



## **The Council of Irish Associations of Greater Bergen County, Inc.**

Post Office Box 5113  
Bergenfield, New Jersey 07621

February 26, 2023

To: High School Guidance Counselors:

The Council of Irish Associations of Greater Bergen County, Inc., a tax-exempt educational and charitable organization, announces the 2023 Kevin J. Duffy Memorial Scholarship Essay Contest. Named in memory of a past council member and president who upheld an inspiring vision of promoting Irish culture and heritage, each year the Council awards a scholarship of a thousand dollars to the winner and five hundred dollars to the second-place winner.

Open to all graduating high school seniors in Bergen County planning to attend an institution of higher learning, the essay contest is for the purpose of promoting awareness and knowledge of Irish and Irish-American culture.

Three topics in Irish and Irish-American studies are provided. The applicant may select one topic for the essay. The winner will receive a thousand dollar scholarship, and the second-place winner will receive a five hundred dollar scholarship. The panel of judges is composed of educators and members of the Council.

Essay winners are encouraged to participate, if possible, in the Council's annual Great Hunger Commemoration at the Bergen County Courthouse, attending the event to accept their scholarships and read their essays. The Great Hunger Commemoration is tentatively scheduled for the first or second Saturday of May.

If there are any questions, please email: [EssayContest@BergenCountyIrish.org](mailto:EssayContest@BergenCountyIrish.org).

Respectfully yours,

Deirdre Spollen-LaRaia, Ed.D.  
President



## The Council of Irish Associations of Greater Bergen County, Inc.

### 2023 Kevin J. Duffy Memorial Scholarship Essay Contest

In the interests of increasing awareness of Irish culture, the Council of Irish Associations of Greater Bergen County, Inc., would like to announce an essay contest for high school seniors. Since 2016, which was the centenary of the 1916 Easter Rising, each annual essay contest has related to events that took place in Ireland a century prior to the contest year. The year 1923 saw the end of the Irish Civil War, which began when the controversial treaty that ended Ireland's War of Independence led to opposing factions within Ireland taking up arms against one another. Two of the following three questions deal with different aspects of this conflict, while the other addresses an Irish literary milestone from the year 1923.

- *The Irish Civil War ended with a ceasefire on May 24, 1923, just less than a year after it had begun. Research the violent events of the Irish Civil War, as well as leaders' attempts to prevent it or bring it to an end. How did the events of the war contribute to lasting bitterness? At the same time, how did the defeat of the Anti-Treaty forces lead to compromise and a more stable way forward for Ireland's evolving government?*
- *One of the key figures of the Irish Civil War was Liam Lynch, the Chief of Staff of the IRA, who led the Anti-Treaty forces against the Free State government, and who voted to continue fighting even when others had wearied of the war. The war is thought to have effectively ended with his death on April 10, 1923, as his successor Frank Aiken quickly ordered a ceasefire a few weeks later. However, Liam Lynch was initially opposed to taking up arms against the government, and is said to have regretted the Civil War at his death. Research Liam Lynch and evaluate his actions before and throughout the Civil War, and the effect that they had on Ireland.*
- *On November 14, 1923, poet and playwright William Butler Yeats received the Nobel Prize for Literature, the first Irishman to receive the prize. In his acceptance speech, he paid tribute to his fellow Irish artists and friends who had worked alongside him, and discussed the problems that beset the Abbey Theatre, which he co-founded with a goal of promoting Irish nationalism, as it came into conflict with British authorities, religious authorities, and Irish political movements. Read Yeats's acceptance speech at <https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/literature/1923/yeats/lecture/> and analyze his portrayal of the growth of modern Irish literature and the pressures affecting Irish art at the time. What does he believe to be supremely important in art? According to him, what helped to give Irish art its power? What compromised or interfered with Irish art in the tumultuous opening decades of the twentieth century? What vision did he have for the future of Irish art, and for Ireland itself?*

The winner will receive a \$1,000 scholarship, while the second place-winner will receive a \$500 scholarship.

**Eligibility**

All high school seniors residing in Bergen County, New Jersey, who intend to enter college.

**Rules**

The essay must be no fewer than 600 and no more than 1,250 words in length, and must be typewritten and double-spaced. Since information is so readily available on the Internet, the student must show insight and understanding of the selected topic, with necessary attributions to sources. An attached cover sheet must include the following:

Your name and address and telephone number	Your selected college
Name and address of your high school	Topic selected (#1, 2 or 3 from list above)
Your counselor's name & telephone number	References and/or sources used

One entry per student, please. All entries must be made electronically no later than **April 19, 2023**. The essay must be solely the work of the entrant. The entry must include a completed cover sheet (available on the next page), as well as the essay itself, and should be sent to [EssayContest@BergenCountyIrish.org](mailto:EssayContest@BergenCountyIrish.org).

**Judging**

Essays will be judged on both style and content. Judges will look for writing that is clear, factual, articulate, and logically organized. The winning essay must demonstrate an understanding of the topic. The decision of the judges will be final.



**The Council of Irish Associations of  
Greater Bergen County, Inc.**

**2023 Kevin J. Duffy Memorial Scholarship Essay Contest**

Contestant's Name, Address, & Telephone  
Number:

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Contestant's High School – Name & Address:

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Contestant's High School Counselor – Name &  
Telephone Number:

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Contestant's Selected College:

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Topic Selected:

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References and/or Sources:

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