

# America the Beautiful in Platte County, MO

## Essay & Art Contest

for the America 250 - SEMIQUINCENTENNIAL



Sponsored by PLATTE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

& PLATTE CITY FRIENDS OF THE ARTS

in partnership with the PLATTE PURCHASE CHAPTER OF DAR

Submissions accepted from May 1 - July 4, 2026

Open to students in 6<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup> grade who are Platte County, MO residents

### How is America Beautiful in Platte County, Missouri?

Your essay will answer this question, or your artwork will show the answer in its content.

One way to approach your essay might be to identify what you will be writing about that illustrates or shows America as 'beautiful' in Platte County, Missouri, and then tell the story behind it or why this is so. For your artwork or essay, you may focus on something from the present or from the past. As inspired by the song *America the Beautiful*, we will define beauty in an expansive way that includes features not only of nature or place, but also of people and our experiences.

In other words, you might find 'beauty' in the natural world or in other possible things, such as, for example, an individual or group that is admirable in some way, a place that is meaningful, a built structure or architecture or community/ school event or even a tradition or cultural expression that has value, and so on. Through observation and imagination, you can discover many possibilities for what makes America beautiful for you and/or others in Platte County, Missouri.

**CONTEST CATEGORIES:** There will be two grade categories: sixth through eighth & ninth through twelfth. Students in sixth - eighth grade can submit artwork or an essay of 200 -275 words. Students grades ninth - 12<sup>th</sup> , can submit an artwork or an essay of 400-500 words

**SUBMISSION PROCESS GUIDELINES:** **ESSAY:** Enter no more than ONE Essay. Single space the essay and submit in the file formats of either Microsoft Word or PDF to [pchs1882@gmail.com](mailto:pchs1882@gmail.com) or mail a typed copy of you essay to *Platte Co. Historical, Box 103, Platte City, MO 64079*. Any sources used must be cited. Make sure your name, phone number, email and home address are on the essay at the top right or left corner. Make sure a title is centered at the top of the essay. **ARTWORK:** Submit no more than one artwork by taking a well-lit, high-quality photo of the artwork you create and emailing this image as a png or pdf file to [pcfavisualarts@gmail.com](mailto:pcfavisualarts@gmail.com) You may create your art in any genre. Optional: in a Microsoft Word or pdf attachment to the same email, you may submit a brief description of no more than 50 words of why/how this art represents America the Beautiful to you in Platte County, Missouri.

**ATTENTION TEACHERS:** We invite you to use this contest as a class project. We kindly appreciate that you select the up to 10 top artworks or essays from each of your classes to submit to the contest and identify which student completed which essay/ artwork.



**DEADLINE:** Submissions are accepted from May 1 – July 4, 2026. In the email message include your FULL NAME (first and last name), ADDRESS, PHONE NUMBER & SCHOOL you attend or if you are homeschooled, note this fact. This information must be included. Email of essay as a .doc or .pdf file attachment or email a PNG or PDF image of your artwork will be confirmed within two weeks of receipt.

**RESIDENCY REQUIREMENTS:** All participants must live in Platte County, Missouri, and be students (in public school or private school or homeschool).

**JUDGING:** The judges will be judging artworks and essays based on (1) clarity; (2) writing or artistic merit; (3) meaningfulness (*essay/artwork shows what makes America beautiful in Platte County, Missouri -past or present*).

If any outside sources are used, cite them fully. Do not use AI to create your essay or artwork.

**PRIZES:** First prize winners will receive \$76 and publication in the Platte County Historical Society's *Bulletin* (a regional magazine) or online to this organization's website. Second place winners will receive \$35. Third place winners will receive a gift certificate.

All winners will be notified by September 2026. All winners will receive a recognition certificate. All winners will be honored at an event (optional to attend), in October 2026.

**SUBMIT AN ENTRY:** To submit an artwork, email a high-quality PNG or PDF photo image of this art with "America the Beautiful" in your email's subject heading to: [pcfavisualarts@gmail.com](mailto:pcfavisualarts@gmail.com)

To submit an essay, send your Microsoft or pdf document as an attachment to the following email with "America the Beautiful" in subject heading: [pchs1882@gmail.com](mailto:pchs1882@gmail.com) Or you can mail us your essay to Platte Co. Historical, P.O. Box 103, Platte City, MO 64079.

### What is Beautiful? Ideas to Spark Your Observation & Imagination

Beauty can be represented in many ways ranging from features of nature and interesting places, architectures or built structures to meaningful events and even admirable values shown by a group or a person. Perhaps an individual shows strength in overcoming hardship, resilience in struggling against great odds, compassion in helping others, self-reliance, dedication to a goal, stewardship of the land or any number of other beautiful American attributes. Or perhaps you find beauty in a place like a neighborhood, school, historic site, farm etc. Can you also find beauty in an event, activity, tradition or cultural expression? Think about what matters to you and to those around you. You might focus on the here and now OR find an example from the past. We have a rich history in Platte County from the frontier era to today and you can see evidence of the past in many places. We also can appreciate beautiful things - small and large - in nature. They are all around us from things that grow to features of the land.

The above ideas are only suggestions to inspire you.

How is America -the place, the people, the experiences - beautifully expressed in Platte County?  
We look forward to what you will share in your artwork or essay!