

To help you maximize your chances of success, we put together this handy list of essay tricks and tips. They cover all the steps from a good idea to a great final draft.

### DO:

- **Start early.** While this may seem obvious, it bears mentioning right here in the beginning: the earlier you start, the more time you have to finish, and the better your essay will be!
- **Know what you want to say.** Before writing your essay, take the time to consider the question, read the guidelines, and think through the response first. Don't just fly through it by the seat of your pants – brainstorm, create an outline, take a few days to think about your idea, talk about it with a friend. You have two months to complete the essay, so take your time!
- **Research, research, research!** We expect you to use the resources made available to you through our website, as well as any other resources you come across. Our website's section on [Women in the Partisans](#) has partisan biographies (including video interviews – an excellent primary resource!), study guides, and even a short film about the subject. Here are some other useful resources:
  - [Yad Vashem](#)
  - [United States Holocaust Memorial Museum](#)
- **Edit and proofread.** Always revise your work *multiple times* before submitting it. This is the standard rule of thumb for everything from graded assignments to cover letters for job applications. Our essay contest is no different – essays with spelling and grammar mistakes will simply not be considered, so get into the habit of proofreading early and often. A second pair of eyes can also be useful – if you can, get a friend or a writing tutor to proofread your essay with you. [More proofreading tips can be found here.](#)
- **Make it shine.** Your essay is limited to 600 words, so make them count. Polish your word choices, tighten up your sentence structures, pare off redundant words and phrases and avoid repetition. Make sure that you are consistent with pronouns and tense. Do your transitions make sense? Make it personal – we want to hear *your* voice!
- **Give your essay one final read-through before submitting it.** We already mentioned this before, but it needs to be mentioned again. You will be amazed at how many mistakes you haven't caught yet! Do not rely solely on spellcheck to catch misspelled words.

### DON'T:

- **Wait until the last minute.** This is never a good idea. When you wait until the last minute to craft your essay, you do not have time to polish and refine your work. Generally, this makes it very difficult for your work to stack up against the best contenders. Additionally, we are only able to accept the first 700 essays, so it would be a shame to spend time and energy on writing a fine essay and be unable to submit it for entry.
- **Plagiarize.** We know you've heard all the warnings before, but here is the obligatory warning: we will disqualify any plagiarized entries and notify the teacher.
- **Submit rough drafts.** We are expecting carefully crafted, insightful, technically proficient essays. We will disqualify anything we think does not fit that criteria without regard to the author's enthusiasm or intent, so please take the time to polish your essay to the best of your abilities.