



ESSAY CONTEST RULES 2025

Each contestant must be given a copy of the rules and complete the entry form. The rules contain information about the contest, judging and awards. All essay contest forms can be downloaded from the Americana Festival website at www.americanafestival.org

Section I- General Rules

1. The Americana Festival, Inc. Scholarship Award Essay Contest is open to residents of Centerville-Washington Township, Ohio only.
2. Contestants must type an original essay with limited guidance from others. Any and all use of AI type assistance is strictly prohibited and will result in immediate disqualification.
3. Any quotations or copyrighted material used in the essay must be identified properly. Failure to identify non-original material will result in disqualification.
4. Americana Festival, Inc. will have the right to edit, publish, or otherwise duplicate any essay entered into the contest without payment to the author.
5. High school and college finalists will meet with the Scholarship Committee for a personal interview. If necessary, college students will be permitted to schedule a phone interview.
6. College, High School and Middle School contestants will attend and participate in the Americana Festival Grand Marshal Reception, the Parade and Fireworks programs in celebration of the Fourth of July.

Section II- Qualifications

1. The requirements for participation are: high school senior currently attending school, college student who will be under 21 years of age on the 4th of July, or a Middle school student in grade 6, 7 or 8. Contestants must be residents of Centerville-Washington Township and meet all requirements to compete.
2. Contestants must meet the application deadline.

Section III- Contest Rules

1. Failure to write on the official topic will result in disqualification.
2. Each entrant must use the **application page** as the **first page** of the entry.
3. Essay title must be listed at the top right side margin of each typed essay entry page. The total number of words in your essay must be typed at the bottom of the last page of your entry.
4. Essays must be typed and double-spaced. (Deduction of 5 points)
5. Essays must contain a minimum of 500 words to 550 words maximum for High School and College and a minimum of 250 words to 265 words maximum for Middle School. Every word of the essay is counted. This does not include the bibliography or footnotes identifying non-original material. (Deduction of 5 points for each 25 words over and under the limits specified.)
6. No reference can be made in the essay that specifically identifies the contestant. This does not include nationality. (Deduction 5 points or fraction based on degree of identification)
7. Each page of the essay must be numbered starting with the first page of the essay, not the application page. The numbers must be centered at the bottom of each page.

Section IV- Judging

1. Judging will be completed by a panel of qualified judges.
2. In an effort to conceal the identity of each contestant, each entry will be assigned a number by the essay contest chair. The assigned number will be placed on the title page and first page of the essay. The application page will then be detached and retained by the essay contest chair. The judges will be given the essay bearing only the assigned number.
3. Judges will not discuss or compare essays being judged.
3. Only judges can assign a penalty or award points.

Section V-Scoring

Scoring procedures for all judges will be identical.

1. Material Organization (Logical interpretation of the subject, adherence to topic) 40 points
2. Vocabulary and Style (Phrasing and continuity) 30 points
3. Grammar, Punctuation, Spelling 20 points
4. Neatness 5 points
5. Adherence to contest rules (prepared in the proper format) 5 points

Section VI-Awards

Awards include framed certificates.

Awards are:

College Division

First place: \$1,600 Scholarship

High School Division

First place: \$1,600 Scholarship

Second place: \$1,000 Scholarship

Third place: \$ 800 Scholarship

Middle School Division

Sixth Grade \$600 Scholarship

Seventh Grade \$600 Scholarship

Eighth Grade \$600 Scholarship

Joe Bowlus Community Service Award (Available only to High School & College students)

The recipient of the Joe Bowlus Community Service Award is selected from among High School and College Essay Contest applicants by a select committee appointed by the Americana Festival President. The Bowlus Community Service Award is based upon the quality and quantity of the applicant's service to his or her community.

\$800 Scholarship

Americana Festival, Inc administers all scholarships.

Section VII- Protests

Any protest in the conduct of the contest must be made immediately. The Americana Scholarship chair will decide all protests in conformity with the contest rules. The decision of the contest chair is final, and no higher appeals will be recognized.