



ESSAY CONTEST

THEME: "The Weight of The Names"

ENTRY DEADLINE: 6PM November 1, 2025

\$250.00 Award

Babylon Vault Company is hosting the Vietnam Traveling Memorial Wall October 9–13, 2025 at the New Windsor Fire Department Carnival Grounds in New Windsor, Maryland. The traveling wall is a $\frac{3}{5}$ -scale exact replica of the original in Washington, DC. At more than six feet tall and 300 feet from end-to-end, it lists the names of more than 58,000 men and women of the armed forces who lost their lives in Vietnam, including 18 from Carroll County.

Who Can Enter?

The Weight of The Names essay contest is open to all 6th–12th-grade students in all public, private, or parochial schools in Carroll County, Maryland. Home schooled students that reside in the county are also eligible.

Essay Criteria

Students are asked to explore the significance of the more than 58,000 names inscribed on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall. The theme encourages students to delve into the emotional, historical, and personal impact these names hold for individuals, families, our community, and the nation. For information, visit BabylonVaultCompany.com and click on "The Vietnam Traveling Memorial Wall." We also recommend that you visit the traveling wall in New Windsor to help you better conceptualize your essay.

Essay Guidelines

- Minimum 300 words to maximum 400 words in length.
- Typed, double spaced, 1-inch margin on all sides
- Arial or Times New Roman font
- 12-point type
- Free of graphics and/or decorative borders
- Every word is counted regardless of length*
- Must include reference list of works cited*
- Student's name and page number should appear as footer on each page*
- Essays not adhering to the above criteria and/or any use of AI will be disqualified from the contest

* Essay title, student name, word count in **bold**, reference list of works cited and footer are not included in word count.

How Are Essays Judged?

Entries will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

Relevance and Originality (50%)

- Does the essay directly address the topic?
- To what extent did the student demonstrate a clear understanding of the topic?
- Does the essay have creativity in its ideas, point of view, and presentation?
- Does the essay demonstrate imagination?
- How well does the writer present their viewpoint?
- Does the essay demonstrate a thorough knowledge of the theme?

Clarity and Coherence (30%)

- Is the essay easy-to-understand?
- Does the essay have a clear structure with a compelling introduction, well-developed paragraphs, and a strong conclusion?
- Are paragraphs appropriately separated and transitions used effectively to create a smooth flow of thoughts and ideas?

Style and Language (10%)

- Is the writing style appropriate and concise?
- Is the essay engaging?
- Are there any errors in grammar, spelling, punctuation, or usage?

Overall Impact (10%)

- Does the essay capture the reader's attention and maintain their interest throughout?
- Is the essay factual, sincere, and persuasive?
- Does the essay leave a lasting impression?

Submission and Deadline

- Submit as a PDF
- Completed and signed entry form must accompany essay at time of submission
- Email essay and completed entry form to BabylonVaultCommRelations@aol.com
- Subject line: The Weight of the Names Submission



Official Entry Form

Must be completed by all contestants
Babylon Vault Company Essay Competition
"The Weight of the Names"

Name: First, Last _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____

Zip _____

Grade in School _____

Essay Word Count _____

School Name _____

To Be Completed by Student's Parent/Guardian

(Required even if student is 18 or over)

I give my permission for _____ (PRINT name of entrant) to enter "The Weight of the Names" essay contest.

Parent/Guardian Name (Printed) _____

Parent/Guardian Signature _____

Date _____

Parent/Guardian Daytime Phone _____

Parent/Guardian's Email _____

What Are the Rules?

- You must write your own essay.
- All essays should be typed in English with no color or graphics. 300-400 words in length (+ or – five word max). Every word is counted regardless of length. The essay title, student name, cited sources and footnotes do not contribute to the word count.
- The entry form is your essay's cover sheet. Contestants are allowed to enter only once.
- The essay must be contestant's original work and a product of the contestant's own thinking.
- Use of Chat GPT or other AI tools is not allowed.
- The approach to the theme should be clearly focused.
- Poetry is not acceptable.
- Quotations may be used sparingly if plainly identified wherever used.
- A contestant's teacher, counselor, or parent may check the essay for punctuation, grammar and/or spelling but the content must remain the contestant's.
- Contestants will be judged on the basis of their essay alone and are not required to present the essay orally.

I have read and understand the contest rules.

Signature of Student Participant _____

Date _____

Winner will be announced on December 3, 2025.