



SUPERIOR COURT OF NEW JERSEY – ESSEX VICINAGE

2023 LAW DAY

WRITING CONTEST RULES

Instructions:

Thank you for your interest in the 2023 Writing Contest.

Please register online at <https://www.njcourts.gov/essex-law-day>.

Theme:

Cornerstones of Democracy: Civics, Civility and Collaboration

"In recent years, tensions in our democratic system have revealed deep divisions in American society. These divisions are aggravated by incivility in public discourse and insufficient understanding among many people about the Constitution and the way American government works. Together, however, we can collaborate to overcome our differences, resolve our disputes, and preserve our democracy and republic. To that end, we call on members of the legal profession to lead the way in promoting civics, civility, and collaboration—the cornerstones of our democracy.

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

Resources:

Teachers, coordinators, or students may visit the following websites to obtain additional information regarding the 2023 Law Day theme. These resources and instructional guidance will aid students in gaining an understanding of why civics education is essential, learning how the government works, understanding the structures of government, our roles as citizens and the processes of legislation.

- ABA Cornerstones of Democracy Conversation Guide
https://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/administrative/public_education/Lawday/2023/cc-program-book-final.pdf
- <https://civiced.rutgers.edu/>
- <https://ourwhitehouse.org/civic-education-websites/>
- <https://njsbf.org/publications/>

Content:

The writing contest is open to all **Essex County middle and high school students**. Students may submit essays or poems that incorporate the 2023 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.

- Civic duties, for example, obeying the laws of the country, paying taxes levied by the government, or serving on a jury or as a witness in court and required of all citizens. Failure to fulfill one's civic duty can result in serious legal consequences. Jury service is one of the most important civic duties a person can perform. The protection of rights and liberties in federal courts largely is achieved through the teamwork of a judge and jury. In your own words, explain why jury service is important to our democracy? Does it promote civic participation? What would happen if people were not required to serve as jurors?
- Voting is considered a civic duty, why do you think all citizens should vote in all elections? Discuss any current voting issues in the world and how the government or citizens should address them. Explain why you agree or disagree with current actions being taken to address any voting issues.
- Why is it important to be an active citizen? What are the most important responsibilities of a citizen? Why do some individuals avoid their civic responsibility?

Format:

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

Judging: **ALL ENTRIES MUST BE TYPED** using Times New Roman or Arial fonts, formatted in MS Word or copy and pasted into the body of an email. Essay and poems will be judged on content and presentation. A teacher, group coordinator or a parent should review entries for spelling and grammatical edits prior to submission. Paraphrases and/or quotes must contain references. Submissions should 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 in May 2023.

Identification: Include the following information for each submission:

- (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 15 to March 31, 2023.**

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 or copy and pasted into the body of an email then sent to EssexLawDay.Mbx@njcourts.gov. Remember to include the information from the "Identification" section above on the first page of each submission.

MAIL to the address listed below. For bulk submissions please include a copy of registration form.
Superior Court of NJ – Essex
Veterans Courthouse
50 West Market Street, Room 132
Newark NJ 07102
Attn: Office of the Ombudsman – Law Day Contest

DROP OFF – During office hours Monday through Friday 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. between the dates of **March 15 to March 31, 2023** at the address listed above.

Questions or concerns:
Email the Essex Vicinage Office of the Ombudsman at EssexLawDay.Mbx@njcourts.gov or call (973) 776-9300 ext. 56886 during office hours.