



American Ancestors®

A NATIONAL CENTER FOR FAMILY HISTORY, HERITAGE & CULTURE

2026 American Ancestors Young Family Historians Essay Contest



The 2026 American Ancestors Young Family Historians Essay Contest is open for students enrolled in grades 4–12 in public, private, and home schools across the nation and US territories.

We encourage teachers to use this essay contest as a class project. Our [Family History Curriculum](#) has everything you need to help students explore their roots, including inquiry-based lessons, teaching strategies, and editable student worksheets.

Essay Question

The years 2025 and 2026 mark the 250th anniversary of the start of the American Revolution and the signing of the Declaration of Independence. Share the story of an ancestor who was “revolutionary” and explain how their actions were new or impactful for their time.

Prizes

Grades 4-6

- Winner (\$500)
- Semifinalist (\$250)

Grades 7-8

- Winner (\$500)
- Semifinalist (\$250)

Grades 9-12

- Winner (\$500)
- Semifinalist (\$250)

Each winner & semifinalists will receive a one-year, student membership to American Ancestors.

Submit your entry at AmericanAncestors.org/Essay-Contest-2026 or scan the QR code



\$250-\$500 in prizes!

Submission Deadline:

APRIL 1, 2026

Who is eligible?

Students currently enrolled in grades 4–12 in public, private, parochial, and home schools across the nation and US territories.

Submission Guidelines

- Grades 4-6: 500 words
- Grades 7-8: 750 words
- Grades 9-12: 1,000 words

Formatting

- Word counts are approximate
- Number all pages
- Double-spaced
- 12 pt Times New Roman
- 1-inch margins on all sides
- Submission file must be a PDF