



# 2024 Media Guide



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## Media Information

Thank you for your interest in America's Field Trip. This guide provides information about the contest and inaugural awardees, storylines, opportunities for media coverage, and more. For additional information about America250 and America's Field Trip, visit [America250.org](http://America250.org).

## Contact

For any questions, to request to cover upcoming field trips, or to connect with awardees, please contact [press@america250.org](mailto:press@america250.org).

## Media Coverage Opportunities

*July through September – Highlighting student awardees*

To inquire about interviewing student awardees, please contact our media team at the email above, and we will connect you with students' families if possible.

*July & August – Field trip experiences*

For safety reasons and to ensure awardees can make the most of their field trips, there will be **limited media availability on the trips themselves, and coverage will be determined on an individual basis**. To inquire about covering a specific field trip experience, please contact our media team at the email above.

## About America250

In 2026, the United States will mark a historic milestone — the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. America250 is the official nonpartisan initiative working to engage every American in commemorating and celebrating the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. It is spearheaded by the congressionally-appointed U.S. Semiquincentennial Commission and its nonprofit supporting organization, America250.org, Inc., together known as America250.



This multi-year effort kicked off with America's Invitation on July 4, 2023: a national public engagement campaign inviting all Americans to share their stories and their hopes and dreams for the future of this country. From now until July 4, 2026, America250 is working to provide opportunities for all Americans to pause and reflect on our nation's past, honor the contributions of all Americans, and look to the future we want to create for the next generation and beyond.

America250 is led by Rosie Rios, Chair of the U.S. Semiquincentennial Commission, and 43rd Treasurer of the United States.

To learn more about America250, visit [America250.org](https://America250.org), and follow us on:

X - [@America250](https://twitter.com/America250)

Instagram - [@250America](https://www.instagram.com/250America)

Facebook - [America250](https://www.facebook.com/America250)

LinkedIn - [@America250](https://www.linkedin.com/company/America250)

# America's Field Trip

America's Field Trip is a new contest that launched in March 2024, inviting students across the country in grades 3-12 to be part of America's 250th anniversary by sharing their perspectives on what America means to them — with the opportunity to earn unforgettable field trip experiences at some of the nation's most iconic historic and cultural landmarks.

For this year's pilot contest, thousands of students from over 40 states and territories submitted artwork, videos, or essays in response to the contest's prompt: "What does America mean to you?"

America's Field Trip was launched in cooperation with BNY, the 240-year-old global financial services company that played a pivotal role in the development, growth, and rise of the United States. America250 also worked with worldwide edtech leader Discovery Education to develop custom educational programming, ready-to-use activities, and resources to help teachers bring the contest into their classrooms.



## Awards

A total of 75 students have been named first-place awardees, 25 from each grade level category. Each student and their designated chaperone has selected one of several specially-curated field trip experiences this summer with travel and lodging provided by America250. Learn more about this year's field trip experiences on page 13. Profiles of the student awardees can be found on page 10.

There are also 75 second-place awardees who will receive a \$500 cash award. The teacher associated with the top scoring student submission in each grade level category received a \$1,000 cash award. Learn more about the teacher awardees on page 11.

# Submission Highlights & Excerpts

Thousands of students across the country submitted essays, poems, videos, and artwork about what America means to them. Their incredible submissions touched on a diverse array of themes – unity, challenges, patriotism, stories of immigration, hopes and dreams for the future, and so much more. Highlights and excerpts from those submissions can be found below.

To request to use submissions in media coverage, please contact [press@america250.org](mailto:press@america250.org).

## Narratives & Themes:

**Unity & Patriotism:** Students around the nation shared their love for America, thoughts on coming together in a polarized time and the need to find common ground.

**Challenges:** Many students looked to the past, present and future, highlighting the challenges that they see in our country but also their views on how to overcome them.

**Stories of Immigration:** The United States is a beacon of hope to millions – several students shared their stories on what it has meant to them to call America home, and why after 248 years our nation still embodies the American Dream.

**Vincenzo F., 5th Grade,**  
Boca Raton, Florida



**Lyric S., 5th Grade,**  
Phoenix, Arizona

*"America is like a huge music festival. One neighbor cranks salsa, another plays jazz. Down the street, you'll hear mariachi, and my mom loves to blast hip-hop tunes. Some might think all this music is just noise, but I think it's a sweet symphony! In America everyone brings their own special song, forming a harmony. We won't always agree on the same music, but when we play it all together, it creates something beautiful. That's what's so awesome about America. We have the freedom to express ourselves however we want, even if it means playing our favorite songs really loud!"*





**Maysen W., 5th Grade,**  
Adel, Iowa



**Anna W., 4th Grade,**  
Clarksville, Maryland

**Yva C., 12th Grade,**  
Miami Lakes, Florida

*"What does America mean to me?  
In Cuba, where dreams were held tight,  
My grandparents bravely made things right.  
With courage, they made their way,  
To America's shores, where they could stay.  
I wish I could truly understand,  
The love they had for this great land.  
For in America, they found a place,  
Where dreams could run wild and race.  
With gratitude, I must confess,  
All they gave, makes me feel so blessed.  
They left their lives behind,  
And I always wonder what was going through their mind.  
Though they weren't born in the USA,  
They continued to work hard everyday.  
My parents learned from the best,  
And have reflected nothing less."*

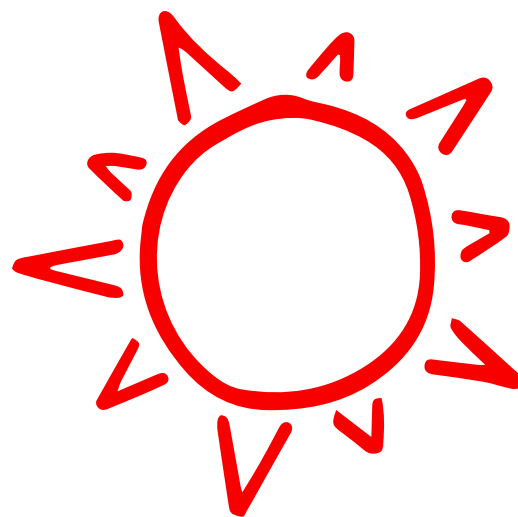


**Kadidiatou L., 12th Grade,  
Newark, New Jersey**

*"Leaving my country of Burkina Faso to find new opportunities in America was a daunting decision that ultimately changed the course of my life. As I navigated the challenges of adapting to a new culture and way of life, I was struck by the brightest of America — a land of endless possibilities, where diversity is celebrated and resilience is revered.*

*The story of America is a tapestry crewith the threads of hope, perseverance, and the pursuit of freedom. It is a land where dreams take flight, where individuals from all walks of life come together in pursuit of a better future. Despite its flaws and imperfections, America represents a land of progress and potential, a place where innovation thrives and voices are heard. To me, America is a melting pot of cultures, ideas, and aspirations. It is a place where the spirit of exploration and discovery is alive in every corner, where the beauty of diversity is embraced and celebrated. America symbolizes the promise of a brighter tomorrow, where individual journeys converge to create a collective story of resilience and triumph.*

*In America, I have found a sense of belonging and purpose, a place where I can continue my mission to advocate for the rights of women affected by genital mutilation. It is here that I see the potential to make a tangible difference, to be a part of a community that values equality and justice for all."*

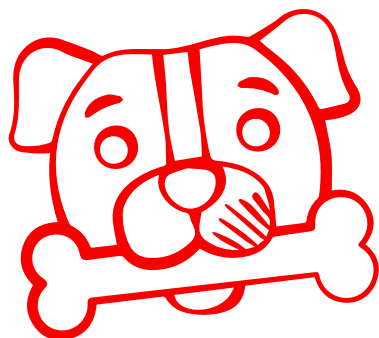


**Elizabeth B., 8th Grade,  
Winston-Salem, North Carolina**





**Caroline H., 8th Grade,**  
Laramie, Wyoming



**Fiona M., 5th Grade,**  
Alexandria, Virginia

*"Our country is like a dog, loyal and true. It's pushed down and let down, but still starts anew. Our country is like a puppy. It's not perfect, but it's new. Sometimes it doesn't know what to do. But with tons of care, and lots of love, our country can rise above. Our country is like a mutt, with many different parts, From places far off, or close. America is a place where we can love and learn, be unique and different. America is like a dog, loyal and true. It's pushed down and let down, but always starts anew."*

# Meet The First-Place Awardees

Out of thousands of amazing students across the country who participated in the inaugural America's Field Trip contest, 75 were selected as first-place awardees. Here's a look at who they are and where they're from:

## Fast Facts:

- ★ Thousands of total submissions from 44 states and territories
- ★ 75 first place awardees from 27 states
- ★ First place awardee submissions included:
  - ☆ 40 text submissions
  - ☆ 13 pieces of artwork
  - ☆ 22 videos
- ★ Grade level breakdown:
  - ☆ 25 first place awardees in 3rd - 5th grade
  - ☆ 25 first place awardees in 6th - 8th grade
  - ☆ 25 first place awardees in 9th - 12th grade



## ALABAMA

Mary H., 3rd Grade, Birmingham  
Camdyn M., 11th Grade, Chelsea

## ARIZONA

Lyric S., 5th Grade, Phoenix  
Dorothy Z., 7th Grade, Chandler  
Helen A., 7th Grade, Laveen  
Britney C., 10th Grade, Phoenix

## CALIFORNIA

Faith S., 4th Grade, Long Beach  
Edward Z., 5th Grade, Manhattan Beach  
Aryan S., 6th Grade, Lakeforest  
Shreya S., 7th Grade, Cupertino  
Melina P., 8th Grade, San Francisco  
Mina L., 10th Grade, Huntington Beach  
Aiyana B., 11th Grade, Sacramento

## FLORIDA

Vincenzo F., 5th Grade, Boca Raton  
Itamar J., 5th Grade, Coral Springs  
Aaliyah V., 9th Grade, Lake Mary  
Rayyan A., 9th Grade, Sarasota  
Yva C., 12th Grade, Miami Lakes

## IDAHO

Phoenix O., 8th Grade, Shoshone

## ILLINOIS

Leo A., 4th Grade, Oak Park  
Elia G., 9th Grade, Chicago

## IOWA

Charlee S., 5th Grade, Adel  
Maysen W., 5th Grade, Adel

## KENTUCKY

Pippy R., 4th Grade, Louisville

**LOUISIANA**

Braydelii H., 5th Grade, Metairie

**MARYLAND**

Anna W., 4th Grade, Clarksville  
Juweriya S., 10th Grade, Frederick  
Silas R., 10th Grade, Mount Airy  
Peony K., 10th Grade, Sykesville  
Guiliane P., 11th Grade, Silver Spring

**MASSACHUSETTS**

Emily W., 3rd Grade, Peabody

**MICHIGAN**

Camila S., 7th Grade, Allen Park  
Cambrie B., 11th Grade, Richland  
Morgan L., 12th Grade, Lake Orion

**MINNESOTA**

Sybil Z., 3rd Grade, Minneapolis

**MISSISSIPPI**

Andrew C., 12th Grade, Corinth  
Jerry P., 12th Grade, Corinth

**MISSOURI**

Kaylee C., 6th Grade, Ellisville  
Natalie R., 8th Grade, Pleasant Hope  
Julia P., 10th Grade, Humansville

**NEVADA**

Amelie M., 7th Grade, Las Vegas

**NEW JERSEY**

Lulin L., 3rd Grade, Bridgewater  
Jace T., 6th Grade, Newark  
Ginger C., 7th Grade, Salem  
Malay G., 7th Grade, Edison  
Kadidiatou L., 12th Grade, Newark

**NEW YORK**

Gabriel D., 5th Grade, Kerhonkson  
Kendyl C., 5th Grade, Kingston  
Audrey B., 5th Grade, New Paltz  
Gwen W., 5th Grade, Rifton  
Ryan Z., 5th Grade, Rifton  
Mckenna H., 6th Grade, Rifton  
Shrikar P., 7th Grade, Scarsdale  
Olivia F., 10th Grade, Brooklyn

**NORTH CAROLINA**

Taliesin Robert Allen R., 5th Grade, Greensboro  
Elizabeth B., 8th Grade, Winston-Salem  
Mya F., 11th Grade

**OKLAHOMA**

Anna S., 12th Grade, Glenpool

**PENNSYLVANIA**

Lydia Z., 3rd Grade, Weatherly  
Alyssa B., 5th Grade, Oreland  
Alyssa Y., 6th Grade, Yardley  
Margaret F., 8th Grade, Chester  
Leila W., 9th Grade, Cranberry Township  
Benjamin M., 12th Grade, Pittsburgh

**SOUTH CAROLINA**

Kiran Miles B., 4th Grade, Mount Pleasant

**TENNESSEE**

Charli M., 6th Grade, Lebanon

**UTAH**

Kate F., 10th Grade, Lehi

**VIRGINIA**

Fiona M., 5th Grade, Alexandria  
James C., 5th Grade, Alexandria  
Evelyn M., 8th Grade, Williamsburg  
Sara M., 11th Grade, Mosley

**WISCONSIN**

August B., 6th Grade, Plover

**WYOMING**

Trenton S., 7th Grade, Worland  
Caroline H., 8th Grade, Laramie  
Grace B., 8th Grade, Laramie

**TEACHER AWARDEES**

Amber Silvers, 3rd-5th Grade, Tully Academy  
Sara Moore, 6th-8th Grade, Home Life Academy  
Yindia Cruz, 9th-12th Grade, Crooms Academy of Information Technology

## Key Dates

- ★ **March 4, 2024** – America's Field Trip Pilot Launched
- ★ **May 17, 2024** – Contest Submission Deadline for 2024 Program
- ★ **June 2025** – 2024 Awardees Notified
- ★ **July 8, 2024** – 2024 Awardees Announced
- ★ **July – August 2024** – 2024 Awardees Participate in Field Trips
- ★ **September 2024** – America's Field Trip 2025 Contest Opens for Submissions
- ★ **Spring 2025** – America's Field Trip 2025 Contest Submission Deadline
- ★ **Summer 2025** – 2025 Awardees Participate in Field Trips

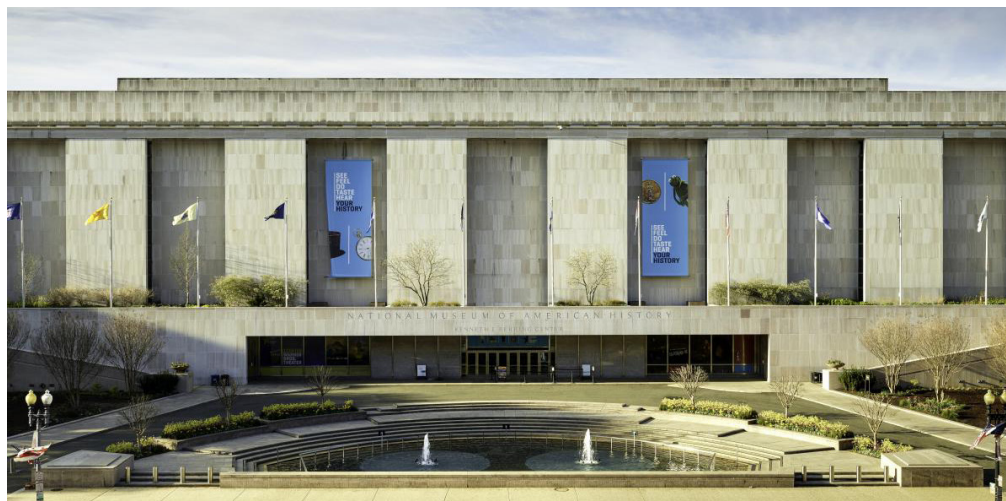
# Field Trip Schedule

## JULY 13 – Rocky Mountain National Park (Colorado)



Students will spend a weekend exploring like Enos Mills, the “Father of Rocky Mountain National Park.” Camp, hike, and horseback ride during a park ranger guided trip back in time. They will reflect on all of those who have come to this place before us: indigenous connections, first national park tourists, and modern visitors.

## JULY 15 – National Museum of American History (Washington, DC)



Students will see the iconic artifacts of American culture with a behind-the-scenes tour of the Smithsonian’s entertainment collections, including objects from blockbuster Hollywood movies and more.

## JULY 19 – American Village (Alabama)



Students will get a behind-the-scenes look at the American Revolution and the fight for America's independence. The awardees will be outfitted as a Patriot spy, immersing themselves in an adventure of espionage, intrigue, and patriotism, where they will ultimately have to decide what course events take. They will carry that role into a special evening experience with a Colonial dinner on campus.

## JULY 20 – National Museum of African American History and Culture (Washington, DC)



Students will get a special tour through the powerful exhibits of the only national museum devoted exclusively to the documentation of African American life, history, and culture.

## JULY 24 – Library of Congress (Washington, DC)



Students will take a unique tour of the largest library in the world and meet the Librarian of Congress, Dr. Carla Hayden. The Library’s curators and conservators will lead the awardees through the hidden stacks and tunnels, as well as underground laboratories. They will explore the National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled through touch with a hands-on learning experience featuring a variety of items from the NLS collections along with a tactile tour of the Library’s iconic Thomas Jefferson Building.

## AUGUST 1 – National Museum of Natural History (Washington, DC)



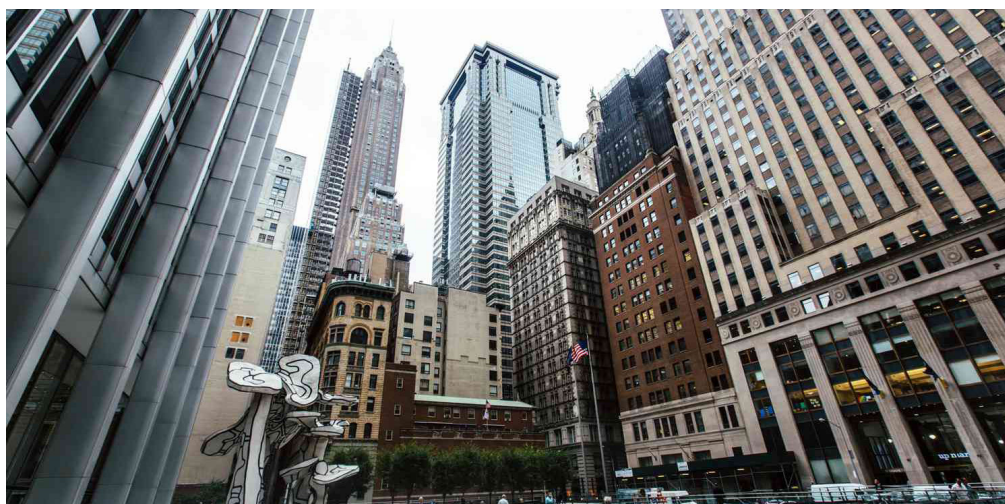
From the Hope Diamond to the Nation’s T. rex and beyond, students will explore the museum before it opens to the public and get a deeper understanding of the natural world and your place in it.

## AUGUST 6 – Statue of Liberty (New York City)



Students will catch a ride on the park rangers' morning boat to explore Liberty Island before the crowds arrive. They will experience the immersive theater at the Statue of Liberty Museum and climb the statue's steps for spectacular views of New York Harbor and the Manhattan skyline.

## AUGUST 6 – Financial District (New York City)



Students will explore America's iconic financial capital with a private, interactive tour of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York Museum and Learning Center to learn about the history and responsibilities of the central bank of the U.S. and its role in the economy. This will be followed by a special access tour of The Bank of New York Mellon — the oldest bank in the country, founded by Alexander Hamilton in 1784 — where students can explore an impressive collection of artifacts that offer a glimpse into the rich history of our country's financial innovation and resilience.



## **AUGUST 8 – Boston Harbor (Boston)**



Students will visit the USS Constitution Museum and step aboard the USS Constitution to learn from active-duty Navy sailors about what life was like aboard a 19th-century sailing vessel. They will experience a special tour of the Charlestown Navy Yard and the World War II destroyer USS Cassin Young. They will end the day with a sunset cruise to Spectacle Island.

## **AUGUST 10 – Golden Gate Bridge (San Francisco)**



Students will join park rangers for a special candlelight tour of Fort Point at the foot of the Golden Gate Bridge. As they walk through the Civil War-era fort, they will travel through time to learn more about West Coast history, from the creation of the Presidio of San Francisco in 1776 to the impact of Spanish colonization and the Gold Rush on the indigenous communities in California. They will end the journey on the roof of the fort for an up-close view of the Golden Gate Bridge after dark.

## **AUGUST 19-24 – Yellowstone National Park (Wyoming and Montana)**



Students will explore America's first ever national park on an unforgettable guided tour through extraordinary landscapes and iconic locations — from the Mammoth Hot Springs to Old Faithful — and a peek at Yellowstone's famous bison.

## **AUGUST 20 – National Archives (Washington, DC)**



Students will get once-in-a-lifetime access to America's most treasured founding documents. Awardees will receive a VIP tour of the National Archives Museum and see the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution of the United States, and the Bill of Rights. The tour includes a special visit to the vaults — almost never opened to the public — where students will get an up-close view of historic treasures like General George Washington's Oath of Allegiance Oath Card, the check that purchased Alaska, and more.

## Judging Criteria

A diverse panel of judges consisting of current and former educators considered the submissions based on the following weighted criteria:

- ★ **CLARITY OF IDEA [25%]:** How well does the Entrant use both their personal and academic experiences to clearly address the Question? Does the Entry effectively convey ideas, emotion, or a story visually or with words by acknowledging the past or celebrating America’s achievements and possibilities for the future? Does the response offer fresh insight and innovative thinking?
- ★ **STUDENT VOICE [50%]:** Is there passion in the Entry or a point-of-view that showcases a unique perspective on the diverse range of different experiences that make America unique in an original/ authentic way?
- ★ **PRESENTATION [25%]:** What makes the submission content more compelling, fresh, or interesting than other Entrants’ content in their grade level category?



# America250 Leadership

## U.S. Semiquincentennial Commission



Senator Shelley Moore Capito,  
U.S. Senator (West Virginia)



Jennifer Condon, Interim Executive  
Director of the USSC and Executive  
Vice President of A250



Senator Lisa Murkowski,  
U.S. Senator (Alaska)



Val Crofts



Senator Alex Padilla, U.S. Senator  
(California)



Joe Crowley, Former U.S.  
Representative (New York)



Senator Jeanne Shaheen, U.S.  
Senator (New Hampshire)



Daniel M. DiLella



Representative Robert Aderholt,  
U.S. Representative (Alabama 4th)



Cathy Gillespie



Representative Dwight Evans, U.S.  
Representative (Pennsylvania 3rd)



Noah Griffin, Jr.



Representative Bonnie Watson  
Coleman, U.S. Representative  
(New Jersey 12th)



Wilfred M. McClay, Ph.D.



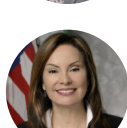
Representative Maria Elvira Salazar,  
U.S. Representative (Florida 27th)



Lucas Morel, Ph.D.



Robert A. Brady, Former U.S.  
Representative (Pennsylvania)



Rosie Rios, Chair



Reginald Browne



James L. Swanson



Thomas Walker, Jr.



Lynn Forney Young



Carla Hayden, Ph.D., Librarian of Congress



Deb Haaland, Secretary of the Interior



Lonnie Bunch III, Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution



Antony Blinken, Secretary of State



Colleen Shogan, Archivist of the United States



Merrick Garland, Attorney General of the United States



Cyndee Landrum, Acting Director of the Institute of Museum and Library Services



Lloyd Austin III, Secretary of Defense



Dr. Maria Rosario Jackson, Chair of the National Endowment for the Arts



Miguel Cardona, Ph.D., Secretary of Education



Shelly C. Lowe, Chair of the National Endowment for the Humanities



Anthony Kennedy, Former Associate Justice

### America250.org Board



Jennifer Condon, Interim Executive Director of the USSC and Executive Vice President of A250



Thomas Walker, Jr.



Cathy Gillespie



Lynn Forney Young



Rosie Rios, Chair