

The Department of State's International Information Programs is initiating a pilot program through which we hope to hear your voices on a variety of subjects of interest to the international community.

The Youth Voices program is requesting essays of no more than 250 words and written in English by contributors between the ages of 15 and 25. Our first topic is sportsmanship and the Olympics. The Olympics begin on July 27, bringing together the world's top athletes.

But what do *you* think about how the Olympics are conducted and the level of sportsmanship on display there? Please **CHOOSE ONLY TWO** of the following questions to answer. Answer each question with an essay of 250 words. **Choose the two questions related to the subjects you feel most strongly about.** We are looking for **honest, unfiltered opinions with specific examples** to support those opinions. Tell us about incidents you've seen, the attitudes you've heard from your friends and the people around your age.

- Describe something specific you learned from sports that helped in your education.
- For a good athlete, when does doing whatever it takes to win become bad sportsmanship? Give specific examples.
 - When does good sportsmanship cut into an athlete's competitive edge? Give specific examples.
 - How do you balance sports and education? Give a specific example of when education benefits from participation in sports.
 - In some parts of the world governments pay for sports programs. Do you think this is good a good thing or bad? What part do you think government should play in sports? Be specific.
 - What values of sportsmanship can be useful when starting your own business?
 - Do you think sports are a way for women and girls to improve their lives? Do better in school? Help them earn money? Help their families? Describe a specific example from your experience when you've seen it happen.
 - How much of a difference does the quality of training facilities make for an athlete? Can you buy the athletic ability that wins Olympic gold, or will the best athlete rise to the top no matter how much or how little money is put into his or her training?
 - Is it fair to use technology to give you an advantage when competing in sports? Does it benefit the sport in general?
 - How can technology help make sports more fair?
 - How does the role of sports in the culture encourage or discourage sportsmanship?
 - Is there a difference between working to become a good athlete and working to become a good sportsman? If you think there is, what is it?

Here are examples of the first respondents:

[Sports Lesson Learned: "Be Good to Others"](#)
["Failure Is a Steppingstone to Success"](#)
[Bolt Electrifies Estonia](#)

When you send your response, please attach a digital picture of yourself—an image of your face rather than a full length picture—that we can run with the essay.

We'll be using the best essays for our social-media properties worldwide. We'll choose the ones to use based on how interesting the specific stories you tell us are. We will be editing them for clarity, grammar, etc.

As we'll be posting the essays during the Olympics, the absolute latest we can receive them is August 9. We will be much more likely, however, to use ones that we receive sooner. Submitting by August 1 will give you the best chance.

Please submit your essays and pictures to TrainerM@state.gov

If you have any questions, please send them to the same email address.

Thanks very much for your help, and I look forward to hearing your opinions!