

# 2026 Essay Questions

## Grades 4-5:

1. Every person leaves behind a story. Think of someone who has made a difference in your life or your community. What makes them special? How do they make the world better? What do you hope people remember about you and the kind things you do?
2. If you could meet any character from a book, who would it be and what would you ask them? Why would you like to meet this particular character?

## Grades 6-8:

1. The Carson Scholars Fund's theme this year is "Innovation and Inspiration." Please tell us about each of the following:
  - a. a time when you were innovative and what inspired you to take action **and**
  - b. what actions you regularly take to inspire others and make a difference and why they're important to you.
2. Dr. and Mrs. Carson created the Carson Scholars Fund to celebrate academic superstars and provide a financial incentive to help them on their educational journeys and are now celebrating the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of awarding scholarships. If you could create a program to help students, what would it be and why?

## Grades 9-11:

1. We know education doesn't occur solely in the classroom. Tell us about where else you've experienced your greatest learning – perhaps through employment, volunteer and/or extracurricular activities. How have these activities prepared you or piqued your interest in your hopeful career field?
2. **Back to 1996: A Time Travel Adventure!** - Imagine being transported to the year 1996 when the first Carson Scholarships were awarded. How would your academic and social life differ in a world without smartphones, social media, or modern learning tools? If you could bring back one piece of today's technology or culture,

what would it be—and how might it influence your life and the lives of others in both eras?