

## **SAMPLE TOPICS BY GRADE LEVEL**

These are suggested starting points, not requirements. Students are welcome to choose their own topic as long as it connects meaningfully to the contest theme: "Freedom: Yesterday and Today."

### **Art Division (Grades 3–5) — Suggested Themes**

- What does freedom look like? Draw your vision.
- A portrait of someone who fought for freedom
- Juneteenth colors (red, black, and green) and what they mean to you
- A scene of celebration: what does a freedom celebration look like in your community?
- Freedom sounds like... (illustrate a sound or feeling)

### **Middle School Division (Grades 6–8) — Suggested Essay Topics**

- What does freedom mean to me today, and how is it different from what freedom meant on June 19, 1865?
- Tell the story of someone in your family or community who fought for freedom — what did they sacrifice, and what did they gain?
- If Juneteenth could speak, what would it say to young people today?
- Freedom is more than the absence of chains. What does true freedom look like to you?
- Describe a moment when you felt truly free. What made that moment possible?
- How has African Americans' struggle for freedom shaped American culture, music, language, or values?

### **High School Division (Grades 9–12) — Suggested Essay Topics**

- Compare the promises of Emancipation with the realities Black Americans faced after 1865. Where do you see echoes of that gap today?
- What role has youth activism played in freedom movements, from Reconstruction through the Civil Rights era to today?
- Juneteenth was not widely known until recently. Why does it matter who gets to tell history, and whose stories get remembered?
- Explore the meaning of freedom for a specific group and its connection to the broader American story of freedom.
- How does your community celebrate or honor freedom? What does that celebration teach younger generations?

- What is the relationship between economic freedom and political freedom? Use Juneteenth's history as a starting point.
- Freedom of expression and artistic resistance: how have musicians, writers, and artists used their work as a form of freedom struggle? Select one artist or movement and analyze their impact.

