



Constitution Day Essay Contest

This year marks the 237th celebration of Constitution Day in the United States, recognizing the signing of the U.S. Constitution on September 17, 1787, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Every Constitution Day is an opportunity for us to celebrate and recognize the rights and responsibilities this document affords us. It underscores the importance of being active participants in the democratic process, including participation in Jury Duty, Voting, and Civic Engagement.

In celebration of Constitution Day, the New York State Unified Court System announces the inaugural Constitution Day Essay Contest.

The New York State Unified Court System invites all High School students to submit essays that discuss this year's theme: **The Role of the U.S. Constitution in Promoting Civic Engagement: Ensuring a Thriving Democracy**. The goal of this contest is to motivate students to thoughtfully read and explore the United States Constitution, thus promoting active engagement in the democratic process.

ELIGIBILITY:

This essay contest is exclusively for high school students residing in New York State which includes students in public schools, charter schools, private schools, independent schools, faith-based institutions, and homeschoolers. **Students whose parents or guardians are employed by the New York State Unified Court System are not eligible for this essay contest.**

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS:

- Essays must follow the theme stated above and not exceed 500 words.
- Only one submission is permitted per student. Each entry must be original, composed by the submitting student, must not have previously won a prize, and must comply with copyright laws.
- Essays must be submitted electronically in PDF format to **civic-engagement@nycourts.gov** with the subject line "Constitution Day Essay Contest".

- Each submission must include a cover page with the essay title, your name, school (if applicable), contact information, and a statement that the student does not have a parent or guardian that is employed by the New York State Unified Court System. Please **DO NOT INCLUDE ANY PERSONAL INFORMATION WITHIN THE ESSAY ITSELF**. Any submitted essay that includes identifying information or fails to adhere to the submission guidelines will be disqualified.
- Attach both the cover page and the essay as separate PDF files in a single email.

DEADLINE FOR ESSAY SUBMISSION: OCTOBER 30, 2024

All participants will receive a **pocket-sized Constitution** and a **Certificate of Participation**.

The NYS UCS encourages all students with disabilities to participate and will provide accommodations to those who need them to ensure a fair and inclusive contest, please inquire at [**civic-engagement@nycourts.gov**](mailto:civic-engagement@nycourts.gov).

PRIZES:

Essays from the First, Second, and Third-Place winners will receive a Certificate of Achievement, statewide recognition by being showcased NYS UCS website, and one of the following:

- **First Place Winner:** Gold Medal – only one winner
- **Second Place Winner:** Silver Medal – only one winner
- **Third Place Winner:** Bronze Medal – only one winner
- **Honorable Mentions:** One for each Judicial District of the New York State Unified Court System

WINNERS WILL BE ANNOUNCED ON OR BEFORE DECEMBER 31, 2024.

For further inquiries, please contact the Statewide Civic Engagement Coordinator at [**civic-engagement@nycourts.gov**](mailto:civic-engagement@nycourts.gov).

