



## **Annual Scholarship Introduction**

### **A Letter Home**

In 1620, a group of about 100 Europeans crossed the Atlantic Ocean to establish a viable new home. About two-thirds of the group had broken English law by separating themselves from the Church of England; some had been imprisoned and others had become exiles in Holland. All became “strangers and pilgrims” in North America among people who did not share their language, culture, or religion. Nearly half of these Mayflower passengers died within their first year, but the plantation that they established became the very first of several English Separatists’ colonies. Today, descendants of the Mayflower number in the millions, and the significance of the Plymouth Plantation continues to be deliberated. Though no one at the time could know of the colony’s historic impact, each colonist had opinions about the significance of the events that unfolded, the actions taken, and the decisions made.

The Washington Society of Mayflower Descendants (WASMD) invites Washington State High School Students in grades 11 and 12 to write a letter, from the perspective of a “pilgrim,” to a friend back home across the Atlantic. The letter must tell of five historically significant events in chronological order that occurred during the colony’s first seven years, from the time of the Mayflower's departure in 1620 to 1627. The letter must be written in first person by someone who lived through or had direct knowledge of all the events described.

Topics may include but are not limited to, the governance of the colony, relationships among the separatists and non-separatists in the colony, relations with Native American tribes or individuals, religious observances or conflicts, health and mortality, housing, food, or any other impactful event that is of interest to you. The letter will conclude with a call to action or request for support.

One student will be awarded a scholarship of \$1,620. It is not necessary to be a descendant of the Mayflower.

# Annual Scholarship Rules A Letter Home

## 1. ELIGIBILITY, SUBMISSIONS OF ESSAYS and DEADLINES

This “Letter Home” is open to all Washington State High School Students currently enrolled in grades 11 or 12 who have not previously won this award.

All entries must be emailed to [education@washingtontmayflower.org](mailto:education@washingtontmayflower.org) no later than April 1st.

Essays must be typed (using writing software of your choice) and submitted as a pdf file. Email your Pdf to [education@washingtontmayflower.org](mailto:education@washingtontmayflower.org).

## 2. LETTER TOPIC and RESEARCH REQUIREMENTS

The entry shall be in the form of a letter written and signed by a documented pilgrim, to a friend or family member who stayed back in England or Leiden, though the specific name of family member will not be required.

The letter must be based on factual events that are well researched with an attached works cited page in PDF of all source material using MLA standards. Examples may be found on Purdue [OWL: MLA Formatting and Style Guide // Purdue Writing Lab](#)

The following is [a link to potential references](#) (books and websites), but does not limit you to only these sources. For the websites, be sure cite the specific source provided within the website, not the website alone.

Note: Each of the following websites has a collection of information that can be used, but individual portions should be cited when using within your “Letter Home”.

### 3. LETTER HOME FORMAT REQUIREMENTS

General Requirements: An original copy of the “Letter Home” must be written in English with no graphics attached and include a descriptive view of events that had significant impact on the early Plymouth colonist.

Specific Requirements: The “Letter Home” must be submitted as two PDFs to the Washington Society of Mayflower Descendants scholarship website: (1) Contestant information page, (2) the “Letter Home” with works cited in MLA Format . In order to avoid bias, a blind-judging process will be used, judges will be provided only the Letter Home and works cited page, no reference to the contestant’s name or other identifying information may appear on the pages of the Letter Home or the works cited pages. Contestant entries who do not conform to these requirements will be disqualified.

### 4. JUDGING CRITERIA

Letter Home submissions that meet criteria in Rules 1 through 3 above will be accepted and judged using the attached rubric: see attached rubric

### 5. PRIZE

The Letter Home winner will be provided a cash award of \$1620 as well as a certificate acknowledging the award. It is our desire to have one of our members personally present the certificate at a school award assembly or have the award recipient attend a Mayflower event to receive their prize.

### 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 the contest, all participants agree that if their Letter Home is chosen as the winning letter, it will become the property of the WASMD.

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

Participants in this contest agree that the interpretation of the rules and decisions of the contest chairman and judges must govern without reservation and that decisions of the judges and/or chairman are final.