



Sixth Circuit 2020 Student Essay Contest

The Role of Civics Education in Protecting the Rule of Law

Who May Enter: The contest is open to junior and senior high school students in Kentucky, Michigan, Ohio, and Tennessee. Students in the 11th and 12th grades attending public, private, parochial and charter schools, and home-schooled students of equivalent grade status are invited to participate. Children of federal judges or federal judiciary employees are not eligible to participate.

Theme: The Role of Civics Education in Protecting the Rule of Law – Over the past few decades, our nation has undergone a significant decline in the provision of civics education, and the effects are troubling. Keeping in mind the state of civics education in our country today, please address the following questions:

- *Is the teaching of civics valuable to maintaining American democracy?*
- *Why is the rule of law important to American democracy, and what role does the teaching of civics have in protecting the rule of law?*
- *How can civics education be improved to better "enlighten our citizenry"?*

For the full prompt, please consult the contest website at <https://connections.ca6.uscourts.gov/civics-contest>. When addressing the three questions above, students should consider some or all of the writing and citation materials located on the resources page of the contest website at <https://connections.ca6.uscourts.gov/civics-contest>.

The essay should:

- 1) Demonstrate an understanding of the role of the judiciary and why the rule of law is important to American democracy;
- 2) Explain whether the teaching of civics is valuable to maintaining American democracy; and
- 3) Discuss the role the teaching of civics has in protecting the rule of law and how civics education can be improved to better "enlighten our citizenry."

Length and Format: Essays must be between 500 and 1,000 words. Please double space and use an easily read 12pt or 14pt font. While not required, proper use of citations and bibliographies will be credited during judging. Citations and bibliographies will not be included in the word count. Essays must be submitted electronically as an Adobe Acrobat document (PDF) attachment sent via email along with a completed contest entry form to civics_contest@ca6.uscourts.gov. The contest entry form should be sent as a separate PDF in the same email. **Please do not include your name on your essay.**

Contest Duration: Entries will be accepted beginning March 24, 2020. The deadline for entries is 11:59 p.m. (EDT) on May 31, 2020. Finalists will be selected in July, and the winners will be announced this summer (2020).

Judging: Judging will be based on the following criteria:

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| 1) Demonstrates an understanding of the role of the judiciary and why the rule of law is important | 40 points |
| 2) Clarity and effectiveness in expressing the theme | 30 points |
| 3) Grammar, spelling, and composition | 25 points |
| 4) Use of citations and bibliographies | 5 points |

Release Forms: Should you become a contest finalist, you will be required to submit a release form allowing the Sixth Circuit to publish your essay in print publications and on public court websites. In addition, contest winners will be required to provide and authorize use of photographs of themselves in contest-related promotional materials.

Disqualification: Providing false information, not adhering to the rules, not meeting the submission deadline, or not providing a release form if requested may result in disqualification.

Questions? Contact the Office of the Circuit Executive at (513) 564-7200 or civics_contest@ca6.uscourts.gov.