

# NY Newspapers Foundation's Law Day Student Essay 2023 Contest Prompt and Criteria

The Law Day 2023 theme is “**Cornerstones of Democracy: Civics, Civility and Collaboration.**” Based on the results of a statewide student interest survey of current events, **Equal Rights/Social Justice** ranked the highest. The following essay prompt asks student to expand on that topic.

Every participant is encouraged to submit their essay entry electronically via the following link: <https://forms.gle/ax5q6VZZVpef8Kts6>

However, entries may be completed by sending **all** necessary information via email to [lawdaynynpa@gmail.com](mailto:lawdaynynpa@gmail.com) or by mailing paper entries to: Law Day 2023 Civics Essay, c/o New York Newspapers Foundation, 252 Hudson Avenue, Albany, NY 12210-1802

## ESSAY PROMPT

- Explain how the U.S. Constitution supports equal rights and social justice in our country. What role do civics, civility and collaboration and access to accurate sources of news and information play?

## KEY DEFINITIONS:

- **Civics** – the study of the rights and duties of citizenship
- **Civility** – politeness and courtesy in behavior or speech
- **Collaboration** – the action of working with someone or in a group to produce or create something
- **Rule of Law** – the principle under which:
  - No one is above the law,
  - Everyone is treated equally under the law,
  - Everyone is held accountable to the same laws,
  - There are clear and fair processes for enforcing laws,
  - There is an independent judiciary, and
  - Human rights are guaranteed for all.

## CRITERIA

- The contest is open to students at least of 13 years of age and currently enrolled in school up to and including grade 12, living and learning in New York State.
- Essays must be the original, unpublished work of one student.
- Essays must be 500-750 words, clearly addressing essay prompt.
- Essays must be typed in 12-point, Times New Roman, double-spaced with 1” margins (numbered pages if submitted on paper and mailed as a hard copy)
- Students must include at least three credible sources to support their thesis.
- Any sources cited must be given proper attribution with numbered footnotes.

- **Organization:** students must include an introduction with a thesis statement, multiple body paragraphs and a conclusion and follow the rules for standard English (grammar, punctuation, mechanics) in writing.
- **Plagiarism:** any submission that is in part or wholly plagiarized will be disqualified.
- **If submitting a hard copy,** you must include a cover page with the following information:
  - student name,
  - grade level,
  - student's complete mailing address,
  - student's email address or phone number
  - school's name
  - teacher's or parent's name, and best phone number and email address for the teacher or parent
  - **Mail to:** Law Day 2023 Civics Essay, c/o New York Newspapers Foundation, 252 Hudson Avenue, Albany, NY 12210-1802
  - **Must be RECIEVED no later than Friday, March 24, 2023**

## STUDENT ESSAY TIPS

- Essays must have a recognizable beginning (opening or introduction), middle and end (closing or conclusion).
- Keep your paragraphs short and vary sentence structure.
- Submit thoroughly thought-out, tightly focused essays.
- In the conclusion, consider including a call to action. Encourage readers to make steps to increase their knowledge or participation in causes for equal rights and social justice.

## FAQs:

**Is there a submission fee?** No fees! This contest was made possible in part by generous support through a grant by the **New York Bar Foundation**.

**What document formats are accepted?** The following formats are accepted: PDF, Google doc.

**How are the essays judged?** The essays will be reviewed and judged using the rubric (see attached). Successful essays will completely answer all portions of the prompt.

**How many winners will there be?** It is the goal of this contest to have one winner per geographic area of New York State – Long Island, New York City, Eastern New York, Central New York and Western New York. **Please note**, winning entries could be published (in-print or online) in NYNPA member newspapers with attribution (Name and Town of the student). Winners will be strongly encouraged to participate in a public forum to share their entries and take part in a moderated student virtual discussion panel sometime in late April or early May. If unavailable for the panel discussion, arrangements will be made to obtain a pre-recorded segment to be aired during the live event. (Details TBD). **A cash award of \$200 will be given to the winner in each geographic region.**

**How are the finalists announced?** An email notification will be sent to the teacher/parent in early April.

**Questions?** Contact Education Services Director, Mary Miller at [lawdaynynpa@gmail.com](mailto:lawdaynynpa@gmail.com) or [mmiller@nynpa.com](mailto:mmiller@nynpa.com)