

# INVITATION



With the support of the  
Finnish National  
Commission for  
UNESCO

**World  
Philosophy  
Day**



**UNESCO  
Associated  
Schools**

## UNESCO World Philosophy Day, November 20<sup>th</sup>, 2025

### Baltic Sea Philosophy Essay Event

*The Finnish UNESCO ASPnet, the Finnish Association of Philosophy and Ethics Teachers (FETO), Philosophical Society of Finland (SFY), and the Association for Women and Feminist Philosophers in Finland (NFY), with the help of the Norwegian High School Philosophical Association, organise a philosophical essay event for upper secondary school students. Even if the name of the competition is the Baltic Sea Philosophy Essay Event, it is open to young philosophers from any country.*

In Finland and Norway, the essay event also functions as a selection for the *International Philosophy Olympiad* (IPO) in 2026.

Schools that wish to participate in the essay event should order the essay topics from FETO by **September 25<sup>th</sup>** via e-mail: [bspee.international@gmail.com](mailto:bspee.international@gmail.com). Schools that have signed up will receive the topics by **September 26<sup>th</sup>**.

### The Essays

Papers should be concise, approximately one or two pages long, and written in English. Students have a choice of philosophical citations to write their essay on. Students are not required to know the larger context of their chosen citation or the philosophical works of its author. Instead, all they need to do is provide a coherent and philosophically meaningful interpretation of the citation. That is, (a) identify a philosophically meaningful question that is in accordance with the whole citation and (b) identify an associated claim (or an idea) that is presented and then discussed.

### Participating Schools Must

- send no more than two (2) best papers by **October 18<sup>th</sup>**
- provide 1–2 teachers for evaluation work from **October 20<sup>th</sup>** to **November 6<sup>th</sup>** (the deadline for the first round of evaluations is **October 29<sup>th</sup>** and the deadline for the second round is **November 6<sup>th</sup>**)
- follow the dates and instructions carefully

## Practicalities

Interested schools register by requesting the topics via e-mail by **September 25<sup>th</sup>**. The essay topics will be sent to the schools by **September 26<sup>th</sup>**.

Participating schools will arrange a monitored two-hour event in which the students will write their essays. Students may use English dictionaries only. The use of any other aid, such as a philosophical encyclopedia, the Internet, or artificial intelligence, is forbidden. The schools should select a maximum of two best papers and send them by e-mail to [bspee.international@gmail.com](mailto:bspee.international@gmail.com). The deadline for papers is **October 18<sup>th</sup>**, but please send them as soon as possible. Unfortunately late submissions cannot be accommodated.

After being coded and anonymised by the organisers, the essays are sent for assessment to the teachers of participating schools. Naturally, no teacher can mark an essay written by their own student. The identities of the contestants are revealed only after the end of the assessment work.

Each essay is read by two teachers during the first round. If there are significant disparities in marking, the essay is read by a third teacher. If the essay receives a sufficiently high point average, it is given a minimum of two extra readings in the second round. This second round of readings filters the potential medal essays for the organising committee. The committee also decides the number of essays to be awarded medals and honorary mentions.

The highest graded essays are sent to an independent jury for a final decision regarding the medals. The jury members represent the discipline of philosophy at the University of Helsinki, the Philosophical Society of Finland, and the Association for Women and Feminist Philosophers in Finland.

Diplomas will be awarded to the most illuminating papers. The names of the awarded participants will be announced on **November 20<sup>th</sup>**, and medal essays will be published on the BSPEE website. We therefore presuppose the participants' permission to publish their essays along with their names and schools. **If your student does not want their name or essay published, please inform us of this ahead of time.**

## Criteria of Evaluation

Even if assessment and evaluation of the philosophical merits of essays is always demanding and problematic, and despite the familiarity of teachers with other marking systems of philosophical essays, the organising committee gives the following advice for teachers in their assessment of BSPEE essays:

1. relevance to the topic,
2. **philosophical understanding of the topic,**
3. **originality,**
4. **persuasive power of argumentation,** and
5. coherence

1 and 5 are of a more formal character that needs to be in order, while 2, 3 and 4 form the substance of the assessment.

Essays are graded on a scale of 0 to 10 points. The grade boundary to enter the second round is 7,5. If the difference in grading is more than 3 points, the essay is read by a third assessor. If the average is more than 7,5 points, including the assessment of the third reader, the essay goes to the second round. In case of extreme differences (5 or more points), the odd grade may be dismissed after a third reading.

BSPEE 2025

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