

# The Bernice L. Fox Classics Writing Contest 2023

Sponsored by the Department of Classics at Monmouth College

## Topic: What Makes Them Different Makes Them Great

When an unlikely hero in mythology or history defeats an ostensibly superior foe or overcomes a seemingly insuperable challenge, people tend to applaud the achievement of the “underdog.” In the real world,



“underdogs” of all sorts often face restrictions that keep them in unfavorable situations. However, a similar factor can lead to overcoming odds in both the classical and modern worlds, summed up in the recently coined idea that “what makes people different makes them great.” Being out of power or privilege often encourages people to cultivate different talents and find different ways to overcome obstacles. In history, Spartacus, himself an enslaved gladiator, coordinated an uprising of gladiators and other enslaved people to challenge the Roman power structure. Demeter could not compete in force with her brothers Hades and Zeus, so

she strategized ways of getting her daughter back (in part) via other means. Aeneas and his defeated companions wandered for years and relied on others’ mercy before establishing themselves in a new land. For this Fox Contest, take a figure from mythology or ancient history who faced obstacles, of whatever sort, as part of her/his/their classical portrayal, and place that figure in the midst of a situation (ancient or modern, but not something with which the ancient person is typically associated) in which that person’s challenge(s) (which you will need to integrate clearly into your work) becomes part of the greatness that solves a problem.

### Contest Guidelines

- Entries must fit the theme of this year’s contest and must be in English.
- Entries must be typed and should be submitted electronically (in Google Doc or Microsoft Word format) by a teacher or



other adult (as explained below). Please ensure that the document is able to be edited by the organizers (i.e., no PDFs, please).

- There is no minimum or maximum length.
- The entrant's name and school must not appear on pages on which the text of the entry is printed. Instead, contestants should place a personal identification code (a randomly selected nine-character series) on the top left-hand corner of every page of the entry and include with their submission a separate document containing the following information:
  - author’s name, date of birth, and personal identification code
  - school name, mailing address, and phone number
  - teacher’s name and email address
- No more than ten entries will be accepted from any individual school, and only one entry per student will be accepted.

### Contest Parameters and Judging

This contest is open to any student enrolled full-time in high school anywhere in the world during the current school year. An award of \$250 will be given to the author of the best entry, which may take the form of a short story, essay, play, poem, or original literary work of any other sort.

Entries will be judged on accuracy to ancient sources (as relevant to this project), appropriate use of those sources, originality, quality of material, thematic development, English style, and effectiveness of presentation.

- Students who wish to enter the contest without school sponsorship (i.e., if they are homeschooled or at a school that is not taking part in the contest) must have a parent or other adult submit their work, and must include on their information page an explanation for their independent submission.
- Failure to follow these guidelines will result in disqualification.
- All entries become the property of Monmouth College.
- Every entrant will receive a certificate of participation from Monmouth College.
- The winner will be announced on or close to April 15, 2023, on the Monmouth College Classics Department Facebook page and/or on the department website.
- Send all entries and any questions to Prof. Robert Holschuh Simmons at [rsimmons@monmouthcollege.edu](mailto:rsimmons@monmouthcollege.edu).
- For further information, including a list of previous winners, please consult the contest website at <http://department.monm.edu/classics/Department/FoxContest/>. For information about our department, please visit <https://monmouthcollege.edu/academics/classics> and <https://www.facebook.com/MonmouthCollegeClassics>.

**All entries must be sent via email no later than March 15, 2023**

#### **About Bernice L. Fox**

The Fox Classics Writing contest was established in 1985 by Dr. Tom Sienkewicz and the Department of Classics at Monmouth College in Monmouth, Illinois, to honor Bernice L. Fox, to promote the study of Latin and the Classics in high schools, and to recognize the good work of high school students. Bernice L. Fox taught courses in English, Latin and Greek at Monmouth College from 1947 to 1981, and served as chair of the Department of Classics from 1970 until her retirement in 1981. Throughout her long and dynamic career, she worked tirelessly to promote the Classics in Illinois high schools and colleges. She is also the author of *Tela Charlottae*, the Latin translation of E. B. White's *Charlotte's Web*. In 1991, Monmouth College conferred on her the honorary degree of Doctor of Humane Letters. She passed away in 2003.

