

Official Rules for the Founded By NYC Student Competition

Overview

The Founded By NYC Student Competition (“**Competition**”) is designed to celebrate outstanding student work using the principles of the [Founded By NYC Campaign](#). Students in grades 7–12 in New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, and Pennsylvania are encouraged to create and submit a performance piece (e.g., a rap, poem, song, dramatic scene) highlighting how New York City has shaped history and continues to inspire the world today. Students are encouraged to highlight New York City’s history, culture, and innovation. The winner of this Competition will participate in a full-day experience including attending a performance of HAMILTON in New York City with their teacher, two adult chaperones, and up to 29 classmates (“**Award**”).

The Competition is sponsored by the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, 49 W. 45th Street, 2nd Floor, New York, NY 10036 (“**Sponsor**”). The Award is funded through a grant from the New York City Tourism + Conventions (1 Rockefeller Plaza, 5th Floor, New York, NY 10020) (“**Grantor**”).

About the Grantor

New York City Tourism + Conventions is the official destination marketing organization and convention and visitors bureau for the five boroughs of New York City. Their mission is to invite the world and energize the City, building equitable, sustainable economic prosperity and community through tourism for the mutual benefit of residents, businesses and visitors.

To mark the 400th anniversary of New York City in 2025 and the 250th of the United States in 2026, Founded By NYC highlights how the City has helped shape history and continues to inspire the world today. In partnership with the City of New York and HAMILTON, Founded By NYC invites the world to explore original storytelling, can’t-miss events, iconic sights and immersive tours that bring NYC’s groundbreaking innovations to life.

Eligibility Requirements

The Competition is open to students currently enrolled in grades 7–12 in New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, and Pennsylvania (“**Entrants**”). Entrants must be over the age of 13 to be eligible for the Competition.

Entrants who fail to meet this requirement will not be eligible for the Competition.

A student who has not reached the age of majority in his or her state of domicile as of the date on which the Competition commences must receive their parent's or legal guardian's permission to enter the Competition.

Employees of the Sponsor and Grantor and members of their immediate family or persons living in the same household are not eligible for the Competition.

Submission Requirements

All entries must be submitted using the online form. First-time users of the site will be asked to create a profile before proceeding to the submission form. Work must be submitted by the student or their teacher. Students submitting their own work will be required to provide the contact information for their teacher.

The form will open on **September 15, 2025**, and will close once 300 entries have been received or by **December 15, 2025**, whichever occurs first. The Submission Form can be found on the Gilder Lehrman website. In order to participate, teachers of students and students will also need to submit certain personal information (such as email address, student name, school information, parent/guardian information, and telephone number).

There is a limit of one (1) entry per student. Teachers may submit an individual form for each student or a student may submit on their own.

Substitutions of entry files may be completed via email to education@gilderlehrman.org through **08:00 a.m. ET on December 15, 2025**. Incomplete entries or entries not complying with these Rules are subject to disqualification.

There is no purchase necessary to enter the Competition or win the Award.

Entry Requirements

In order to be considered for the Competition, Entrants must submit their written performance piece to the online form by December 15, 2025. Entries are subject to the requirements listed below. Entrants are encouraged to submit a video recording of their piece. The requirements for the entry are as follows:

- Submissions must highlight how New York City has shaped history and continues to inspire the world today.
- Students must work on their own project and may not work in groups.
- Written performance pieces should not exceed 750 words.
- If recorded, the Submission must be under 2 minutes long.

- If recorded, the Submission must be a performance by the student who researched and wrote the piece.
- The creative piece must not violate any party's copyrights or trademark rights. It must be original work created by the student without the use of AI.

Judging Criteria

Eligible students being considered for the Award will be evaluated on three criteria:

- **Research:** The piece must use the research sources provided on the activity sheet or independent research and show the student's understanding of the topic.
- **Artistic Expression:** The written piece must provide an original interpretation of the student's chosen topic through song, rhyme, or prose that conveys to the audience a clear, engaging message. It must be a unique expression of ideas that arises from the student's inventiveness and creativity in their choice of character or topic, their storytelling, their lyrics, rhyme, or prose, and/or their musical compositions. The student may not copy another work or violate any party's copyrights or trademark rights.
- **Connection to the Founded By NYC Campaign:** The creative piece should have a clear and strong connection to New York City and its role in shaping history and its continued influence on culture, politics, and innovation. This connection may include people or events rooted in NYC, the city as a symbol or setting, or its ongoing influence on culture and innovation worldwide.

For each of these areas, students will be assigned a score of 1–5 in accordance with the “Judging Process” section below.

Scores in each of these areas will be equally weighted.

Below is the Award Rubric.

Project Rubric (15 Points)

For the Competition, the submitted performance piece will be evaluated based on the research and the artistic expression, and the Founded By NYC principles which highlight how New York City has shaped

	Research	Artistic Expression	“Founded By NYC” Connection
1	Inadequate research shown	The piece shows little or no creative effort or originality.	No connection to New York City is apparent.
2	Needs more evidence of research	The piece shows some creative effort and originality.	New York City connection is weak or tangential.
3	Good example of historical research	The piece shows originality and artistic merit.	New York City connection is relevant and reasonably developed, showing some understanding of the historical or cultural relevance of the city.
4	Above-average quality of insightful research in primary sources	The piece is original, creative, and performance ready.	Above-average integration of the New York City connection that highlights how the city influenced the event, person, or topic in the piece.
5	Clear evidence of exemplary research in primary sources	Production is highly creative and original and well written.	New York City connection is strong, clear, well integrated, and highlights how the city shaped the historical narrative or continues to influence culture.

history and continues to inspire the world today in their work using this rubric.

What is meant by Research?

Use the sources provided or independent research to understand your topic. You may need to use information you learned in class or from reading reputable sources.

What is meant by Artistic Expression?

Your performance piece provides an original interpretation of your topic through song, rhyme, or prose that conveys to the audience a clear, engaging message. It must be a unique expression of ideas and may not copy another work or violate any party’s copyrights or trademark rights.

What is meant by Founded By NYC Connection?

Your performance piece provides a clear and strong connection to New York City and its role in shaping history and its continued influence on culture, politics, and innovation. This connection may include

people or events rooted in NYC, the city as a symbol or setting, or its ongoing influence on culture and innovation worldwide.

Judging Process

Round One: A panel of 3 to 5 qualified judges with knowledge of the expectations of the Competition will review all entries against the criteria listed above and provide a score for each of the components on a scale of 1 to 5, with 15 being the best score.

Round Two: The top 5 submissions with the highest scores from Round One will then be provided to a finalist panel composed of 2 to 3 qualified judges with knowledge of the expectations of the Competition to review the top submissions, provide a score for each of the components on a scale of 1 to 5, with 15 being the best score, and make the final determination of the winner (based on the highest score).

Following review of the entry using anti-plagiarism software and confirmation that the entry is original work, the entry with the highest score provided by the judges will be selected as the Award winner (“**Award Winner**”). For clarity, entries that are determined to be plagiarized or written using AI, in part or in full, will be disqualified and deemed ineligible.

In the event of a tie, the submissions will be returned to the finalist committee for a vote to break the tie.

Announcement of Award Winners

The Award Winner will be notified by email by **February 28, 2026**. Award Winner notification will be sent to the student’s teacher. Teacher information, including email address, will be collected from the Entrant upon submission of the entry.

The Award Winner’s full name, school name, and a link to their submission will also be listed on the Sponsors’ website(s) by **March 30, 2026**.

The Award

The Award Winner, their teacher, two chaperones (must be school faculty), and up to 29 classmates (a total of 30 students [including the Winner] and 3 school faculty adult chaperones) will be invited to attend a full-day program on May 6, 2026 (“**Prize**”). The Prize will include tickets to a Hamilton Education Program with middle and high school students from the tri-state area, including a matinee performance of *HAMILTON* at the Richard Rodgers Theatre.

The Sponsor will only pay for admission costs to any Prize events, including up to 33 tickets for (30 students and 3 adult school faculty chaperones) to a performance of HAMILTON.

Travel arrangements, meals, and other incidentals to/from Prize events will be at the expense of the Award Winner's school. All Prize events will take place in New York City.

Award Redemption

In order to redeem the Award, the potential Award Winner, teacher and all attending classmates (and/or their parent or legal guardian, if the entrant has not reached the age of majority in their state of domicile) MUST sign and return the required consents, forms, and releases of liability that include a publicity release (except where prohibited by law) by **March 30, 2026**. Failure to complete and submit paperwork by this deadline will result in forfeiture of the Award, and the Sponsor shall have the option to award the Award to an alternate winner. The bounceback or return of any award notification may result in disqualification if the Sponsor is unable to reach the Award Winner or the Award Winner's teacher. An alternate winner may be selected. If a potential Award Winner forfeits the Award for any reason, the entry that received the next highest score total may be chosen as a potential winner, or the Sponsors may elect not to award such Award to any student, at the Sponsor's sole discretion. By entering this Competition, each entrant accepts and agrees to these Rules and the decisions of the Sponsor, which shall be final in all matters.

Privacy Policy

All information submitted for the Competition and through the Gilder Lehrman website is in compliance with the Gilder Lehrman Institute's Privacy Policy. A copy of the Privacy Policy can be found [here](#).

Questions

If you have any questions about the Competition or the Award, please email education@gilderlehrman.org.

General Conditions

All information submitted by the Award Winner (including without limitation name and other eligibility requirements) may be subject to verification by the Sponsor.

The Sponsor retains the right to disqualify an entrant if all Competition rules are not followed.

By entering the Competition, an entrant waives all right to, and agrees to indemnify and hold the Sponsor, Grantor, their employees, independent contractors, agents, members, directors, officers,

trustees, board, donors, and other representatives harmless from any claim, liability, loss, damage (including punitive, incidental, and consequential damages), or expense (including attorneys' fees) arising out of or in connection with: (i) any material submitted by the entrant that infringes any copyright, trademark, trade secret, trade dress, patent, or other intellectual property right of any person or defames any person or violates their rights of publicity or privacy; (ii) any misrepresentation made by the entrant in connection with the Competition; (iii) any non-compliance by the entrant with these Rules; and (iv) acceptance, possession, misuse or use of the Award, or participation in any Competition-related activity or participation in the Competition. SOME JURISDICTIONS DO NOT ALLOW THE LIMITATIONS OR EXCLUSION OF LIABILITY FOR INCIDENTAL OR CONSEQUENTIAL DAMAGES, SO THE ABOVE MAY NOT APPLY TO YOU.

The Sponsor and Grantor will not be responsible for: (i) late, incomplete, technically corrupted, damaged, not delivered, or incorrect entries; (ii) an entrant's failure to receive notices due to entrant's spam, junk e-mail, or other security settings or for entrants' provision of incorrect or otherwise non-functioning contact information; (iii) technical, hardware, or software malfunctions, lost or unavailable network connections, or failed, incorrect, inaccurate, incomplete, garbled, or delayed electronic communications however caused and even if caused by any of Sponsors' equipment, software, or other programming associated with or used in the Competition; (iv) by any error which may occur in the transmission, receipt, or processing of the entries or in the administration of the Competition; (v) any typographical, technological, or other error in the publishing of the offer, administration of the Competition, or announcement of the Award, (vi) unauthorized human intervention in the Competition; or (vii) injury or damage to persons or property which may be caused, directly or indirectly, in whole or in part, from participation in the Competition or acceptance of the Award.

In addition, the Sponsor and Grantor are not responsible for any injury or damage to an entrant's or any other person's computer related to or resulting from entering the Competition or downloading or printing any material for the Competition. Without limitation of the foregoing, everything on the website associated with the Competition is provided "as is" without warranty of any kind, either express or implied.

If, for any reason, the Sponsor is not capable of completing or running the Competition as planned, including without limitation by reason of suspected tampering, technological corruption, infection by virus, bug, worm or other malicious code, unauthorized human intervention, fraud, acts of God, strikes, terrorist acts, criminal acts of third parties, an insufficient number of qualified Competition entries, safety concerns, inability to obtain adequate insurance coverage, force majeure or technical or mechanical failures of any sort, or any other causes which, in the Sponsor and Grantor's consensus opinion, corrupts, threatens, or impairs the administration, security, safety, fairness, integrity, or proper conduct of the Competition, the Sponsor reserves the right to modify or suspend the Competition at the Sponsor

and Grantor's consensus discretion. The Sponsor and Grantor assume no liability and are not responsible for, and entrants hereby forever waive any rights to any claim in connection with, errors and/or ambiguity: (i) in the Competition; (ii) in any related advertising or promotions of the Competition; and/or (iii) in these Rules. In the event of any ambiguity(s) or error(s) in these Rules, the Sponsor and Grantor reserve the right to modify these Rules for clarification purposes or to correct any such error(s) without materially affecting the terms and conditions of the Competition.

An entrant agrees that: (i) any and all disputes, claims, controversies, and causes of action arising out of or connected with the Competition or the Award shall be resolved individually, without resort to any form of class action; (ii) any and all disputes, claims, controversies, and causes of action arising out of or in connection with the Competition shall be resolved by binding arbitration before a single arbitrator in New York City, in accordance with the rules of JAMS, and judgment upon the award rendered by the arbitrator may be entered in any court having jurisdiction thereof; (iii) any and all claims, judgments, and awards shall be limited to actual out-of-pocket costs incurred, including costs associated with entering the Competition, but in no event attorneys' fees; and (iv) under no circumstances will entrant be permitted to obtain awards for, and entrant hereby waives all rights to claim, injunctive relief, indirect, punitive, incidental and consequential damages and any other damages, other than for actual out-of-pocket expenses, and any and all rights to have damages multiplied or otherwise increased. **SOME JURISDICTIONS DO NOT ALLOW THE LIMITATIONS OR EXCLUSION OF LIABILITY FOR INCIDENTAL OR CONSEQUENTIAL DAMAGES, SO THE ABOVE MAY NOT APPLY TO YOU.** All issues and questions concerning the construction, validity, interpretation, and enforceability of these Rules, or the rights and obligations of the entrant and Sponsors in connection with the Competition, shall be governed by, and construed in accordance with, the laws of the State of New York, without giving effect to any choice of law or conflict of law rules (whether of the State of New York or any other jurisdiction), which would cause the application of the laws of any jurisdiction other than the State of New York.

Any attempt by an entrant to deliberately damage the website associated with the Competition, submit malicious code, or undermine the legitimate operation of the Competition may be in violation of criminal and civil laws and should such an attempt be made, Sponsors reserve the right to seek remedies and damages (including attorneys' fees) from any such entrant to the fullest extent of the law, including criminal prosecution.