



SUPERIOR COURT OF NEW JERSEY – ESSEX VICINAGE

2026 LAW DAY

WRITING CONTEST RULES

Instructions:

**Thank you for your interest in the 2026 Writing Contest.
Please register online at <https://www.njcourts.gov/essex-law-day>.**

Theme:

The Rule of Law and the American Dream
“The rule of law—the idea that no person is above the law—is what ensures the rights of the people to live their lives as freely as possible and to pursue their dreams. The ABA encourages all Americans to recognize Law Day on May 1, 2026, and to reflect on how the rule of law ensures all Americans have the ability to fulfill their dreams.”

The above information was retrieved from the American Bar Association website [Law Day \(americanbar.org\)](https://americanbar.org).

Resources:

Teachers, coordinators, or students may visit the following websites to obtain additional information regarding the 2026 Law Day theme. These resources and instructional guidance will encourage students to explore the connection between the Rule of Law and the American Dream, deepen their understanding of justice and equality, and inspire creative expression through that reflects how laws protect opportunity, fairness, and freedom for all.

- ABA 2026 Law Day Guide at [Law Day \(americanbar.org\)](https://americanbar.org)
- bensguide.gpo.gov
- <https://www.pbslearningmedia.org>
- <https://www.icivics.org>
- [Law Day and Rule of Law Resources](#)
- [How the Rule of Law Makes Democracy Work - Lesson plan | Facing History & Ourselves](#)
- [American Lawyers Alliance](#)

Content:

The writing contest is open to all **Essex County middle and high school students**. Students may submit essays or poems that incorporate the 2026 Law Day theme and discuss issues pertaining to the theme and the court in the students' own words. Listed below is some suggested content to get the students started. Submissions are not limited to the suggestions below.

- The Rule of Law ensures that everyone, regardless of status, background, or wealth, is subject to the same laws and protections. Write an essay or story that illustrates why the Rule of Law is essential for fairness and justice in society. Use a real or imagined example to show how following the law helps protect rights, resolve conflicts, or allow people to pursue their goals safely and equally. Think about a law or court decision that promoted equality. How did it help more people access opportunities and achieve their goals?
- Write about an individual or group whose voice influenced the law or helped others achieve the American Dream. How did they make a difference?
- Use a metaphor, poem, or allegory to describe the relationship between the rule of law and the American Dream. For example, compare the law to a bridge, a key, or a compass guiding people toward opportunity.

Format:

An essay of 250 to 300 words or a poem of 4 to 6 stanzas.

Judging:

ALL ENTRIES MUST BE STUDENTS ORIGINAL WORK AND TYPED using Times New Roman font formatted in MS Word or copied and pasted into the body of an email. Essay and poems will be judged on originality, content, and presentation. A teacher, group coordinator or a parent should review entries for spelling and grammatical edits prior to submission. Paraphrases, quotes and AI resources must contain references or proper citation.

Plagiarism is defined as using someone else's work without giving them proper credit. Submissions that are identified as such will immediately be disqualified. Submissions should also refrain from using threatening, offensive, or abusive language. First place, second place, third place and honorable mention(s) may be selected. Winners will be acknowledged at an awards ceremony on May 1, 2026.

Include the following information for each submission:

Identification:

- (1) Title (if applicable)
- (2) Student's name and mailing address
- (3) Student's grade and age
- (4) School or group name
- (5) Teacher or group coordinator name (if applicable)
- (6) Parent or guardian name, telephone number and email address.

Deadline: Submissions will be accepted **between March 2 to March 13, 2026.**

Disclaimer: All entries become the property of the Superior Court of New Jersey - Essex Vicinage. Students are encouraged to keep copies of their entries. Excerpts from submissions may be displayed in Judiciary publications and/or website. Entries will not be used for commercial purposes.

Submissions: **ELECTRONICALLY**
Essays and/or poems should be formatted as a MS Word document using Times New Roman font and emailed as an attachment to **EssexLawDay.Mbx@njcourts.gov**. **Include the information** from the “Identification” section above on the first page of each submission at the top left of the page. Essays may also be copied and pasted into the body of an email.

MAIL TO:
Superior Court of NJ – Essex
Veterans Courthouse
50 West Market Street, Room 132
Newark NJ 07102
Attn: Ombudsman’s Office – Law Day Contest

DROP OFF – During office hours Monday through Friday 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at the address listed above, between
March 2 to March 13, 2026.

Questions or concerns:
Contact the Essex Vicinage Ombudsman’s Office
Email: **EssexLawDay.Mbx@njcourts.gov**
Telephone: (973) 776-9300 ext. 56886