

# 4th Grade Student Essay Contest “This Place Matters”

## - Contest Guidelines -



As a part of 2025 Archaeology and  
Historic Preservation Month!



Sponsored by the South Dakota State Historical Society, Historic Preservation Office.

**\*Deadline for the 2025 Essay Contest is Friday, March 14th\***

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**Please note, our office organizes the receiving of each essay in a specific way in order to read and judge the essays anonymously without knowing the student’s name, gender, school, etc. Because of this, the Contest Guidelines are very detailed and specific. We only ask that you please follow the Guidelines to the best of your ability and thank you for working with us to judge the essays fairly and make the contest another success!**

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- The participant must be a resident of and a student in the state of South Dakota.
- The participant must be in the 4th grade, or if home schooled, at the age associated with the 4th grade as submitted to the SD Department of Education.
- The subject matter of the essay should be a structure (building, house, bridge, tower, etc.) or landscape (park, farm, mountain, etc.) located in South Dakota and at least 50 years old or older. It should be a favorite place of the student that they have been to, not necessarily a historic place.
- Why does this place matter to you? The essay should have three components: the participant must describe the location, state why it is a favorite place of theirs, and describe why it should be preserved for the future. A history of the site is not necessary!
- The essay may be handwritten or typed on a computer.
  - If handwritten: The essay should be double-spaced on standard paper (8-1/2” by 11”) wide ruled white paper, written in pencil or ink only on the front of each page, and written neatly with no cross-outs.
  - If typed on a computer: The essay should be double-spaced using 12 point Arial font. If printed, please print on standard paper (8-1/2” by 11”) plain white. Please print each page separately and front only.
- The participant’s name should not be written anywhere on the front of the essay.
- The title of the essay should be written at the top left margin of the first page.
- Single-spaced, on the line below the title, write the name and location of the site being discussed in the essay. Examples are “My Grandpa Johnson’s Farm In Turner County” or “The Capitol Building In Pierre.”
- There should be a double space between the name/location line and the body of the essay.
- The essay should have no less than 100 words and no more than 400 words.
- Please do not include any pictures, photos, drawings, etc. The essay should be text only.
- The final page of the essay should include only three single-spaced lines. At the top left margin, handwrite or type the student’s first and last name. On the line below that, write the name of the school and the name of the town where the school is located (if home schooled just write ‘Homeschool’).

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- One completed entry form with all necessary signatures and information must be submitted with the essay.
- There should be a minimum of 4 front-only pages, more if the essay is over 1 page. The 2-page entry form should be on top followed by the essay and finally the back page with the student’s name and school. All the pages should be paper clipped together, please no staples!
- Homeschool participants do not need to complete the school information section of the entry form. A parent should sign as the teacher on page two of the entry form.
- Entries will be judged by volunteers anonymously based on quality of writing, content and theme, and originality of thought.
- The essay must be the student’s original work.
- Only one entry per student may be submitted.
- Entries may be printed and mailed via US Postal Service. They may also be scanned or saved as a PDF document and emailed. Both addresses are located at the bottom of the entry form.
- By entering this contest, the student gives the South Dakota State Historical Society unrestricted rights and permissions for use of the essay.
- The top three chosen winners will receive a prize. This information, date of winner notification, and more information can be found on our website.

For more details, including the entry form, please visit our website at <https://history.sd.gov/preservation/archhpmth.aspx> (scroll down!) or contact Katie Goss at 605-773-2907 or [katie.goss@state.sd.us](mailto:katie.goss@state.sd.us)

