



2025 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 one of the following topics:

- 1) 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.

- 2) Discuss how religious motivations influenced explorations and settlements in the Americas. Focus on specific explorers or missions, such as the Franciscan efforts in La Florida.

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.
- 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.

HOMESCHOOL

4TH GRADE: COLE GLOWACKI

"Blessed Solanus Casey"

Cole wrote an interesting, engaging essay about a lesser-known Blessed, Solanus Casey. Not only did Cole give good information about Casey, but he also included his personal connections with the Blessed priest.

5TH GRADE: JUDE MONAGHAN

"The Life and Devotion of Elizabeth Ann Seton"

Jude's essay started out clearly stating why St. Elizabeth Anne Seton is important to the Church and her country. He then went on to give engaging examples of those reasons, and finished with a summary of those reasons. It was a well-constructed essay that was interesting and informative.

6TH GRADE: BELLE MASON

"A Land of Castles and Cottages: Slovenia"

Belle chose to write about a country that she would not only like to visit, but that is important to her and her family for personal reasons. Belle described her two chosen destinations in Slovenia with good details, adding in personal anecdotes about her family's history there. The essay was well-constructed and used lovely, descriptive language that was a pleasure to read.

7TH & 8TH GRADE: MERCEDES ISINGER

"A Lighted Lamp Illuminating Dark Places: Florence Nightingale"

Mercedes' essay on Florence Nightingale was well-researched and engaging. She went into exhaustive detail about Nightingale's work treating the ill in different corners of the world and how her tireless work led to changes in sanitation that we still benefit from to this day. For anyone who has never heard of Florence Nightingale, this essay serves as a fine introduction to her life.

HIGH SCHOOL: EMYR BRANDON

"Operation Little Vittles"

Emyr's essay on Operation Little Vittles was a pleasure to read. This year-long airlift of tons of candy to the children of West Berlin in the late 1940s is not a well-known event to most people, however, this essay provides substantial information about the origins and logistics of this operation meant to boost the morale of the citizens of a divided Berlin. It is a heartwarming and riveting read.

CATHOLIC SCHOOL

4TH GRADE: NYAH HARRIS

"Clara Barton"

Nyah Harris' essay is excellent from the beginning to the end. The essay follows the life and accomplishments of Clara Barton from her younger years helping at a farm to her founding of the American Red Cross. The well-organized concluding paragraph demonstrates the author's admiration for her subject. Congratulations to Nyah Harris for a superb essay!

5TH GRADE: NATALIA PIÑA

"Juan Diego's Tilma"

The story of St. Juan Diego and Our Lady of Guadalupe is a very popular one, and often retold. Natalia Piña's essay offers an excellent account of the story, highlighting the key events in well-organized paragraphs. The concluding paragraph remarks on the impressive ramifications of the events. Congratulations to Natalia Piña for an excellent essay!

6TH GRADE: EVELYN LUDEMAN

"Neuschwanstein Castle and Cologne Cathedral"

Evelyn Ludeman's essay offers a well-organized, succinct, and clear account of the two places in Germany she selected to describe. Her paragraphs describing the features and history of the Neuschwanstein Castle and the Cologne Cathedral are both well written and well organized. Congratulations to Evelyn Ludeman for a first-rate essay!

7TH & 8TH GRADE: AMELIE SUTINGCO

"Gabriela Silang: The Joan of Arc of Ilocandia"

Amelie's riveting essay tells the impact of Gabriela Silang, not only in the context of the Philippine struggle for independence, but her continued relevance as a figure of courage in modern culture. In addition, Amelie displayed knowledge of the international politics of Gabriela Silang's time and her use of the better known Western figure of Joan of Arc to draw the reader in was an excellent device which made Silang relatable to the audience.

HIGH SCHOOL: RUTH TOCCI

"Turning Towards Democracy"

Ruth built an excellent case for the influence of the Magna Carta on the American Declaration of Independence while giving the historical development and use in England for context. Her use of quotations enhanced the essay without overpowering it. While the timeliness of the topic is presumably coincidental, Ruth's essay proves the timeless importance of this foundational document.