, podcast, digital story, animation, video essay, or other original multimedia presentation. Entries should demonstrate originality and thoughtful engagement with the contest theme while making effective use of the chosen medium.

All entries—writing, art, and multimedia—must include a title and be accompanied by the following information:

- Student's name
- Home address and telephone number
- School name, address, and telephone number
- Teacher's name
- Grade level

The submission deadline is Wednesday, March 31, 2027.

Awards will be presented during the community's Yom Hashoah Commemoration on May 4, 2027 at noon in the Rotunda of the Mahoning County Common Pleas Courts. For more information, contact the Jewish Community Relations Council at 330.746.3250, ext. 108.
