

**ACCESS TO INFORMATION UNIT
&
ACCESS TO INFORMATION ADVISORY STAKEHOLDERS Committee
NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL ESSAY COMPETITION**

- Topic:** "The right of access to official government documents granted to members of the public by the Access to Information Act (2002) strengthens our democratic system of government". Discuss.
- Period:** September 2009 – February 2010
- Launch:** September 30, 2009
- When Due:** February 28, 2010
- Judging:** March 2010
- Awards:** March 2010
- Who:** Registered High school students between third form and sixth form
- Purpose:** This contest is sponsored by the Access to Information Unit and the Access to Information Advisory Stakeholders Group and is designed to give Jamaican youngsters the opportunity to become more aware of the Access to Information Act
- Essay Length:** 2500 words typed and double-spaced. (Title, footnotes and bibliography are not included in the final word count).

How to Enter: Entries must be sent to:
Access to Information Unit,
5-9 South Odeon Avenue, Kingston 10
Phone: 968-8282
Fax: 926-9491
Email: ati@cwjamaica.com

Prizes: The essay competition will award first, second and third place winners with \$10,000, \$7,000 and \$5,000 respectively. The winners will also be presented with ATI Unit Trophy, ATI Advisory Stakeholders Committee Trophy and ATIAA Trophy.

Judges: A panel of judges will be selected. It will comprise representatives of the ATI Stakeholders Committee, Access to Information Association of Administrators and the ATI Unit.

In either case, judges should never compare scores or comment on the essays being judged.

Essay Contest Rules

General Rules

1. Contestants must type an original essay with limited guidance from others.
2. Any quotations or copyrighted material used in the essay must be properly identified. Failure to identify non-original material will result in disqualification.
3. The Access to Information Unit will have the right to edit, publish or otherwise duplicate any essay entered into the contest without payment to or permission from the author.
4. Essays must be written in Standard English. Font size is to be 12 point in Times New Roman. Paper size should be either A4 or standard letter size.
5. Each contestant may submit only one essay.

Contest Rules

1. Failure to write on the official topic will result in disqualification.
2. Each entry must begin with a title page containing: topic, number of words, writer's name, address, telephone number, name of school. (Deduction of 5 points for incorrect total of words submitted).
3. Essays must be type-written and double-spaced. (Deduction of 5 points)
4. Essays must contain 2500 words. Every word of the essay is counted. This does not include the title, bibliography, or footnotes identifying non-original material.
5. Each page of the essay must be numbered starting with first page of the essay, not the title page. The numbers must be centered at the bottom of each page.

Judging

A double-blind scoring system will be used to judge essays submitted. This system is designed to make the process of judging as easy and impartial as possible.

- Each judge will receive copies of the essays from which the names and schools of the students have been removed.
- The panel of experts selecting the three winners will read and score each essay individually.
- The total points for each of the essays will be added together, and the essay with the highest cumulative points wins.

Point System

The following system will be used to judge the essays:

- Understanding of the topic = 0 – 30 points
- Effectiveness of style and organization of essay = 0 – 15 points
- Originality in approach and treatment of the topic = 0 – 30 points
- Ability to establish a coherent, convincing response to the essay topic = 0 – 15 points
- Adherence to format and length rules = 0 – 10 points

Total Points = 100 points

Awards

First-place: ATI Trophy & \$10,000 cash
Second-place: ATI Advisory Stakeholders Committee Trophy & \$7,000 cash
Third-place: ATIAA Trophy & \$5,000 cash

Protests

The decision of the Access to Information Unit and the Access to Information Advisory Stakeholders' Committee Group is final.