



Student Essay Contest

“As a Jewish Michigander, What Does America’s 250th Mean to You?”

What is the topic?

The state of Michigan’s guiding themes for the celebration of America’s 250th birthday include the “Power of Place.”

<https://www.america250mi.org/guide>

After thinking about this theme, write an essay that responds to the following question:

As a Jewish Michigander, what does America’s 250th birthday mean to you?

Discuss how your history, experiences, geographic location, identity, and/or values as a Jewish Michigander shape your perspective on our nation's milestone. Be as creative as you like!

Who can enter?

This competition is open to students in grades 9-12 in public, private, or homeschool as of the essay submission deadline.

Entrants must be residents of the state of Michigan.

What are the essay writing and research guidelines?

- All essays must be in English and be typed.
- Essays must be **250-500 words** in length and **must** include a title.
- Consulting outside sources is not necessary or expected, but any outside sources used in writing the essay must be cited.
- Quotations may be used sparingly as long as the source is identified.
- The word length **includes** the essay’s title and any added footnotes or endnotes. A “works cited” or bibliography page is **not** included in the word length.
- Essays must be the **original** work of the entrant whose name is listed on the entry form.
Plagiarism or AI-generated content will result in immediate disqualification.

What is the submission deadline?

- Essays must be submitted by 8:00 p.m. EDT on **October 12, 2026.**
- Late submissions will **not** be accepted.

How are essays submitted?

- Do **not** include your name, address, school name, or other identifying information in your essay.
- In a **single email**, attach as separate documents your essay **without** your name **plus** a completed entry form. Photos / screenshots of the entry form **are** acceptable.
- **Send to: Amer250@jhsmichigan.org**

Entrants may **not** submit more than one essay for consideration.

Submissions that fail to meet contest requirements will be disqualified.

What are the prizes?

- **1st place:** \$500
- **2nd place:** \$250
- **3rd place:** \$100

Winning essays will be published in the *Bulletin*, JHSM’s award-winning history publication.

Winners will be notified in early November 2026. An awards ceremony will be held in late November—date and location TBD.

How are entries judged?

- **Development of theme (50%):** Essays must directly respond to the question, relate the theme to the entrant’s personal experiences, and come to a conclusion.
- **Creativity (25%):** Essays must be original and engaging.
- **Writing (25%):** Essays must be well-organized, clear, concise, and use proper grammar, punctuation, and spelling.

Email questions to: Amer250@jhsmichigan.org

2026 JHSM Essay Contest Official Entry Form

Name: First, Middle Initial, Last

Address

City, State, Zip Code

Email

() _____
Cell Phone

School Name

Grade in School

Title of Essay

Name(s) of Parent(s)

Note: Ownership of any submission remains the property of the writer, but entry into the competition constitutes the entrant's permission and consent, without compensation, and with or without attribution, for Jewish Historical Society of Michigan to use, reproduce, transmit, post, distribute, edit, and/or display the submission.

I certify that my essay submission is my original work and I have followed all contest rules.

Signature of Entrant

Date