

## University Students of Illinois Essay Contest on the Responsibility to Protect

In 1785, a student essay changed the world.

That year, the best students of their time entered the prestigious annual Cambridge University Latin essay contest. The essay topic was: "Is it right to make men slaves against their wills?" The contest winner, Thomas Clarkson, made a vibrant and compelling case against the abomination of slavery. The power of his ideas and the strength of his arguments eventually led to what seemed totally unconceivable at the time of his writing: the end of the slave trade in the British Empire in March 1807.

The Illinois essay contest on the responsibility to protect – R2P – is inspired by the historical contribution of students' essays in addressing the most fundamental issues facing humanity. Two hundred years ago, Thomas Clarkson's words triggered the abolition of slavery. Today, Illinois students are given the opportunity to prove their passion, their wisdom and their skills towards the abolition of atrocity crimes.