



Children's Museum of Oak Ridge

461 W. Outer Dr. • Oak Ridge TN • 37830 • 865-482-1074

America at 250 Poetry Contest

From Sea to Shining Sea

Rules

1. The contest is free and open to students ages 11 through 18.
2. Poems must be submitted online at <https://forms.gle/C4nHUpjA8TwbZbiW9> by **11:59 PM on March 31, 2026**. Late submissions will not be accepted.
3. Poems must reflect the theme **America at 250: From Sea to Shining Sea**.
4. Poems must be original work written solely by the entrant. **AI-generated or AI-assisted content will result in disqualification.**
5. Poems must be written in English.
6. Entries must be submitted as a .pdf using the title format **LastName_FirstName_Age.pdf**
7. Poems must be no longer than one page in length.
8. Poems may be in any poetic form.
9. Poems containing language that is vulgar, offensive, or otherwise inappropriate will be disqualified.
10. Only one entry per person is permitted.
11. By submitting, entrants grant permission for poems to be displayed or published with credit.
12. The Children's Museum of Oak Ridge reserves the right to make final decisions regarding eligibility and rule interpretation.

(ctnd)



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Frequently Asked Questions

How are winners chosen?

Entries will be judged in two age categories: ages 11–14 and ages 15–18. Entries will be evaluated based on originality, creativity, and connection to the theme. In each category, one First Place and one Second Place winner will be selected.

What are the prizes?

Ages 15-18

1st Place-\$100 Visa Gift Card

2nd Place-\$50 Visa Gift Card

Ages 11-14

1st Place-\$50 Visa Gift Card

2nd Place-\$25 Children's Museum of Oak Ridge Gift Certificate

How and when will I be notified if I've won?

Winners will be notified via email by April 15, 2026 and announced on the Museum's website and social media channels. Due to the volume of entries, only selected winners will be notified.

Can I revise my poem after submitting it?

No. Once a poem is submitted, it may not be revised or replaced.

Who can help me with my poem?

Feedback from teachers, librarians, or family members is allowed; however, the poem must be written solely by the student.

Can poems be written as part of a class assignment?

Yes, as long as the poem is the student's original work and meets all contest rules.

Do I need permission from a parent or guardian to enter? (ctnd)



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By submitting, entrants confirm they have permission from a parent or guardian to participate.

Who owns the poem after submission?

The poet retains ownership of their work. By entering, poets grant permission for the Children's Museum of Oak Ridge to display or publish the poem with credit.

What happens if a rule is not followed?

Entries that do not meet contest rules may be disqualified.

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Submission Checklist

Before submitting your poem, please make sure:

- You are **between 11 and 18 years old**.
- Your poem clearly reflects the theme “**America at 250: From Sea to Shining Sea.**”
- Your poem is **entirely your own original work** and does **not** include AI-generated or AI-assisted content.
- Your poem is written **in English**.
- Your poem is **no longer than one page**.
- Your poem is saved and submitted as a **.pdf file**.
- You are submitting **only one poem**.
- Your poem does **not** include vulgar, offensive, or inappropriate language.
- You have reviewed your poem for spelling, grammar, and clarity.
- You understand that by submitting, you grant permission for your poem to be **displayed or published with credit** if selected.

For questions, contact Jessica Ordóñez, Education Director, at (865) 482-1074 or jordonez@childrensmuseumofOakRidge.org.