



SUPERIOR COURT OF NEW JERSEY – ESSEX VICINAGE

2024 LAW DAY

WRITING CONTEST RULES

Instructions:

Thank you for your interest in the 2024 Writing Contest.

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

"Voices of Democracy"

Theme:

"The 2024 Law Day theme "Voices of Democracy" recognizes that in democracies, the people rule. For nearly 250 years, Americans have expressed their political views and wishes by speaking their minds and voting in elections. In 2024, the United States will hold its 60th presidential election, and Americans will address fundamental questions about democracy and the rule of law.

The Voices of Democracy Law Day theme encourages Americans to participate in the 2024 elections by deepening their understanding of the electoral process; discussing issues in honest and civil ways; turning out to vote; and, finally, helping to move the country forward after free and fair elections. In this way, Americans ensure that our government remains responsive to the wishes of the people. We invite all Americans to join us on May 1, 2024, to celebrate Law Day by lifting their voices to strengthen our democracy."

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

Resources:

Teachers, coordinators, or students may visit the following websites to obtain additional information regarding the 2024 Law Day theme. These resources and instructional guidance will aid students in gaining an understanding about the roles of citizens in the democratic process. How voting allows citizens to express their voice, influence policy, hold leaders accountable, protect their rights and promote change.

- ABA 2024 Law Day Guide at [Law Day \(americanbar.org\)](http://Law Day (americanbar.org))
- www.constitutioncenter.org
- <https://www.learningforjustice.org/moment/voting-elections>
- <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 2024 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.

- What does democracy mean to you, and why are voices important in a democracy?
- How can kids like you use their voices to make their school or community better? Give examples and explain in detail.
- Reflect on the concept of free speech in a democracy. Are there limits to what can be said, and if so, what are they? How should society balance free expression with the need for civility and respect?
- "Voices of Democracy" can include both individual voices and collective voices of movements and organizations. Choose a historical or current example and analyze how collective voices have influenced government policies or societal change.
- The theme "Voices of Democracy" implies that every voice should be valued and heard. Discuss the importance of diversity and inclusion in political representation and decision-making.

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 or Arial fonts, formatted in MS Word or copy 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 and/or quotes 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 in May 2024. Poems and Essays that are found to have utilized content generated by Artificial Intelligence (AI) may be disqualified.

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 1 to March 15, 2024.**

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.

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 1 to March 15, 2024** 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.