



LAW DAY
2022 –
“The
Constitution
in Times of
Change”

GRADES 6 TO 8

ART, ESSAY AND POETRY
WINNING ENTRIES

First Place: Jeff Jiju, Bayshore Middle School

Ode to the Constitution

Oh constitution, oh constitution,
You are the spirit of our nation, our moral protector in a way.
If you were a person, you'd fight for us without hesitation, making sure we lived to see another day.

Oh constitution, oh constitution,
You are crinkled and centuries-old, yet here you are, still going strong.
Your paper is a goldish-brown, filled with ink in the styles of writing long gone.

Oh constitution, oh constitution,
If you were picked up you would crinkle and crackle, yet even though you are so old, you are still strong, brave, and bold.

Oh constitution, oh constitution,
Around you are people of all kinds and backgrounds, chattering and praising how you set the nation's bonds.

Oh constitution, oh constitution,
When I think of you, I feel glad, thankful, and safe. If you were a person, we would all celebrate and not hesitate!

Oh constitution, oh constitution,
When I first learned of you, we were taught that you were the basis of our nation, the center of order, and helped decide which laws passed and which didn't.
We were taught that you should be revered and respected, as it was you who kept this nation afloat when other documents couldn't.

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Oh constitution, oh constitution,
If you didn't exist, my life would be one consumed by fear.
My life's setting might not even be here!

Oh constitution, oh constitution,
Without you, we would still be on the Articles of Confederation.
We would be a disunited, less-safer, less-prosperous nation.

Oh constitution, oh constitution,
While all of this is true, there is still something more to celebrate in you.
Your ability to change and adapt was unthinkable for its time, that is true.

Oh constitution, oh constitution,
Throughout the centuries, throughout the ages, more and more things have been added to your pages.
You are who we look back on for not only reflection but for creating laws, judging acts, and understanding our nation's various complexions.
Throughout times of change and times of worry, you still stand strong and tall, helping us wisely think, stay calm, and not panic in a hurry.
You have been with us from 1788 to 2022, and that won't be changing any time soon.
In an era of increasing division and chaos, you are the beacon of light that holds us together and helps us stay strong.
All in all, you are so much more than a piece of paper. You are the base of our way of life, you help decide so many things in law, you show us that democracy can adapt to the changing times and keep its values, and you are the core of our society. And for that, we are eternally grateful.

Middle School Essay Contest (Grades 6-8)

PROMPT:

U.S. Supreme Court Justice Hugo Black when discussing the U.S. Constitution said, “This great document is the unique American contribution to man’s continuing search for a society in which individual liberty is secure against governmental oppression.”

Write an essay that describes the individual liberty(ies) that you feel are most in need of protection from governmental oppression. Discuss how the Constitution protects those liberties.

The 19th Amendment: Women's Right to Vote

The 19th Amendment is "The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the US or by any state on account of sex." As citizens, all of our voices should be heard in life and in voting. Why should gender matter? Men were handed the right to vote but women had to fight for it. This thought process does not make sense. Women and men are created equal as it is written in our constitution, they should both have the same opportunities. Women have the intelligence and mindset to vote but most of all a voice that should be heard.

If someone is a citizen and of age, their gender is irrelevant in regards to voting. They are part of this country, the United States of America, our country is a democracy. Since we are a democracy all voices should be heard regardless of race, religion, or gender. Votes are an outlet for expressing thoughts and opinions so all people should be able to voice those thoughts and opinions. Votes are a privilege that all citizens will gain and this is important.

The 19th Amendment is valuable and a great privilege to all. It took many years for women to achieve this milestone. They worked through it with peaceful protests and silent walks. Eventually, in August, 1920, victory was theirs. Suffragists paved the way for women who make up more than 50% of the United States population.

I am an American female and am inspired by the works of Women Suffragists who gained women the right to vote. In this way, I would like this amendment to be maintained for all women in America.

First Place:
Claire
Buniewski,
St. Jerome
School

The First Amendment

Freedom of speech is the ability to have your own opinions and to share your own ideas without fearing retaliation. This to me is the most important amendment because I believe that you should be able to speak your mind and share your opinions without fear. Our opinions and what we have to say make each one of us unique. We all deserve respect regardless of what we say. You may not agree with everyone, but you should at least listen to what they have to say. No one should be fearful of what others say no matter their gender, race, or ethnicity.

The first amendment also includes freedom of religion which is the right to act, think, and express what you believe in. I think this is also part of the first amendment that should be protected because what you believe in shouldn't be held against you. There are over four thousand religions in the world, and each one adds diversity to our society. Religion is a big part of the culture, and for some people, it's their whole culture. What you believe in shouldn't be taken away from you.

Without the first amendment, none of us would recognize our society. Most of us would probably be too scared to speak our minds and share our ideas because our fear of retaliation would take over. Some people may even feel unsafe with having their own opinions and practicing their religion. With freedom of speech, we are able to express ourselves, solve problems, and share new ideas. Our freedom of speech and religion were given to us for a reason, and we should never give anyone the power to take those freedoms away from us.

Second
Place:
Abigail
Basile,
St.
Jerome
School

The Constitution was created after the colonists declared their independence from Great Britain which led to the Revolutionary War. Governmental oppression by the British before the war played a big role in how the first ten amendments of the U.S Constitution came to be. The amendments provide protection of the rights of the citizens that the government needs to abide by and protect. For this reason, the first ten amendments, also known as the Bill of Rights, should be protected because they are important and helped shape America for what it is today.

The first amendment that I think is most in need of protection from governmental oppression is the third amendment. The third amendment protects citizens by not allowing the government to force citizens to give up their homes for soldiers. It was important to American colonists as it was a response to the Quartering Acts made by the British during the American Revolution. The third amendment may not be as important in the present day, but will surely be significant if a war were to ever happen in the United States. The second amendment I think is in need of protection from governmental oppression is the first amendment. The first amendment protects freedom of speech, religion, the press, and the right to assemble. It was important to American colonists because governmental oppression from Great Britain and religious persecution from the church were major reasons why many people went to America. The first amendment most certainly is vital in today's society. In a country with diverse people with different religions and ways of thinking, the first amendment is critical to protect. The final amendment I think is in need of protection from governmental oppression is the fourth amendment. The fourth amendment protects people from being searched without reason or just cause by the government. It was important to American colonists because what brought about the fourth amendment was the British actions before the Revolution where colonists' were being

Third Place:
Allison
Jacob-
Guzman, Long
Branch Middle
School

forced to have their belongings inspected for illegal goods by British soldiers. The fourth amendment is still used in the present day as it keeps the government from doing a search of a person or their property without just cause.

While the ten amendments all are important and in need of protection from governmental oppression, Amendments I, III, and IV are very crucial because they were based on the past, still followed currently, and most certainly will continue to be followed in the future to protect the rights and freedoms of the people of the United States. Thus, Amendments I, III, and IV are the most in need of protection from governmental oppression because they allow Americans to live without the fear of expressing themselves, or being searched unfairly, or giving up their homes. As it is stated in the Constitution, the rights of all Americans should always be protected and the government is there to protect those rights and liberties.