

2024 History Essay Contest Winners



ESSAY TOPICS

4th Grade:

Choose one of the following topics:

- 1) Write an essay about your state's history, including information about the Catholic Church's history in your state.
- 2) Choose an important person in your state's history and write that person's biography.
- 3) Choose an important historical site in your state. It can be natural or man-made. Describe it and write about why it is important to your state.

5th Grade:

Choose a Catholic historical character (born before 1950) from North America (Canada, U.S., Mexico). Write about his or her life and work and why he or she was important to the Church and their country. Students may choose a person who was born outside of North America, but who did their important work in North America.

6th Grade:

Choose a country other than your home country, that you would like to visit. Research that country's history and write about two places of historical interest that you would like to visit if you traveled there and why. Your essay should not be an encyclopedic report on the country, but rather focus on the two historical places of interest and why they are of interest to you.

7th & 8th Grade:

Choose a non-North American historical character (from Europe, Asia, Africa, Australia or South America) who made their most important historical contribution between 300 A.D. and 1900 A.D. Relate how that person influenced the time and place in which they lived.

High School:

Choose one of the following topics:

- 1) Choose an important historical event (this could be a war, a single battle in a war, a plague, the coronation of a king, the passage of a law or decree, an ecumenical council, a revolution, an invention, a birth or death, a marriage, etc., but the event must be a historically important event). Describe the event, the key players, its outcome and how it changed history.
- 2) Discuss an artifact, whether physical or cultural. Examples include but are not limited to a document, a painting, a musical composition, a play, a building, etc. Spend some time exploring its place in the culture that created it, what it can tell us about the people and events of its time, and why it matters today. New for 2024.
- 3) Select a speech or address from a historical figure. Examples include but are not limited to the Gettysburg Address, Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech, Queen Elizabeth I's Speech to the Troops at Tilbury, etc. Research it and describe its place in history, its importance in its own time, what transpired before and after the address, and what themes remain relevant today. New for 2024.

HOMESCHOOL

4TH GRADE: KYLER BRANDON

“Ashfall Fossil Beds”

Kyler’s essay painted a mesmerizing picture of the natural events that led to the creation of the Ashland Fossil Beds in Nebraska. The grammar in the essay was sound and the paragraphs were clearly laid out and contained well-researched information.

5TH GRADE: DOMINIC GOUGE

“A Bishop to the Native Americans”

Dominic’s essay on Bishop Frederic Baraga was a pleasure to read. Dominic organized his essay with well-written and informative paragraphs that told a fascinating story about a figure that many Catholics in the United States likely have never heard about.

6TH GRADE: ANTHONY BALTZ

“Pompeii and Vatican City: The Classical and Renaissance Majesty of Italy”

Anthony’s essay on visiting Italy was an enthusiastic and well-written read. His paragraphs were organized and contained intriguing details about the aspects of Pompeii and the Vatican that were of most interest to him. His introductory and concluding paragraphs masterfully tied his essay together.

7TH & 8TH GRADE: CHIARA VALENTI

“An Unquenchable Flame: St. Edmund Campion”

Chiara’s essay on St. Edmund Campion provided a wonderful glimpse into the life of a courageous and uncompromising priest during the tumult of the English Reformation. Her essay was well-laid out with plenty of relevant information in her paragraphs. Her use of quotations in the essay was a particular strength that enhanced the quality of the entire essay.

HIGH SCHOOL: ELLIE BAKER

“On Sphere-Making: How a 2000-Year-Old Computer is Changing Everything”

Ellie’s essay on the Antikythera Mechanism was an excellent essay on a little-known artifact from Ancient Greece. Ellie did a terrific job of gathering her research and put forward a cogent and well-laid out piece detailing the importance of the Antikythera Mechanism during the time of the Ancient Greeks, how it shed light on a skillset.

CATHOLIC SCHOOL

4TH GRADE: PIO TARDIFF

“Father Peter de Smet, Hero of the Rockies”

Pio Tardiff's essay on Father De Smet offers a genuine, beautifully written account of Father De Smet's invaluable work in the United States. The essay is a comprehensive and organized biographical sketch on the famous priest and his work as a peacemaker between the United State government and the native Americans. In Tardiff's words, Fr. De Smet's intelligence and goodness shines through very nicely. Congratulations to Pio Tardiff.

5TH GRADE: BASIL HARDIN

“The Bishop of Baltimore”

The essay about John Carroll by Basil Hardin is nicely written. It offers interesting details of the Bishop of Baltimore and the importance of his life and work in the history of the Catholic Church in America, as well as in American history generally. I enjoyed the sincere tone and the organization of the well-written essay. Congratulations to Basil Hardin.

6TH GRADE: MILA GRIMMER

“Ukraine”

Mila Grimmer chose two places in Ukraine to write her essay, the St. Sophia Cathedral and the city of Ternopil. Her piece is well organized, bringing up interesting facets of both places and their historical significance. I enjoyed learning many new facts about Ukraine and also admired her personal, sincere tone. Congratulations to Mila Grimmer.

7TH & 8TH GRADE: LINH NGUYEN

“The Austrian Duchess of Habsburg”

Linh chose Empress Maria Theresa of Austria of the Hapsburg dynasty as the subject of her essay. Often eclipsed by the fame of her daughter, Marie Antionette, Linh's essay makes a solid argument that Maria Theresa's far-reaching reforms had a significant impact beyond her realm.

HIGH SCHOOL: LUCIA AUGDAHL

“The Tragic History of Japanese Christians during the Edo Period (1603-1867)”

The essay written by Lucia Augdahl entitled “The Tragic History of Japanese Christians during the Edo Period (1603-1867)” sheds light on a little-known yet important story. It is interesting and well organized, and it shows how the spread of the Catholic faith can suffer many setbacks. The use of a variety of references and the creative presentation are both excellent aspects of this winning essay. Congratulations to Lucia Augdahl.