



**National Genealogical Society**  
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Falls Church, VA 22042-2318  
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[ngsgenealogy.org](http://ngsgenealogy.org)

# RUBINCAM YOUTH WRITING COMPETITION

## Submission Requirements

### Junior Rubincam Youth Writing Competition

#### **Deadline for Submissions—15 December annually**

Applicants are notified of the decision by 1 April annually through email.

Applicants must be students in grades 6 to 8 at the time of submission.

Each applicant should submit a narrative essay in a biographical format about a principal individual, either male or female. The individual you choose may be a biological or adoptive relative, a foster parent, or a guardian. The submission should contain 750 to 1200 words and four to five written pages. It should demonstrate your basic understanding of various genealogical records.

**Step No. 1:** Select a person in your family you admire and respect and conduct an in-person oral interview. You may record the interview with the person's permission or take very good notes to refer to for your written narrative essay assignment.

Some open-ended questions for the relative might include:

- Names—How did your parents select your name? Did you have a nickname?
- Residences—Where did you spend most of your time growing up? How did your family come to live there? Describe one of the houses (or apartment, farm, etc.) you lived in. How many rooms? How many bathrooms? Were there any special items in the house that you remember?
- Childhood memories—What is your earliest childhood memory? What kind of games did you play? What kind of toys did you have? What was your favorite

thing to do for fun (movies, beach, etc.)? Did you have family chores? Who were your childhood heroes and why? How is the world today different from when you were a child?

- Family—Who was the oldest relative you remember as a child? What do you remember about that person? What stories have come down to you about your parents? Did you know your grandparents? Did your grandparents tell you family stories? Are there any stories about famous relatives in your family? Of all the things you learned from your parents, which do you feel was the most valuable? What world events had the most impact on you while you were growing up? Did any of them personally affect your family?
- School—What was school like for you as a child? What were your best and worst subjects? Where did you attend grade school? Where did you attend high school? Where did you attend college? What school activities and sports did you participate in?
- Religion—What was your religion? Did you attend religious services while growing up? What did you do on Saturday/Sunday? How did you celebrate religious holidays (Christmas, Diwali, Eid al-Fitr, Kwanzaa, Passover, or other)?
- Holidays—How did your family celebrate special days (birthdays, Chinese New Year, Cinco De Mayo, Thanksgiving, 4th of July, etc.)? Did your family have unique foods or traditions?
- Employment—What was your profession? What made you select that job? If you could have had any other profession, what would it have been? Why wasn't it your first choice? What accomplishments are you most proud of?

**Step No. 2:** Have any special heirlooms, photos, bibles, or other memorabilia been passed down to the relative? Items may include journals/diaries, letters, scrapbooks, newspaper clippings, announcements for weddings or births, family bibles, baby books, photo albums, memorial cards, and autograph books. Ask to look at some of these home sources with your relative. As you look at the items, listen carefully to what your relative says about them. Ask questions like: Why is it important to you? Who are the people? (These questions may overlap with some of the information in the above exercise.)

**Step No. 3:** Create a timeline of your relative's life. In addition to relevant biographical information (including birth date and place, the names of parents, marriage(s), parents' deaths, spouse(s), births of children), include pertinent historical events for the native homeland. You can sketch a timeline out on paper to put events in chronological order or investigate an app or software to help you organize the timeline.

**Step No. 4:** Based on the information you collected in Steps 1, 2 and 3, write a narrative essay for submission. It should have 750 to 1200 words and four to five written pages. Besides relevant biographical information (including birthdate and place, the names of parents, marriage(s), spouse(s), and names of children), discuss information you collected to bring your special person to life for the reader. Use your timeline to help shape the order of your narrative. Finally, express why this person is important to you.

### **Submission Style**

- Typed on 8 ½" x 11" letter-quality paper
- Double-spaced
- One-inch margins on all four sides
- Pages numbered consecutively, with the title (cover) page as the first page
- Submission should not exceed one title (cover) page and five written essay pages
- Submission should be a Word or PDF document

Please include an authorization letter from the principal person of your essay.

### **Contents**

- A title page with:
  - Title
  - Applicant's contact information
  - Name
  - Address
  - Home phone or mobile phone
  - Email
  - School
  - Grade
  - Age
  - Submission date
- Narrative essay (beginning on page 2)
- Include appropriate footnotes

### **Supporting evidence**

- Cite in footnote form
- Refer to the *Chicago Manual of Style* at your school, library, or online for help in creating footnotes for different sources you use
- Do not send your timeline, documents, or pictures

**The NGS website has many free resources to learn more about genealogy. Visit [ngsgenealogy.org](http://ngsgenealogy.org) > Learning Center > Free Resources and also the sections on Getting Started, Going to the Next Level, and Building Advanced Skills.**

**Send your completed submission materials by 15 December:**

**Email—[awards@ngsgenealogy.org](mailto:awards@ngsgenealogy.org)**

**Regular Mail -**

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(Consider getting a tracking number to track your package and assure arrival.)

**Questions?** Contact the NGS Awards Chair at [awards@ngsgenealogy.org](mailto:awards@ngsgenealogy.org).