

CENTER OF THOUGHT

2026 BLACK HISTORY MONTH ESSAY + ART CONTEST

PRIZES:

Essay Winners

- First Place: \$100
- Second Place: \$70
- Third Place: \$30

Art Winners

- First Place: \$100
- Second Place: \$70
- Third Place: \$30

THEME: Commemorating Black History Month by celebrating the lives, works, legacies, as well as contributions made by African / Black people, both past and present, to world history and culture.

ELIGIBILITY: Current High School Student (9 - 12th grade).

RULES:

- One entry per student. Students may submit to both categories: essay & art.
- Entries must follow the competition's theme.
- Only original work is accepted.
- **No entry fee.**

CRITERIA:

The essays submitted to our competitions will be judged based on the following elements of writing

- focus (addresses topic clearly and responds effectively)
- organization (e.g. structure, transitions)
- style (e.g. writer's voice, audience awareness)
- mechanics (e.g. spelling, punctuation, capitalization)

The artwork submitted to our competitions will be judged based on the following elements of artistic expression

- originality and quality of art
- interpretation of the theme
- creativity
- overall design

NOTIFICATION: All submissions will be notified **VIA EMAIL** after the deadline.

JURY/JUDGING: Center of Thought's selection process involves an anonymous multi-member panel of professional and academic advisors with a broad range of expertise relative to art, design, and technical writing.

ENTRY DEADLINE: February 20, 2026 (11:59 PM CST)

HOW TO SUBMIT:

See "Contest Submission Form" at <https://centerofthought.org/essay-art-contest>

- Acceptable image file formats for **art**: **.JPG, .JPEG, .png, .mov, .mp4**. Note: if you take a picture, make sure that the image is in plain view.
- Acceptable text file formats for essays: **.doc, .docx, .pdf, .txt**
- Individual files cannot exceed **10 MB**. If multiple files are uploaded the total cannot exceed **15 MB**.
- Include your **full name** in the title of your submission (as well as within essays).

If you have trouble with the online form, please send/email submissions to info@centerofthought.org with the subject line: **COT Black History Contest 2026**. Be sure to include your name and the school you attend in the body of the email.

REGULATIONS: By entering this contest you are agreeing to be added to Center of Thought's email list for forthcoming opportunities. By submitting images and essays, you agree that the image/essay is your own work. The actual artwork/essay will remain the property of the student. Should your work be accepted, you grant Center of Thought the right to reproduce your image on our website, on social media, and where appropriate to help promote our competitions. Center of Thought will always credit you wherever feasible. We will not use your image for any other purpose without permission.

PLEASE NOTE: ENTRIES THAT ARE NOT IN COMPLIANCE WITH GUIDELINES ABOVE WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED!

Parental Consent

I confirm that I _____ am the parent/legal guardian of
(Parent)

_____.
(Student)

I hereby consent to the above child participating in Center of Thought's Black History Essay + Art Contest according to the above guidelines.

Parent/Guardian Email

Signature of Parent/Guardian

Date