



## *A Letter Home*

The Washington Society of Mayflower Descendants (WASMD) invites its Junior members, 9<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grades, interested in the lives of their Mayflower ancestors, to assume the life of a young person living at Plymouth. It is 1626; the Colony is five years old. You are going to write a letter to a friend or family member telling them about your life at Plymouth.

Your letter home must be from 500 to 800 words in length and based upon any aspect of life in Plymouth during its first five years. Topics might include food, clothing, housing, health problems, relationships among the Pilgrims, relationships with Native Americans, religious observances – anything of interest to you. It is your letter home. Each ‘*Letter Home*’ will be judged based upon its historical accuracy, clarity, organization, grammar and spelling, and documentation.



# RULES

## 1. ELIGIBILITY, SUBMISSION OF ESSAYS and DEADLINES

This “*Letter Home*” contest is open to all Junior members of the Washington Society of Mayflower Descendants in 9<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grades.

All entries must be submitted to the contest chairman before 11:59 pm, PST, on **January 15<sup>th</sup>**. All entries must be submitted as PDF files attached to emails. Entries submitted in any other format will be disqualified.

## 2. LETTER TOPICS and RESEARCH REQUIREMENTS

The entry shall be in the form of a letter written to friends or family who stayed back in England or in Leiden. The writer shall describe some facet of life at Plymouth and how it affects the writer’s life.

The letter must be based upon no less than five references. Plagiarism will be grounds for immediate disqualification.

## 3. *LETTER HOME* FORMAT REQUIREMENTS

**General Requirements:** An original copy of the *Letter Home* must be submitted. Graphics are not permitted. The *Letter Home* must be written in English. The objective of the letter is to convey the difficulties and hardships young colonists faced in the establishment of Plimoth Colony in the New World.

**Specific Requirements:** Each *Letter Home* entry must have four parts: (1) cover page, (2) Letter Home, (3) work cited page, and (4) contestant's biography, each of which is described in more detail below. The cover page, work cited page and contestant's biography must be on separate pages. In order to avoid bias, a blind-judging process is used, and the judges are provided with only the *Letter Home* and work cited pages. Therefore, no reference to the contestant's name or other identifying information may appear on the pages of the *Letter Home* or work cited page. Contest entries that do not conform to these requirements will be disqualified.

- The **cover page** must include the contestant's name, contestant's grade level, home address, telephone number, email address, and name of their Pilgrim ancestor. This page is separated from the essay for judging purposes.
- The ***Letter Home*** must be a minimum of 500 words and may not exceed 800 words (excluding title, in-text citations, and work cited page). The text of the *Letter Home* must be double spaced. The font must be Times Roman and the size must be 12 pt. Use 8½ X 11-inch paper with 1-inch margins on all sides. The *Letter Home*'s pages, which shall include the work cited page, must be sequentially numbered beginning with the first page

of the *Letter Home* as page 1. No contestant information may appear on the pages of the *Letter Home* or work cited page.

- Citations in the *Letter Home* and references in the **work cited page** should be formatted in accordance with MLA standards. Examples can be found on Purdue OWL.
- **Biography** should include information about the student writer's life, school activities, extracurricular activities, as well as general interests. Information regarding connections to the Mayflower Society, and why they are interested in history could be included as well.

#### 4. JUDGING CRITERIA

*Letters Home* that meet the criteria in Rules 1 through 3 above will be accepted and judged on the following equally weighted criteria:

- Historical accuracy
- Clarity of thought
- Organization and proven topic
- Grammar and spelling
- Documentation

#### 5. PRIZE

The prize will be \$500.00.

#### 6. PUBLICATION and ASSIGNMENT OF RIGHTS

Participants in this contest agree that their *Letter Home* may be published in the WASMD newsletter and on the WASMD Facebook page. By entering this contest, all participants agree that if their *Letter Home* is chosen as the winning *Letter Home* it will become the property WASMD.

#### 7. WSMD DECISIONS ARE FINAL AND NOT SUBJECT TO REVIEW

Participants in the WASMD *Letter Home* contest agree that the interpretation of the rules and decisions of the contest chairman and its judges must govern without reservation and that decisions of the judges and/or the chairman are final.