

## Essay Theme: A part of/Apart from

This year, 2026, marks the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States of America, and the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the CNMI Covenant. Locally, the CNMI sits at a crossroads where Pacific, Asian, and Western cultures move, mix, and sometimes merge together, all while living under the umbrella of the American political system. For this contest, the NMI Humanities Council asks high school students across all private and public schools to write a personal narrative essay where they describe a **specific experience that captures what it means to be from the CNMI**. They should also dedicate some portion of their essay to describing the **nuanced** ways this experience makes them feel **a part of and/or apart from the United States**. The students should also describe **what they want to see happen for the CNMI's political relationship with the United States in the next 50 years**.

The experience represented in the essay can be a large community event or an annual island-wide tradition; it can also be something more intimate, such as a daily cultural or social practice that makes the CNMI unique. The point of the essay is to capture the student's idea of the values the CNMI holds at its core. Somewhere in the essay the student should describe how the experience they write about either makes the CNMI distinct from the overall American experience or is an integral part of being in the United States.

Submission guidelines:

- Use size 12 Times New Roman or similar font
- Double space
- Three pages minimum, five pages maximum
- Submit essays in PDF format to [info@nmhcouncil.org](mailto:info@nmhcouncil.org)
- File name should be in the following format: *Essay title\_Student Name*. An essay entitled "The Grind of Life" by Andrew Roberto will look like: The Grind of Life\_Andrew Roberto.
- The essay title should also appear at the top of the first page of the essay. However, students **should not** put their own name in the essay. The only place a student's name should appear in the submission is on the PDF title.
- Deadline for submission is 5:00 p.m. on April 17, 2026
- All submissions must include the **publishing consent form** available on the Council's website.