

CAP Youth Essay Competition 2026

Submission Guidelines & Rules

Theme: Leading | Building | Transforming — The African Story Continues

Submission Deadline: March 31, 2026

1. Background and Rationale

In celebration of Black History Month 2026, the Council of African Professionals (CAP) invites young Africans and members of the African diaspora to participate in its annual Essay Writing Competition.

As an organization dedicated to shaping the next generation of transformative African leaders, CAP seeks to provide an intellectual platform for youth to explore leadership, innovation, and identity as pathways to a more just and prosperous continent. This competition celebrates the spirit of leadership intelligence — the capacity to think critically, act courageously, and lead regeneratively — as the foundation for Africa's renaissance in the 21st century.

2. Competition Objectives

The competition aims to:

- Inspire young Africans to reflect on the leadership lessons of Black and African history.
- Promote intellectual curiosity and cultural pride among youth.
- Amplify youth voices in defining Africa's future.
- Advance CAP's mission of Leading | Building | Transforming across generations and geographies.

3. Eligibility Categories

The competition is open to Africans and members of the African diaspora, aged 15–30.

- **Category A (15–18 years):** Senior Secondary / High School Students
- **Category B (19–24 years):** University / College Students
- **Category C (25–30 years):** Early-Career Professionals or Researchers

4. Essay Topics

Category A: High School Students

- **Topic:** *Leading Beyond Borders: How I Plan to Contribute to Africa's Future*

Category B: University / College Students

- **Topic:** *My Vision for Africa: A Personal Manifesto on Leadership and Change*

Category C: Early-Career Professionals / Researchers

- **Topic:** *The Future is African: How Innovation Can Redefine Africa's Global Role*

5. Submission Guidelines

Technical Requirements:

- **Word Count:** 1,500 – 2,500 words (Minimum – Maximum).
- **Format:** Microsoft Word (.docx) or PDF.
- **Font:** Times New Roman, 12pt, Double-spaced.

Cover Page Requirements: All submissions must include a cover page containing the following:

- Full Name
- Age and Category
- Institution / Organization
- Contact Information (Email & Phone Number)
- Short Bio (Maximum 150 words)
- **Requirement:** Please attach a professional headshot with your submission.

6. Mandatory Presentation & Hackathon

In-Person Presentation: Finalists are required to deliver a **2-minute in-person presentation** during the event. This will be a high-level overview of who you are and what you wrote about.

- **Note:** Video submissions are **not** acceptable. If you do not attend to present in person, you will not be awarded marks for the presentation portion of the score.

Youth Hackathon: All essay participants are expected to participate in the Hackathon. Separate cash prizes will be awarded for this specific activity.

7. Prizes and Awards

- **1st Prize:** \$750 (Per Category)
- **2nd Prize:** \$500 (Per Category)

- **3rd Prize:** \$300 (Per Category)
- **Participation:** At least \$100 for participation.

8. Important Dates & Locations

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Event Dates:

- **St. John's, New Brunswick:** May 9th, 2026 | 12:00 PM – 5:00 PM
- **Milton, Ontario:** June 27th, 2026 | 2:00 PM – 7:00 PM EST

9. How to submit

Please email your attached document to bhm@capngo.ca with the subject line: “*2026 Essay Submission – [Your Name]*”.