

GUIDELINES – 2026 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 10, 2026

The Awards Ceremony will take place at the Freedom Tea at Fuller Lodge (Saturday, April 25, 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.

Cash prizes will be awarded to winners: grades 4-6 (\$100), middle school (\$200) and high school (\$400).

The contest is designed to challenge students to learn more about the Constitution and to express original, thoughtful ideas in writing. 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 the original work of the student, without the assistance of artificial intelligence (AI). Judging is blind—judges decide winners without knowing who wrote the essays.

Write an original essay addressing the topic:

In honor of the 250th Anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, discuss the relationship between the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution. How did one impact the other to foster and sustain our country's longevity? Support and defend your ideas.

Grades 4-6: 350-400 word essay

Middle School: 400-500 word essay

High School: 500-700 word essay

Quotes and unique facts require citations, and you may use any common style. Citations do not count in the total word count.

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. Place the completed entry form and essay inside a large envelope and seal.
5. Write on the outside of the envelope your grade level as of January 1, 2026 (no other writing on envelope).

Double-check your entry against the above list to make sure you followed all guidelines. Every year an essay is disqualified because the name is on the essay or another guideline was not followed.

Turn your entry in no later than 5:00 p.m., Friday, April 10, 2026 by placing it in the box marked “U.S. CONSTITUTION ESSAY CONTEST ENTRIES” at Aspen Copies, 1907 Central Avenue, Los Alamos.

For questions, help with delivery of your entry or help with having access to a computer and printer, contact constitutionessaycontest@gmail.com.