



## America250FL Essay Contest

*“Celebrating Florida’s Contributions to America”*

### Official Essay Rules and Guidelines Grades 6-12

The America250FL Essay Contest is open to all Florida students in grades 6-12. Eight winners will be selected: three middle school students (grades 6-8) with each winner receiving a 2-year Florida College Plan scholarship provided by the Florida Prepaid College Foundation and five high school students (grades 9-12) with each winner receiving a 4-year Florida College Plan scholarship provided by the Florida Prepaid College Foundation.

**Eligibility:** Contestants must be Florida residents and able to provide a Social Security Number. Each student may enter only one essay, written in English, no longer than 500 words.

**Entry Dates:** Entries can be mailed to Volunteer Florida, America250FL Committee, 1545 Raymond Diehl Road, Suite 250, Tallahassee, Florida 32308, or submitted electronically at [America250FloridaContest.com](http://America250FloridaContest.com). **All entries must be *received* no later than 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time on Monday, March 16.** Contestants are responsible for all shipping costs. Entries submitted electronically will receive email confirmation.

**Entry Form:** Student must provide all required information requested on the entry form and entry form must be legible. The student and parent/legal guardian are required to read and understand these rules in order to complete the entry form in its entirety. The entry form includes a release and certification that must be signed by a parent or legal guardian.

**Essay:** Student must submit an original essay not aided by any artificial means (e.g., artificial intelligence). Essay must:

1. Respond to prompt for appropriate grade level
2. Not be longer than 500 words
3. Written in English and typed
4. Include proper citations for previously published works

**Labeling Requirements:** Essays must include student’s name, home address, telephone number, school the student attends, grade level, title of the essay and a word count. Essays must be no longer than 500 words in length, written in English, and should be typed.

**Public Disclosure:** The Florida Public Records Act, located in Chapter 120, Florida Statutes, generally requires that all activities, including this contest, are open to the public. Therefore, all aspects of your involvement in this contest, including your essay, will be subject to public disclosure.

**In addition to the 500-word essay, each student must also submit each of the following:**

- A letter of recommendation (no more than 250 words) from an educator or professional describing why the student is worthy of receiving a scholarship and how the student stands out from his/her peers. **Letters of recommendation sent separately, via mail or electronically, will not be accepted.**
- A 200-word personal essay of why the student believes he/she is deserving of the scholarship, what his/her plans are for the future and what he or she has done recently to give back to his/her community.

For more information, visit [America250FloridaContest.com](http://America250FloridaContest.com) or contact Volunteer Florida at 850-414-7400.



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Essays should be written in a way that encourages the reader to continue to explore the topic further. All essays should include citations provided on a separate page. The link below can be a helpful resource for properly citing sources.

<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/2/>

### **Grades 6-8 Prompt**

Using several credible sources with varying points of view, write about a Floridian who made a lasting impact on American history and explain why their contributions still matter today.

**The student should explain in their own words why the subject of the essay is worthy of recognition.**

### **Grades 9-12 Prompt**

Using several credible sources with varying points of view, write about a Floridian whose actions, leadership, or ideas advanced federalist principles and had an impact on western civilization. Defend your choice with historical evidence.

**The student should explain in their own words why the subject of the essay is worthy of recognition and how he/she advanced federalist principles and had an impact on western civilization.**

### **Information to include on essay:**

- Title of essay
- Word count
- Student’s name
- Telephone number
- School student attends
- Grade level



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### Entry Form and Parent/Legal Guardian Waiver Form Grades 6-12

<b>Student Name:</b>		<b>Grade:</b>	
<b>Title of Essay:</b>		<b>Word Count:</b>	
<b>Home Mailing Address:</b>		<b>Age:</b>	
<b>City:</b>	<b>State:</b> Florida	<b>Zip Code:</b>	
<b>Parent/Legal Guardian Name:</b>			
<b>Parent/Legal Guardian Cell Phone Number:</b> <i>(including area code)</i>		<b>Parent/Legal Guardian E-Mail Address:</b>	
<b>School Name:</b>			<b>County:</b>
<b>School Mailing Address:</b>			
<b>City:</b>	<b>State:</b> Florida	<b>Zip Code:</b>	
<b>School Phone Number:</b> <i>(including area code)</i>			

**Essay Contest Checklist: All items to be included and submitted together in the entry packet.**

- Original essay responding to appropriate prompt for grade level.
- Completed, legible entry form.
- Signed Parent/Legal Guardian Waiver.
- Letter of recommendation (no more than 250 words) from educator or professional. **Letters of recommendation sent separately, via mail or electronically, will not be accepted.**
- Personal essay including community service statement (200 words).
- Submitted in time to be received by Volunteer Florida by 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time on Monday, March 16.**



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### Parent/Legal Guardian Waiver Grades 6-12

***Release Statement:***

As parent or legal guardian, I acknowledge that my child has written the attached essay. Should he or she win the essay contest, I agree to allow the essay to be distributed publicly. I also understand that if it is discovered my child used artificial intelligence, plagiarized or that the thoughts expressed are not his or her own, the essay will be subject to disqualification.

I, \_\_\_\_\_,  
(Print Name of Parent/Legal Guardian), hereby certify the following:

1. I am the parent/legal guardian of \_\_\_\_\_  
(print name of student, hereafter referred to as “my child”).
2. My child is currently a legal resident of Florida, a Florida elementary student (grades 6-12), and is enrolled in a Florida school (including public, charter, private, home or virtual).
3. I give permission for my child to enter his/her essay in the America250FL Essay Contest.
4. I understand that all rights to the submitted essay, including copyright, will be owned by the Executive Office of the Governor and not by me or my child. This transfer of rights will allow the Office, at a minimum, to reproduce, distribute, and display the essay as appropriate.
5. I give the Executive Office of the Governor permission to use my child’s name, photograph, voice, video image, biographical information, and his/her essay for promotional purposes without compensation or prior notice.
6. I agree to release and hold harmless the Executive Office of the Governor and its employees, officers, affiliates, agents, and advertising and promotional agencies from any and all damages, injuries, claims, causes of actions, or losses of any kind resulting from my child’s participation in this contest, including infringement of intellectual property rights. The Executive Office of the Governor and its employees, officers, affiliates, agents, and advertising and promotional agencies assume no responsibility or liability for any damages, injuries, claims, causes of actions, or losses of any kind arising in whole or in part from this contest. I understand that once the winners are announced, the decision is final.
7. I have read the official rules of this contest, and I further certify my child has followed these rules and is eligible to participate in this contest.

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Parent/Legal Guardian Signature

Date