

Latvian History Competition 2024/2025

“There Used to Be ...”

History is not only about what we can see. Sometimes, what’s missing tells the most compelling stories. Discovering exactly that was the challenge of this year’s Latvian History Competition “There Used to Be ...”. Pupils set out to uncover the history of buildings that had long since disappeared from their hometowns.



Prize winners of the Latvian History Competition | Photo: Ilmārs Znotiņš/Valsts prezidenta kanceleja

At the award ceremony in Riga castle, Latvian president Edgars Rinkēvičs praised the unusual perspective: “History can be viewed and analysed in many different ways. You can tell it through a story of big political shifts, wars, palaces, and decisions achieved after high level consultations. Or you can view history through present day, a village, a city, region, people, lifestyles, everyday occurrences – many different angles that are often left outside the academic writings of prominent authors. That is why I am so happy to see so many diverse takes on history in your projects: through a railway station building that is gone, army barracks, cafeteria, street and other lenses. It is exciting to discover history through the ages this way.”

Eighty-three pupils submitted more than sixty works, from research essays to creative projects. The best twenty were invited to the finals in May to present their work to the jury. In the end, nine entries received the grand prizes, handed out by the Latvian president himself.



Latvian president Edgars Rinkēvičs

Photo: Ilmārs Znotiņš/Valsts prezidenta kanceleja

The other participants were also recognised: everyone received books on Latvian history. President Rinkēvičs emphasised the value of all contributions: “Latvia has received 63 new stories. These stories, now engrained in our collective history, have made us richer.”



Books as prizes

Photo: Ilmārs Znotiņš/Valsts prezidenta kanceleja