

West River History Conference, Inc. (WRHC)
Kids Write History!
Essay Contest Rules

The goal of the award-winning KWH! Essay Contest is to inspire 4th grade students' investigation into local history. They can do this by selecting a person they greatly respect from their family or community, then write (or draw) a one-page story about that person. Resource interview questions can be found at kidswritehistory.com. A good story might include something about the person's childhood and why the student respects them.

WHO? Essays are to be written by 4th grade students residing west of the Missouri river in the states of SD, WY, and ND. The submissions may be from teachers of public, private, charter, homeschooled, tribal, or BIE students and/or by mainstream or special education students.

HOW? Essays can be handwritten, typed, or drawn and should be one 8.5X11 page (either blank or on the pdf template provided here or at www.westriverhistoryconference.org). The essay may extend to the back side of the paper. At the teacher's discretion and supervision, students ARE allowed to write from their interview notes or even a three-point draft outline, but NOT copy a previously prepared essay. Time limits may be extended only for special education students.

SUBMISSIONS Teachers may submit their class's essay entries by scanned PDFs (emailed to westriverhistoryconf@gmail.com) or by mailing hardcopy entries to: KWH! Contest, 9026 Stagebarn Canyon Rd, Piedmont, South Dakota 57702. All entries must be received by October 30, 2026.

JUDGING Essays will be judged by a committee of educators and historians. There will be four winners, one from each of the following categories:

- **Family Legacy** – family member who left an important legacy for their extended family or important lesson for the student author
- **Community Impact** – person who greatly impacted the community/region
- **Historic Account** – best record of a historic event
- **Biography** – best narrated story of a historic figure.

AWARDS Essay winners will each receive a certificate and check for \$75, both of which will be presented to each winner at their elementary school in late fall. Each winning essay will also be published in the biannual WRHC Collected Papers which will also permanently archived at the Black Hills State University Archives and Special Collections (<https://archives.bhsu.edu/as/public/repositories/3> under Regional History Resources/West River History Conference Proceedings).

QUESTIONS? Contact Julie Stoll, Ph.D. (WRHC VP) at julie.b.stoll@gmail.com or at westriverhistoryconf@gmail.com. For more about WRHC, please go to www.westriverhistoryconference.org