

2014 Benjamin Franklin Transatlantic Fellows Summer Institute Essay Contest

The Academic Exchanges Office is pleased to announce an essay competition for the 2014 Benjamin Franklin Transatlantic Fellows Summer Institute. An intensive, four-week exchange program held each summer in the United States, the Institute is named after the distinguished American statesman and diplomat Benjamin Franklin. His legacy serves as inspiration to today's young citizens seeking to explore how Americans and Europeans see each other and the world. The goal of the Institute is to foster relationships between American and European youth and to promote mutual understanding between the United States and Europe.

One or two essay contest winners will be selected to travel to the United States **June 28-July 26, 2014** to participate in an Institute held at **Wake Forest University in North Carolina or Purdue University in Indiana**. Students from Europe and the U.S. will take part in discussion of global issues of common interest, training sessions, workshops, community-based programs, study tours, and cultural events. Participants will work together to prepare a joint project that promotes the goals of the Institute.

Costs for the Institute (travel, courses, lodging, and meals) will be covered by the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs and the host university. The application process consists of an essay, registration form, and telephone interview.

Contest Topic

Students are asked to write an original and creative essay, no more than 1,000 words, in English on the following topic:

In February 2014, athletes representing many countries of the world will gather in Sochi for the XXII Winter Olympic Games. How would you evaluate the role of the Olympic Games and sports in promoting international understanding and cross-cultural interaction?

Essays must be the **original work** of the student (all quotes should be cited properly) and include a bibliography. Students must use at least **five different sources** such as newspaper articles, books, and/or personal interviews, and online resources, to address the topic.

Please submit your essays and completed registration forms by e-mail to the U.S. Embassy's Academic Exchanges Office at USGExchanges@gmail.com. For questions, please call the office at (495) 728-5000, ext. 4925, or send an e-mail to USGExchanges@gmail.com. The deadline to submit essays and registration forms is **February 7, 2014**. The registration form can be downloaded here: <http://moscow.usembassy.gov/bf-essay-regform.html> and more details about the Institute and selection criteria can be found here: <http://moscow.usembassy.gov/bf-ta.html>.

Phone interviews will take place in March, and winners and alternate candidates will be announced in late April – early May 2014.

Eligibility Requirements

Contest entrants must:

- be citizens of the Russian Federation and qualify for an exchange visitor (J-1) visa;
- be 16, 17 or 18 years of age as of June 28, 2014;
- be highly proficient in English;
- be committed to enrolling in high school or university in Russia in fall 2014;
- demonstrate strong leadership potential and interest in transatlantic relations and diplomacy;
- indicate a serious interest in learning about the United States;
- have a record of sustained high academic achievement;
- demonstrate a commitment to community service and extracurricular activities;

- have had little or no prior U.S. study or travel experience in the United States;
- be mature, responsible, independent, confident, open-minded, tolerant, and inquisitive;
- be willing and able to fully participate in an intensive summer program and community service;
- be comfortable with campus life, shared living accommodations, travel and interaction with a multinational group of participants from across Europe and the United States;
- be willing to share their culture and traditions with Americans and other participants.

Employees of the U.S. Embassy and members of their families are not eligible to participate.