



Art + Essay Contest for Grades K-12 presented by Collier County Museums and Southwest Florida Family.

Celebrate America's 250th anniversary through art, history, and your own Southwest Florida story. From family roots and community pride to creativity, courage, and culture, young artists across Southwest Florida are invited to share what America at 250 means to them.

Details:

Contest Dates: May 1, 2026 – May 31, 2026

Who can enter: Open to students from grades K-12 (Categories listed below)

Where to Enter: Limited printed templates will be available for pick up at participating locations listed below:

Collier County Museums:

- Naples Depot Museum: 1051 Fifth Avenue South, Naples, FL 34102
- Collier Museum at the Government Center: 3331 Tamiami Trail East, Naples, FL 34112
- Immokalee Pioneer Museum: 1215 Roberts Avenue West, Immokalee, FL 34142
- Marco Island Historical Museum: 180 South Heathwood Drive, Marco Island, FL 34145
- Museum of the Everglades: 105 West Broadway Avenue, Everglades City, FL 34139

Collier County Libraries:

- Headquarters Regional: 2385 Orange Blossom Drive, Naples, FL 34109
- Naples Regional: 650 Central Ave, Naples, FL 34102
- South Regional: 8065 Lely Cultural Pkwy, FL 34113
- Estates Branch: 1266 Golden Gate Blvd, FL 34120
- Immokalee Branch: 417 N. First Street, Immokalee, FL 34142

The templates first come-first served. You will also have the option to submit your artwork via online submission at www.colliermuseums.com.

Art Submission Requirements: Participating students should create and submit an original, two-dimensional artwork based on the theme chosen and requires an accompanying artist essay of no more than 500 words explaining why you chose your theme and what your art represents.

Size of artwork will need to be 16" x 20". No smaller, No larger.

There are 2 ways to enter your artwork. (See below)

Option 1: Limited pre-printed templates will be available for pickup at participating locations that you can use as your canvas. You will need to bring the completed art back to any of the designated locations by May 31, 2026.

Option 2: Online submission link via www.colliermuseums.com

Online Submission rules: Artwork will be created on your own paper and size of artwork will need to be 16" x 20". No smaller, No larger.

All artwork will need to be submitted in jpeg format and no smaller than 300 dpi. Use hi-res camera (5 megapixels or higher) Use indirect light, no glares and take photo straight on so that the artwork is completely visible. (We will be asking for the actual artwork for judging so please make sure that the artwork size is followed.)

Themes and Categories:

There are three age categories, please select the one that fits you. Each category includes a set of themes/ prompts, and you may choose **ONE** theme that inspires you most.

- Pioneer: Grades (K-4)
- Explorer: Grades (5-8)
- Innovator: Grades (9-12)

Pioneer: Grades (K-4)

- What does America's 250th anniversary mean to you?
- America 250 SWFL Postage Stamp: Design a postage stamp that reflects your journey to Southwest Florida.

Explorer: Grades (5-8)

- My family's journey to SWFL
- Swamp Buggy redesign: Redesign a swamp buggy that represents America 250

Innovator: Grades (9-12)

- America Illustrated: Tell your American story inspired by American artists.
- America: A tapestry of cultures: representing your heritage, your journey to SWFL

Visit www.colliermuseums.com to view additional resources regarding each theme and prompt.

Rules:

Acceptable mediums: Paint Markers, Crayons, Pastels, Ink, Oil Pastels, Charcoal, Mixed media, Acrylic Paint, Pencils, Color Pencils.

If you are using the pre-printed template: DO NOT USE WATERCOLORS

Not acceptable: AI-generated images, plagiarized artwork, digital art only, heavy 3-dimensional items, copywritten images, derogatory or inappropriate images.

All parents and guardians need to provide a Parent Consent and Release form.

Before submitting actual artwork, please make sure that your art is dry and that you have included your artist essay.

Contest will be judged based on creativity, originality, and interpretation of your selected theme. There will be 3 winners, one for each category and we will select 40-50 artworks to be displayed as part of our America 250 Exhibit at the Collier Museum at Government Center. There will be an Exhibit reception on July 11, 2026, to honor all the kids chosen and the winners. We will send out emails to let the winners and featured artists know by June 2026. If you have any questions or concerns, please email museums@collier.gov.

