



**ARKANSAS
HISTORIC
PRESERVATION
PROGRAM**

**PRESERVE OUR PAST
ART & ESSAY INVITATIONAL
2026**

The 35th annual *Preserve Our Past Art & Essay Invitational* celebrates National Historic Preservation Month. The contest teaches students about local and state history and fosters an interest in preserving historic places. For 2026, winning entries will be exhibited at the Historic Arkansas Museum. **The contest is open to all Arkansas 5th, 6th, 7th and 8th grade students.** Submissions must relate to a historic Arkansas property that is 50 years old or older.

General Guidelines

- The contest has two age categories: 5th/6th grade and 7th/8th grade.
- Students may enter the essay or art contests individually, or they may enter both contests for their age category.
- Students who are homeschooled or in any alternative educational arrangement are welcome to enter, so long as they fit into one of the grade categories.
- All students must be Arkansas residents.
- All hard-copy work must be postmarked by April 1, 2026, to be considered.
- All digital submissions must be submitted by 11:59 p.m. on April 1, 2026, to be considered.
- An entry form must be included with each student submission (30 submissions = 30 entry forms).

Essay Contest

Essays should be original, and no longer than 500 words. Each essay should focus on a historic site somewhere in Arkansas that is 50 years old or older. Essays do not have to be a typical five-paragraph enumeration or straight history of a property. Creativity and imagination are encouraged. However, the contest does not accept pieces that are pure fiction or refer to a fictional property. If students are using sources in their work, it is customary to include a bibliography listing them. Yes, spelling and grammar do count. Students may submit essays via hard copy or email.

Art Contest

Art pieces should be original. They must also focus on a historic site somewhere in Arkansas that is 50 years old or older. Art has slightly stricter guidelines:

- Pieces should be **11 X 14 inches** in size, **no larger or smaller!**
- Pieces should be on paper, **no stretched canvas.**
- Pieces can be done in pencil, ink, charcoal, acrylic paint, pastels, or any other medium that works on paper.
- No oil paints, please.
- Collage or other approaches are permitted, so long as all the parts of the piece are created by the student.
- It must be possible to frame all pieces in a standard 11 X 14 frame.
- Art pieces CANNOT be entered online.

Need More Information? Call Amy Milliken at (501) 324-9786, or e-mail amy.milliken@arkansas.gov



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Preserve Our Past Entry Form

Please include one form per entry! Mail to: Preserve Our Past,

Arkansas Historic Preservation Program, 1100 North Street, Little Rock, AR 72201

Student Name: _____

Title of the piece: _____

Name and Location of the Historical Property: _____

Genre Category: Art _____ Essay _____

Age Category: 5th/6th _____ 7th/8th _____

Deadline: April 1, 2026

Home Contact Information:

Street: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Student or Guardian's Home Phone Number: _____

Student or Guardian's Email Address: _____

School Contact Information:

School Name: _____

School Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

School Phone: _____

Teacher's Name: _____

Teacher's Email: _____

Art Instructions:

Send your 11 X 14 piece in a large envelope (please do not fold). **On the back of your piece, please carefully write:**

- Your name
- Your grade / Your school
- The name of your piece
- Your home address
- Your phone number
- Your email or your guardian's email
- Fill out the entry form and send it with your piece
- **Art CANNOT be entered online**

Type your essay, double-spaced, on 8½ X 11 white paper. Please do not put your name anywhere on the front of the essay. Give your essay a title. Below the title, list the name and location of the historic site you wrote about. **On the back of the essay, please carefully write:**

- Your name
- Your grade / Your school
- The title of your essay
- Your home address
- Your phone number
- Your email or your guardian's email
- Fill out the entry form and send it with your piece

Essay Instructions