

# AMERICA 250

Celebrating the Semiquincentennial of the  
Declaration of Independence

## Vermont Student Art & Poetry Contest

Celebration and Exhibition of Art and Poetry

**September 17, 2026**

**1:00 – 2:30 pm**

**Town Hall Theater  
Middlebury, Vermont**



On July 4, 2026, our nation will commemorate and celebrate the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, marking American's Semiquincentennial. The journey toward this historic milestone is an opportunity to pause and reflect on our nation's past, honor the contributions of all Americans, and look ahead toward the future we want to create for the next generation and beyond.

We invite students across the State of Vermont to be a part of our nation's 250th anniversary by sharing artwork and poetry to describe what Liberty means to them. Today's young people are the leaders, innovators, and thinkers who will shape the next 250 years, and it is important their voices are heard as we commemorate this historic milestone. For the Contest, Students will respond to the following prompt with artwork or poetry:

### What Does Freedom Mean to Me

Judging will be evaluated based on creativity, originality, thoughtfulness, depth of reflection, connection to the prompt, clarity of expression, and craftsmanship. Selected works will be displayed at the Semiquincentennial Celebration on Constitution Day, September 17, 2026 at the Town Hall Theater in Middlebury, Vermont. Selected works may also be featured on a website or social media platform and included in a commemorative publication or digital gallery.

#### Artwork Guidelines

Maximum size: 4" x 6"  
Hand-drawn, sketched, or painted  
Not fragile and easy to transport  
No AI-generated images

#### Poetry Guidelines

Maximum length: 150 words  
Poems may be written in free verse,  
rhymed, narrative, or Haiku  
No AI-generated content

Each entry must include student's full name, school grade, phone number, email address and title of the artwork or poem. Each student may submit one piece of artwork and one poem. All student work must be original, and any artwork done by another person will be disqualified.

Artwork and poetry should reflect personal perspectives and experiences and must remain nonpartisan and politically neutral. Entries that do not meet these guidelines may not be eligible for consideration. Entries must be respectful and appropriate for display in public schools and government facilities and reflect individual perspectives in a respectful manner. Entries must not advocate for changes to laws or public policy, promote political candidates or parties, or include partisan messaging.

### **SUBMISSION DEADLINE — (extended to) JUNE 15, 2026**

Students are encouraged to focus on shared values, history, community, service, opportunity, freedom, unity, and hopes for the future. We encourage you to share your honest voice, your hopes, your questions, and your dreams for the next 250 years. Your perspective matters! Submissions will be reviewed in grade-level categories. Submission constitutes permission for selected works to be displayed at public commemorative events or featured in digital and/or printed exhibitions.

#### Artwork Submissions

Please mail or deliver to:  
United States District Court  
151 West Street  
Rutland, Vermont 05701  
Attn: America 250 Contest

#### Poetry Submissions

Please e-mail poetry to:  
[america250poetry@gmail.com](mailto:america250poetry@gmail.com)

Please also send any questions you may have to:  
[america250poetry@gmail.com](mailto:america250poetry@gmail.com)



Sponsored by  
**United States District Court for the District of Vermont**  
**Town Hall Theater – Middlebury, Vermont**

