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C-SPAN Announces 2026 StudentCam Documentary Competition

Students reflect on the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence

Awarding \$100,000 in cash prizes

Washington, DC (Sept. 10, 2025) — C-SPAN's StudentCam documentary competition returns for its 22nd year, continuing to challenge students across the country to think critically about issues that affect our communities and our nation. As the United States approaches its 250th anniversary, C-SPAN invites students to join in commemorating the semiquincentennial by exploring this year's theme:

"America's 250th Anniversary"

Exploring the American Story through the Declaration of Independence

Students are asked to create a 5- to 6-minute documentary that explores the enduring impact of the Declaration of Independence by examining:

(1) its influence on a key moment from America's 250-year history.

— or —

(2) how the values stated in the foundational document touch on a contemporary issue impacting you or your community.

C-SPAN and its cable and satellite television partners invite middle and high school student filmmakers of all levels to enter the documentary contest which awards \$100,000 in cash prizes.

The C-SPAN Education Foundation annually awards 150 student and 53 teacher cash prizes. The grand-prize student winner will receive \$5,000, and multiple cash prizes of \$3,000, \$1,500, \$750 and \$250 will be awarded to students in first, second and third places, as well as honorable mention categories.

“C-SPAN is thrilled to include StudentCam in tandem with our America 250 programming that explores the American story,” said Craig McAndrew, director of C-SPAN Education Relations. “We look forward to seeing students explore the ideals of the Declaration of Independence, whether through a historical lens or in the context of contemporary issues that shape their lives and communities today.”

Competition Guidelines

- Middle school students (grades 6–8) and high school students (grades 9–12) may compete individually or in teams composed of two or three members.
- Documentaries must be the original work of students; however, teachers may provide guidance and critiques.
- All documentaries must include C-SPAN video clips that support the chosen topic and are used effectively.
- StudentCam documentaries should comprehensively represent a variety of viewpoints related to the chosen topic, including those that may oppose the filmmakers’ points of view.
- Documentaries must be between **5 and 6 minutes** in length.
- Entries must include sources, either in the end credits or works cited list.
- Video submissions and entry forms can be uploaded directly online at studentcam.org.
- The deadline for students to submit entries is 11:59pm PST, **Tuesday, Jan. 20, 2026**.

The documentaries will be judged by a panel of C-SPAN representatives. Middle school students will be judged on a national basis. High school students will compete on a regional level, with the United States divided into three regions: West, Central and East. The grand-prize winner with the best overall entry will be selected nationally from both middle and high school entries.

Winners will be announced in March 2026, with the top winning videos to air on C-SPAN in April 2026. Competition details are available at studentcam.org. Students and teachers can stay up to date with StudentCam on [X](#) and [TikTok](#) @studentcam and on [Instagram](#) @cspanstudentcam.

About C-SPAN Classroom:

C-SPAN Classroom uses the network's programs on public affairs, coverage of Congress, nonfiction books and American history to create free digital tools for teachers, students and the public to use in classrooms, in projects or for research. C-SPAN Classroom's website provides social studies teachers with access to thousands of free resources, including short current events videos, lesson plans, bell ringers, plus Constitution Clips and On This Day in History events. Engage with [C-SPAN Classroom](#) on [X](#) and [Facebook](#).

About C-SPAN:

C-SPAN, the private nonprofit public affairs media organization providing Americans with unfiltered access to government proceedings, was created in 1979 as a public service by the cable television industry and is primarily funded through fees paid by cable, satellite television and streaming companies that provide the C-SPAN Networks to subscribers. C-SPAN connects with millions of Americans through its three commercial-free TV networks, [C-SPAN Radio](#), [C-SPAN podcasts](#), the [C-SPAN Now app](#), a new connected-TV streaming app [C-SPAN Select](#), [C-SPAN.org](#) and various social media platforms. The C-SPAN Networks' video-rich website contains over 300,000 hours of searchable and shareable content. Engage with C-SPAN on [X](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [TikTok](#), [Threads](#), and [YouTube](#), and stay connected through [weekly and daily newsletters](#).

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