

# Estonian History Competition 2024/2025

## “Duration and Interruption”

"As long as we remember, we endure." With these words, the jury summed up the spirit of this year's Estonian History Competition, which culminated in a celebratory event at the Ministry of Education and Research in Tartu on 16 May 2025. Held under the theme "Durations and Interruptions", the 26th edition of the competition inspired young researchers to investigate moments of continuity and rupture in Estonian and global history.



*Participants of the 26th Estonian History Competition | Photo: Aldo Luud*

This year's theme resonated deeply with dominant topics including war, deportations, migration, and resistance. Projects tackled a wide range of topics: from school histories to local religious life, women's representation in media, and even calendar reforms.

Within the traditional research works, the students explored personal and family biographies, as well as topics related to their village life or the local industries. Many works skilfully combined oral histories with archival sources, demonstrating a thoughtful and multifaceted approach to historical research. This approach is also evident in one of the first prizes, where one student explored the depiction of watercourses in Estonian folk songs. This work stood out for its strong connection to cultural heritage and its analytical treatment of folklore as a source of historical insight.

Besides the written research papers, the creative works category showcased remarkable craftsmanship. Entries included traditional clothing design, woodworking, 3D models, interactive games, and sound-based projects. As juror Helina Raal highlighted in her speech: "It seems like the students of the most successful works included their hobbies into history projects – and that joy is reflected in the quality of their work." From digitally reconstructed memorials to hand-sewn Seto folk costumes, the projects reflected a strong connection to cultural heritage and community engagement.

Among the award-winning creative projects were a 3D-printed bench commemorating a local teacher, a digitally modeled war memorial, and costumes that will be worn by their creators during this year's Laulupidu, the Estonian National Song festival. The top prize for creative work at secondary level went to a project on banned literature in Estonia, which included an exhibition and a catalogue collecting works once censored.

Across both categories, the jury praised the thoughtful use of sources, clear structuring, and a strong sense of purpose. Many students succeeded in going beyond mere documentation, offering analytical insights into how histories endure or are interrupted.