



The Virginia Black History Month Association Children's Writing Contest



What: The Virginia Black History Month Association Children's Writing Contest.

When: Contest ends **Monday, February 16, 2026, at 5:00 p.m.**

Where: Winners announced at the **26th Anniversary Virginia Black History Month Gala** on **Saturday, February 28, 2026** (6pm to 9pm) at the **Renaissance Arlington Capital View Hotel, 2800 S. Potomac Ave, Arlington, VA 22202**

Who: All 5th Grade Students currently attending any Virginia Elementary School (or Home School).

The Winners Receive

FIRST PRIZE: \$300

SECOND PRIZE: \$150

THIRD PRIZE: \$75

- Monetary gifts from the Virginia Black History Month Association.
- The 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place winners are announced during the Gala. All finalists will receive two complimentary tickets to attend the 26th Anniversary Virginia Black History Month Gala.
- The 1st place winner will receive a large poster-sized check with their name, school, and winning amount.
- All winners will receive a complimentary family portrait from our professional photographer at the 26th Annual Virginia Black History Month Gala.
- All will receive a Certificate of Achievement from the Virginia Black History Month Association.
- All monetary awards will be distributed on Saturday, February 26, 2026, during the 26th Annual Virginia Black History Month Gala.

Cover Sheet Information
(Must Accompany Your Essay Submission)

Essay Title:

Name:

Permanent Address:

Home Phone Number:

Contact E-mail Address:

Gender: ____Male ____Female

Grade (as of fall of 2025):

School Name & Address (as of fall of 2025):

Parent(s) Contact Information:

Contest Rules

1. This contest is open to all 5th Grade Students currently attending any Virginia Elementary School (or Home School).
 2. Contest ends **Monday, February 16, 2026, at 5:00 pm.**
 3. Writing entries should be restricted to two pages, plus a cover sheet.
 4. The student must write each entry.
 5. The entry must be neatly **handwritten** on standard ruled note paper.
 6. Include the title of your entry on both the first page of the essay and the cover sheet.
 7. **HOW TO ENTER:** The essay should pertain to the following topic: **Theme: A Century of Black History Commemorations** — celebrating the 100th anniversary of Black History observances that began with Negro History Week in 1926, founded by historian Dr. Carter G. Woodson.
 - a. **Scenario:** Imagine it is 1926, and Dr. Carter G. Woodson has come to speak at your 5th-grade elementary school for Negro History Week. After his visit, he gives your class a special homework assignment to help you learn about African American history.
 - b. **Your Assignment:** Identify five African Americans who were born before 1926. For each person, write one sentence explaining why they are essential to African American history.
 8. **Judging Criteria:** The three winners will be selected by a neutral judging panel and will be rated in three areas: writing skill, story content, and originality.
 9. The list of panel members includes Ms. Pamela Nephew (College Professor), Mr. Larry Marks (Retired High School Principal), and Mr. Eugene Williams (Author & Retired High School Principal). Participants agree to follow these rules and accept the judges' decisions. All decisions are final. The top three winners will be notified by mail or phone no later than Monday, February 20, 2026.
 10. Send the enclosed cover sheet with each entry. Ensure you include the following:
 - Name and title of the entry
 - Student's permanent home address and school address (if applicable)
 - Telephone number(s)
- Note: Scan and Email entries to: President@vabhma.com or mail entries to: The Virginia Black History Month Children's Writing Contest, PO Box 41924, FREDERICKSBURG, VA 22404. All entries must be received by 5:00 pm on **Monday, February 16, 2026**.**
11. The writing entry with the highest achievement will earn the first-place award; the next highest will earn the second-place award, and the third highest will earn the third-place prize.
 12. Certificates will be awarded during the 26th Annual Virginia Black History Month Gala on Saturday, February 28, 2026 (please arrive by 5:15 pm). We want the winning contestants to attend the Gala. Additionally, the winners and one of their parents will receive complimentary tickets. (Note: The ticket does not include parking.) The cost for extra adult tickets is \$100.00, \$75 for students, and \$50.00 for children under 12. (Note: Children 5 years old and under are free.)