

GUIDELINES – 2025 U.S. CONSTITUTION ESSAY CONTEST

For students in grades 4-12 who reside in or attend school in Los Alamos County
Deadline: 5:00 PM, Friday, April 4, 2025

The Awards Ceremony will take place at the Spring Tea (Saturday, April 26, 2:00-4:30 pm). The event is sponsored by the Los Alamos Federated Republican Women. Winners will be notified one week before the event and will be invited to attend with their families as our guests. Winners will be invited, but not required, to read their essays at the event.

The contest is designed to challenge students to learn more about the Constitution and to express original, thoughtful ideas in writing. (Poem/art options added for lower grades). Entries will be judged on how completely and clearly the ideas and conclusions are stated and supported. Grammar, spelling and punctuation will also be considered. Submissions must be entirely the original work of the students, without any assistance of artificial intelligence (AI). Entries will be analyzed by third party software. Judging is blind (judges read essays without knowing who wrote them).

Grades 4-5: \$100 will be awarded for the winning poem and \$100 for the winning card.

Option 1: Create a Constitution-themed poem by choosing from one of the themes below.

Option 2: Create a Constitution-themed artwork appropriate for the front of a holiday card utilizing one of the themes below. Create an original drawing, no bigger than a 9×11 image, single-sided, easily scanned (2-dimensional only), in full color in pencil, pen, colors, or paint.

Theme 1: The Constitution as America's greatest strength.

Theme 2: How the checks and balances in the U.S. Constitution help ensure that people remain both sovereign and free.

Grades 6-8 (\$200 prize) and **Grades 9-12** (\$300 prize) have the same essay options. Quotes and unique facts require citations, and you may use any common style. Citations do not count in the total word count.

Option 1: Write a 500-700 word essay on the different powers vested in our three branches of government and why the concept of checks and balances, as guaranteed by our Constitution, are vital to the preservation of our government. Are there examples (recent or historical) of violations of these checks and balances?

Option 2: Recognizing our form of government is a Republic, write a 500-700 word essay on how our First Amendment (RAPPS: Religion, Assembly, Press, Petition, Speech) rights enable the citizens to influence the laws of our country or initiate a constitutional amendment and, in so doing, prevent the dissolution of the Republic in the ways that have affected other nations in the past (e.g. violent rebellion/uprising or coup d'état).

Entry instructions for all grades:

1. Do not put your name or contact information on your essay pages.
2. Essays must be typed, double-spaced and have numbered pages. Double-sided printing is allowed.
3. Complete the entry form. This should be the only place your name and contact information appear.
4. Do not fold your entry. Place the completed entry form and entry inside a large envelope and seal.
5. Write on the outside of the envelope your grade level as of January 1, 2025 (no other writing on envelope). Double-check your entry. Entries that fail to follow all guidelines shall be disqualified.

6. Turn your entry in no later than 5:00 p.m., Friday, April 4, 2025 by placing it in the box marked U.S. CONSTITUTION ESSAY CONTEST ENTRIES at Aspen Copies, 1907 Central Avenue, Los Alamos. For questions/assistance with printing or delivery of your entry, contact constitutionessaycontest@gmail.com.