

2023 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 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 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.

HOMESCHOOL

4TH: ANNA HARGETT

“Getting it Dunn for Tennessee”

Anna’s essay was well organized and the thoughts clearly laid out in well-formed paragraphs. The grammar was mostly sound and prompt/writing guidelines were followed. We especially appreciated that she used well-formed introductory and concluding paragraphs and that the writing was engaging.

5TH: JULIAN CRACE

“The Legendary Story of Fr. Patrick Ryan”

Julian’s essay was engaging and presented the story of Fr. Ryan in a detailed but organized way. The grammar was mostly sound and prompt/writing guidelines were followed. We especially appreciated details such as his use of questions in his introductory paragraph and having a strong concluding paragraph.

6TH: NATALIA BRAGA

“Australia, the Land of My Dreams”

Julian’s essay was engaging and presented the story of Fr. Ryan in a detailed but organized way. The grammar was mostly sound and prompt/writing guidelines were followed. We especially appreciated details such as his use of questions in his introductory paragraph and having a strong concluding paragraph.

7/8 THOMAS LANTHIER:

“Words for the World”

Thomas’ essay was very neatly presented. His paragraphs were well organized and his grammar and punctuation outstanding. Thomas chose an important historical person and wrote about him in an engaging style that was consistent through the whole essay. His essay brought forth a pleasant balance between information about the historical character and an engaging language.

HIGH SCHOOL GIANNA PASQUALE:

“How the Sinking of the Lusitania Affected the First World War”

Gianna’s essay was outstanding. It was beautifully written, concise, and interesting. Gianna chose an important event that is often not well-known, and kept the reader interested throughout. The bibliographical information was well presented as well.

CATHOLIC SCHOOL

GRADE 4: JAVIER MOLINA,

“The Prophet of Nature” (John Muir, California)

Javier wrote an excellent biographical essay on John Muir and how his work had an impact on California. He utilized a few quotations from John Muir’s writings to add additional depth to the essay. In addition, Javier’s love of nature and God’s creation comes through in his writing, giving the essay a personal connection.

GRADE 5: ALEX THOMPSON

“The Life of St. John Neumann”

Alex did an excellent job of giving examples of selfless actions by St. John Neumann in order to minister to his people. I enjoyed the personal connection made by Alex when he credited St. John Neumann’s founding of the first Catholic School for allowing him to receive a Catholic education today.

GRADE 6: MIRANDA POKKOW

“Australian Adventures”

Miranda’s essay focused on two specific sites in Australia which she felt encompassed the attractions of the country as a whole. She explained the historical significance of each site, but also what it was about each site which interested her personally. Miranda shared interesting historical facts about each site without giving an exhaustive history.

7TH-8TH BRIDGET KAUFFMAN:

“A Humble Bride of Christ: St. Birgitta of Sweden”

Ms. Bridget Kauffman’s essay on St. Birgitta of Sweden is an exemplary submission to the Catholic Essay Contest and marks an impressive achievement for the young author. Ms. Kauffman’s prose is lucid and coherent while her thought is focused in scope yet expansive in its logic. Moreover, her command of English grammar, punctuation, and syntax render her essay nigh impeccable in its mechanics. The result is a memorable and compelling presentation of the far-reaching influence a little-known saint bore on the key players in a pivotal time and place in Western civilization. I am confident in stating that, during my time as an essay judge, Ms. Kauffman’s work is almost certainly the finest piece I’ve ever read in the 7th-8th category.

HIGH SCHOOL ANTONIA FITZPATRICK:

“Two Revolutions: Liberty and Liberalism”

Ms. Antonia Fitzpatrick’s critical contrast of the ideologies underpinning the American and French revolutions is a thoughtful and inspired argument against the corrupting influence of rationalism, materialism, and secularism. Ms. Fitzpatrick demonstrates a depth of thought not commonly found today as she juxtaposes the Founding Fathers’ focus on personal sovereignty and dignity with the French Revolutionaries’ fixation on human reason and individual liberation. In a vivacious and uncompromising style, Ms. Fitzpatrick’s use of sound logic, relevant source material, and forceful prose marks her essay as the pinnacle of this year’s submissions to the High School category.