

# 2022 NINTH CIRCUIT CIVICS CONTEST

*The First Amendment and the Schoolhouse Gate:  
Students' Free Speech Rights*



An essay and video contest for high school students in the western United States and Pacific Islands. Contest rules and entry instructions available at

<https://www.ca9.uscourts.gov/civicscontest>



Entries accepted beginning **January 17, 2022**. Deadline for entries is **March 28, 2022**. Sponsored by the United States Courts for the Ninth Circuit.

**†Plus! Travel and accommodations to attend the 2022 Ninth Circuit Judicial Conference in Big Sky, Montana.**

\* May be subject to federal, state or local taxes unless exemptions apply.

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## *The First Amendment and the Schoolhouse Gate: Students' Free Speech Rights*

The First Amendment to the United States Constitution provides that “Congress shall make no law ... abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press ...”

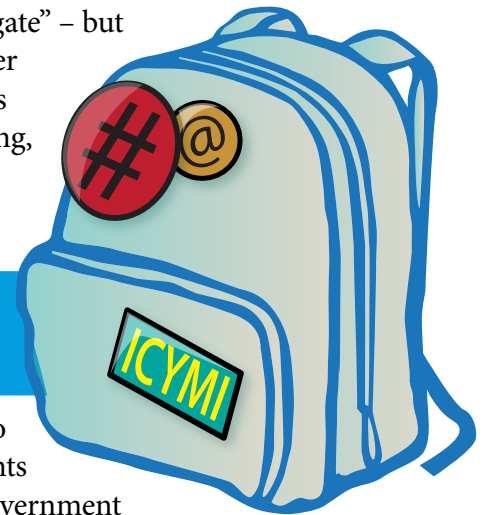
But how does this constitutional right apply to students?

More than 50 years ago, the United States Supreme Court said that students do not “shed their constitutional rights to freedom of speech and expression at the schoolhouse gate” – but it also has said that students’ rights are not the same as “rights of adults in other settings.” Decades later, the internet and social media allow students to express themselves in many different ways in addition to banners and symbolic clothing, with greater reach and impact than in the past.

The 2022 Ninth Circuit Civics Contest asks students to address:

### **What are students’ free speech rights – and responsibilities – on and off campus?**

Participants are asked to consider what rights the First Amendment provides to students engaging in free speech – both inside and outside of school. Participants should also consider the responsibilities, if any, that students, schools, or the government have with respect to speech by students, including whether it may cause harm to others.



Individual students can express their thoughts and ideas in an essay of between 500 and 1,000 words. Individuals or teams of up to three students can produce a 3-5 minute video on the theme. A student may submit both an essay and a video, but only one of each.

The essay or video should 1) demonstrate an understanding of the history and development of student free speech rights and responsibilities under the First Amendment; and 2) address the role of students, schools and the courts in considering and applying these rights and responsibilities.

The 2022 Ninth Circuit Civics Contest is open to high school students in nine western states and two Pacific island jurisdictions. Students from public, private, and parochial and charter schools and home-schooled students of equivalent grade status may enter.



The United States District Court for the Eastern District of California will conduct a local competition to select finalists for the circuit-wide competition. To enter the local contest, students must reside in one of these counties: Alpine, Amador, Butte, Calaveras, Colusa, El Dorado, Fresno, Glenn, Inyo, Kern, Kings, Lassen, Madera, Mariposa, Merced, Modoc, Mono, Nevada, Placer, Plumas, Sacramento, San Joaquin, Shasta, Sierra, Siskiyou, Solano, Stanislaus, Sutter, Tehama, Trinity, Tulare, Tuolumne, Yolo, or Yuba.

For more information about the district contest, please contact:

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