



FORT BEND COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Annual Essay Contest

Prizes awarded:

[for each grade]

1st place: \$250

2nd place: \$150

Prizes
provided by
Friends of
the FBCHC

Entries

Due:

October 30

4th Grade

**Stephen F. Austin:
Texas's First
Successful
Empressario**

7th Grade

**The Life and Times
of the
Old Three
Hundred**

Contest Rules and Resources follow



2026 ESSAY CONTEST RULES & RESOURCES

RULES

1. The contest is open to all 4th and 7th grade students that live or attend school in Fort Bend County.
2. Essays should be created using 12 point type in Times New Roman font.
3. Essays should be submitted in pdf format via email to:
HistoricalCommission@fortbendcountytexas.gov
4. Essays must be received by 5:00 pm on October 30, 2026
5. 4th Grade Essays should be between 500 – 750 words (2-3 pages)
6. 7th Grade Essays should be between 750 – 1000 words (3-4 pages)
7. All essays must contain a bibliography with at least 4 references, at least 2 of which are primary. The Bibliography is not part of the word count.
8. All essays must contain a title page with the name of the student, the title of the essay, and the name of the school, or home address if homeschooled. Please also include the name and contact information (email or telephone number) for a parent or guardian. The title page is not part of the word count. Essays may also contain one page of images, photographs, or original art related to the research topic, including image citations or descriptions.
9. 4th Grade Essay Topic: *Stephen F. Austin: Texas' First Successful Empresario*
10. 7th Grade Essay Topic: *The Life and Times of the Old Three Hundred*

ESSAY CONTEST RESOURCES

The following are some suggested resources for the start of student's research into the topics. It is expected that the student will conduct his/her own independent research beyond these resources. For additional resources please visit the Genealogy and Local History Department at the George Memorial Library, your local Fort Bend County Library Branch and the Fort Bend County Museum and ask for the resource guides they have put together for the essay topic of your choice.

4th and 7th GRADE ESSAY RESOURCES

Online:

Stephen F. Austin's Old Three Hundred Original Settlers - Fort Bend County Texas (Genealogy Trails)

<https://genealogytrails.com/tex/gulfcoast/fortbend/history/original300.html>

The Old Three Hundred: Pioneers of Texas Colonization (Texas State Historical Association)

<https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/old-three-hundred>

The Old Three Hundred: A List of Settlers in Austin's First Colony on JSTOR <https://www.jstor.org/stable/30242636?seq=1>

Books:

Austin's Old Three Hundred: The First Anglo Colony in Texas / by their descendant. Several copies that can be checked out from Fort Bend County Libraries.

The Old Three Hundred: Gone to Texas; Paul N. Spellman

Books (continued):

Austin's Old Three Hundred: Histories of the first Anglo colonists in Texas. 1 copy in GEN. – Fort Bend County Library

Vertical File in Genealogy department (must go to Genealogy in George Memorial Library to access or can request a scan emailed to recipient over the phone) They have a file on Stephen F. Austin which has biographical and other information on him, including some on the Old 300.

Online databases that can be accessed with a library card from www.fortbend.lib.tx.us :

The History Reference Center has info on the Old 300 with lists of colonists and brief biographies.

Sam Houston State University Special Collections & University

Archives: Newton Gresham Library has some original papers signed by some of the 300 colonists.