

## The Mathieu Da Costa Challenge

The Mathieu Da Costa Challenge is an annual writing and artwork contest that is open to youth between the ages of 9 and 18. The Challenge encourages young Canadians to embark on their own personal voyage of discovery by learning about the contributions that Canadians of different backgrounds have made in building our country.

Participants submit an original piece of writing or artwork that illustrates how specific individuals from Canada's Aboriginal, African and other backgrounds have contributed to the development of Canada. Winning entries are selected from three age groups (9–12, 13–15 and 16–18).

Mathieu Da Costa was a navigator and interpreter of African descent who likely travelled extensively throughout the Atlantic world in the late 1500s and early 1600s. As an interpreter, he was sought after by the French and the Dutch to help in their trade with Aboriginal people. The tradition of Europeans relying on Black interpreters was more than a century old by Mathieu Da Costa's time. His interpreting skills helped bridge the cultural and linguistic gap between early French explorers and the Mi'kmaq people. His work in Canada is commemorated at the Port Royal Habitation National Historic Site of Canada in Annapolis Royal, Nova Scotia.

See [www.pch.gc.ca/special/mdc/main/index\\_e.cfm](http://www.pch.gc.ca/special/mdc/main/index_e.cfm) for more details about the contest.