



We the People of the VALLEY

A VA250 Student Contest

Calling all student creators!!

As we celebrate the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, we want to hear from the students of America. What does American democracy mean to you? What should we celebrate about America? What matters most about our country? What ideals, freedoms, or principles should be protected for the next 250 years?

This contest is intentionally wide open. There are very few rules because we want your creativity to shine. When Thomas Jefferson wrote the Declaration of Independence, he began with a blank piece of paper and created something that changed the world.

✨ Now it is your turn! ✨

WHAT CAN YOU CREATE?

Absolutely anything that celebrates America and its ideals, including:

- Essays, poems, or speeches
- Artwork such as paintings, cartoons, collages, sculptures, or models
- Live or recorded performances, including songs, plays, videos, or even a scene from *Hamilton!*
- Museum exhibits, historical reenactments, or original research projects



AMERICA
★ 250!

Daughters of the
American Revolution

If it reflects your vision of American democracy, it belongs here!

SPONSORED BY THE MASSANUTTON CHAPTER OF THE DAR

Please submit entries to your school of enrollment, or school of residence if home-schooled.

WHAT CAN IT BE ABOUT?

This contest is certainly rooted in the Revolutionary Era as we celebrate the Declaration of Independence and the Fourth of July. But your project can highlight any time period in American history, from the Revolution to the Civil War, or from the Civil Rights Movement to more recent history. You might focus on:

PEOPLE: Founding Fathers and Mothers such as Thomas Jefferson, George Washington, Abigail Adams, and Phillis Wheatley; abolitionists and freedom fighters like Frederick Douglass, Harriet Tubman, and Sojourner Truth; reformers and suffragists such as Susan B. Anthony, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and Ida B. Wells; leaders of democracy and equality including Abraham Lincoln, Theodore Roosevelt, Barbara Johns; or voices for justice like Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Cesar Chavez, and Chief Joseph.

PLACES AND LANDSCAPES: The Mississippi River, the Rocky Mountains, the Great Plains, the Shenandoah Valley, national parks, historic landmarks, big cities, small towns, farms and factories, and other places that symbolize America's story.

SYMBOLS OF AMERICA: The Statue of Liberty, the St. Louis Arch, the Golden Gate Bridge, Mount Rushmore, or natural symbols such as the bald eagle, American buffalo, the Bull Moose, or the giant sequoia trees.

IDEAS AND IDEALS: Liberty, equality, justice, civil rights, the pursuit of happiness, freedom of speech, self-government, the rule of law, civic action, courage, resilience, unity, and the ongoing pursuit of "a more perfect Union."

IMPORTANT DATES:

Entries Due: Friday, May 22, 2026

Winners Announced: June 1, 2026

Recognition Ceremony: July 4, 2026

Awards will be presented the morning of July 4 at Spotswood High School during a 250th Independence Day community celebration hosted by the Massanutton Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution. Winners will share their creative response and receive their monetary award. **Recipients must be present.**



WIN CASH PRIZES!



HIGH SCHOOL DIVISION

1st Place — \$250

2nd Place — \$175

3rd Place — \$100



MIDDLE SCHOOL DIVISION

1st Place — \$250

2nd Place — \$175

3rd Place — \$100

QUESTIONS: Contact Beau Dickenson at bdickenson@rockingham.k12.va.us

Celebrate Democracy. Share Your Voice.



*There are no limits — only possibilities.
Be creative. Be bold. Be part of history.*

