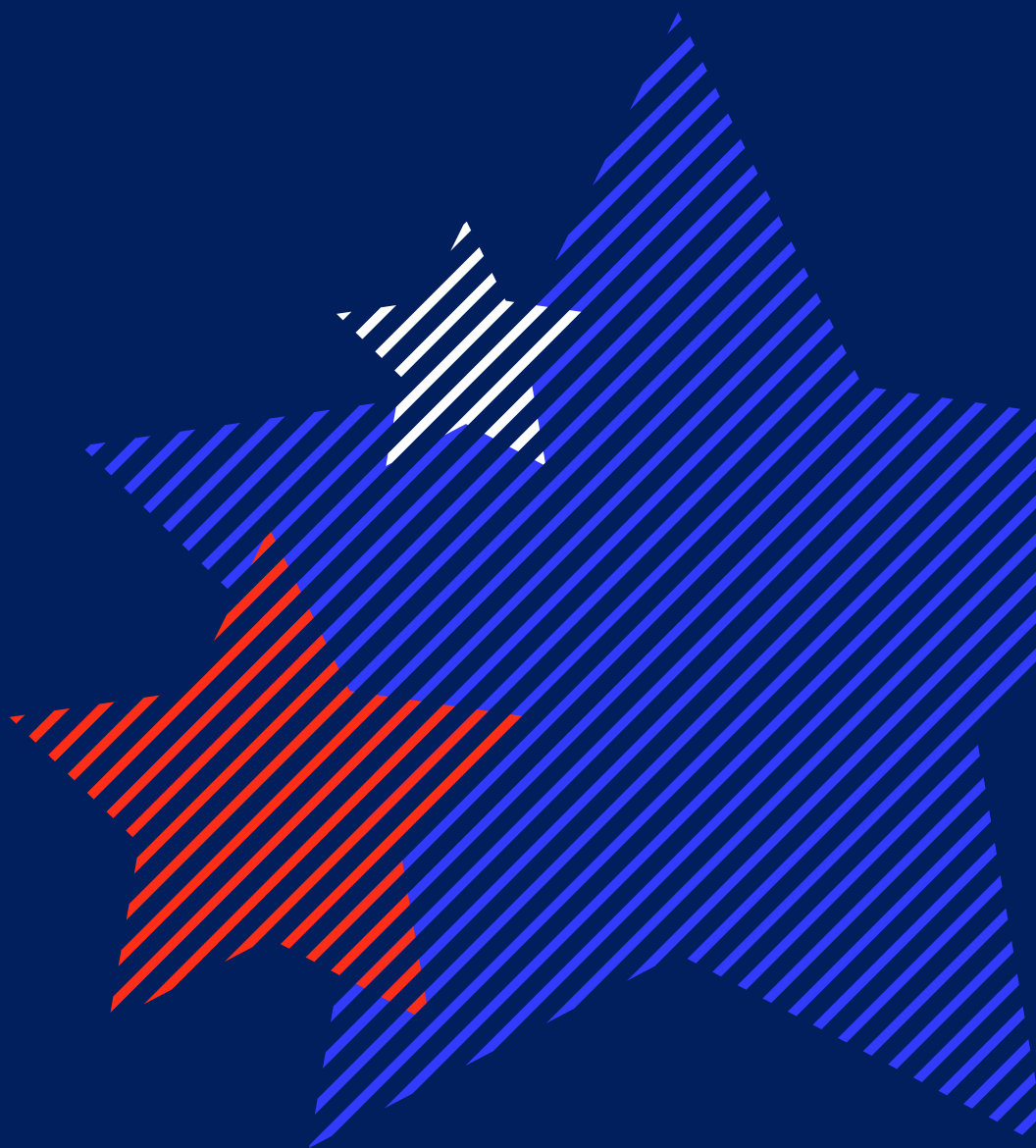
National Civics Bee®
by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation

Educator Toolkit

2025–2026



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Welcome to the National Civics Bee® Educator Toolkit

Dear Educator,

We are excited to share the National Civics Bee Educator Toolkit with you—a curated collection of resources crafted to help you bring the Bee to life in your classroom. These resources are designed to help students explore the foundations of civics while participating in the Bee, nurturing their understanding of American democracy and inspiring them to take on roles as informed citizens.

What's inside the toolkit? Inside, you'll find key information about the competition's mission, structure, prizes, and timeline. You'll also find **FAQs, outreach templates, sample planning materials, and sample classroom activities** created in partnership with the Bill of Rights Institute. These resources are tailored to help you integrate the Bee into your classroom while enhancing students' civic knowledge, writing, and critical thinking skills.

Why Participate? By participating in the National Civics Bee, your students will:

- Showcase their understanding of civic principles, strengthen writing and public speaking skills, and engage in thoughtful discussions.
- Explore solutions to real-world issues and contribute positively to their communities.
- Develop confidence and skills needed to become active, informed citizens.
- Compete for cash, prizes, and recognition, including a **$100,000 contribution to a 529 education savings account** for the 2026 National Champion.

New School Prize! It's not just students who benefit—when they win, your school wins! In addition to their own prizes and recognition, the first-place winner in each state may also secure a **$5,000 donation for their school**, thanks to the generous support of the Fisher Global Foundation.

Your Role as an Educator: As a cornerstone of the Bee, you have the incredible opportunity to guide and inspire the next generation of civic leaders. Your mentorship can ignite a passion for civic engagement, empowering students to become active participants in shaping the future of their communities and our country. Let's work together to make civics come alive for your students—and celebrate their potential to lead, innovate, and make a difference.

Thank you for your commitment and enthusiasm. We can't wait to see the impact you and your students will create through the National Civics Bee!

With gratitude,

The National Civics Bee Team
U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation

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Contest Overview

Created and organized by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation, the National Civics Bee® is an annual competition that encourages young Americans to engage in civics and contribute to their communities. As they compete for prizes, finalists strengthen their civics, writing, and public speaking skills, and form friendships with other young leaders along the way.

How to Enter

1. 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students from public, private, charter, and home schools in participating states are eligible to apply.
2. Students use the instructions in the Essay Application Guide to submit an essay application online.
3. Applications are judged using the Judging Rubric, and the top scoring finalists are invited to advance to a live Bee in their state.

Live Bee Structure

At live Bees, finalists put their civics knowledge, skills, and disposition to the test. Each Bee includes:

- Multiple-choice quiz rounds, to assess civics knowledge
- Q&A round with judges, where finalists discuss their essays
- Awards and recognition, including cash prizes and trophies

Advancing to State & National Levels

- Regional winners advance to the State Finals.
- The top State winner earns a trip to the National Championship.
- Click here to watch the highlights from the 2024 National Championship!

Prizes

REGIONAL BEES

1st Place: **$500***

2nd Place: **$250***

3rd Place: **$125***

STATE FINALS

1st Place: **$1,000***
Plus a potential $5,000 donation to the state champion's school

2nd Place: **$500***

3rd Place: **$250***

NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

1st Place: **$100,000***
529 Plan Contribution

2nd Place: **$25,000***

3rd Place: **$15,000***

*Amounts shown are the anticipated minimums to be awarded. All amounts are cash prizes except as indicated above. Finalists for each round should reference their respective Contest Rules for full prize information.

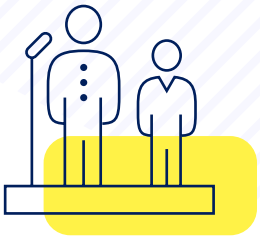
Student Journey

01 Essay Round

Students submit a 4-paragraph essay proposing their ideas for improving their communities.

02 Regional Bees

Judges select finalists to advance to regional competitions to compete for trophies, prizes, and recognition.



03 State Finals

The winners from each regional competition advance to the State Finals.

04 National Competition

The winner of the State Finals receives a trip to Washington, D.C. to compete for big prizes at the National Championship.

Important Dates

September 8, 2025	Essay Application portal opens at 6:01pm Hawaii Standard Time
February 17, 2026	Essay Application portal closes at 11:59pm Hawaii Standard Time
March 20–May 23, 2026	Regional Bee season
June 6–July 31, 2026	State Finals
Fall 2026	National Championship in Washington, D.C.

How to Get Started

☐ Review Contest Details

- **Find Participating States & Regional Bee Locations:** Look up your state in the "Bee Near Me" Map to find the competitions near you. Remember: Finalists are automatically routed to the closest Bee in their state.

  civics.uschamberfoundation.org/ncb-how-it-works/#locations

- **Review Essay Application Guide:** Find the official essay prompt, judging rubric, and step-by-step instructions on crafting and submitting applications in this downloadable guide.

  civics.uschamberfoundation.org/student-essay-guide/

- **Read Essay Round Rules:** Describes eligibility, entry deadlines, contest prizes, judging criteria, and more.

  https://civics.uschamberfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/Essay-Round-Rules_Digital-1.pdf

☐ Talk to School Administrators

Whether you choose to make the Bee a required class assignment or promote it as an optional activity, getting early buy-in from your school administration is recommended. Consider kicking off the conversation by sending an email, like the one below:

Sample Email for School Administration

Dear [Principal Name],

I've recently learned about the National Civics Bee®—a civics competition for middle schoolers that could be an incredible opportunity for our students. I plan to incorporate the competition into an upcoming unit, either as an optional or required assignment.

Students enter the competition by submitting an essay by February 17, 2026. The essay prompt asks students to describe how they would make a positive impact in their community and how their ideas connect to civics principles. Finalists compete for cash prizes as they advance through regional, state, and national rounds.

If one of our students were to win first place at the State Finals, our school could receive a $5,000 award. I'd be happy to review the details with you and discuss any school policies that may apply.

Thank you and I look forward to your feedback,
[Educator Name]

☐ Plan Ahead

Once you have support from your school administration, it's time to start planning! The earlier you begin, the smoother the experience will be for both you and your students.

Key Considerations

Know Your Timeline
How much time do I have before essay applications are due?

- Mark the application deadline (February 3, 2026) on your calendar and work backwards to build in time for brainstorming, drafting, revisions, and submission.

Use the Sample Planning Materials
Sample planning blocks are provided to help you align National Civics Bee prep with your existing lesson plans. Find it on page 18

Try the In-Class Writing Workshop
Use our sample activity to guide students through writing their application essays over the course of two class periods. Find it on page 21

Notify Parents
Consider sending a note to parents, like the Sample Parent Email, well before the application deadline. Find it on page 17

Do you plan to have students submit their essays in class? If parental permission is required, we've included a customizable opt-out form. Find it on page 17

☐ Stay Informed

Register for an Info Session

To learn more about the National Civics Bee, attend an informational presentation hosted by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation.

At the end of each presentation, you are welcome to stay on to ask questions and network with other educators.

- **Click here to register for an information session.** Educators who complete registration will be automatically subscribed to the National Civics Bee newsletter.
- **Join the National Civics Bee mailing list** for the latest updates and announcements.
- **Watch Highlight Videos** Visit the National Civics Bee YouTube Playlist to watch sizzle reels and testimonials from prior years.

Spotlights

- 2024 National Civics Bee: "How It Works" Video
- 2024 National Civics Bee: "Student Testimonials" Video
- Meet the First National Civics Bee Champion Video

Essay Round Application Tips

Students must apply in one of two ways: online (preferred) or by mail (if they do not have internet or computer access).

Preferred Method: Online Application

Deadline: Tuesday, February 17, 2026 at 11:59pm Hawaii Standard Time.

Students should submit individual applications online—this includes essays assigned in the classroom.

Tips for a Successful Online Application:

- Encourage students to create their accounts in the online application portal well before the deadline. For step-by-step instructions, check out this video: How to Submit Online
- Make sure students double-check all information before submitting:
  - Is my **address** correct?
  - Is my **parent/guardian contact information** correct?
  - **REMINDER:** Finalists will be invited to the nearest competition based on the address listed in their application.

BOOKMARK THIS: Online Application Portal Link

Alternate Method: Mail-in Application

If a student does not have access to the internet or a computer, they may submit their application by mail.

Postmark Deadline: Tuesday, February 17, 2026

Mail-in Applications Must:

- Follow the mail-in instructions described in the 2026 Essay Application Guide;
- Include a completed Mail-In Application Form;
- Be legible if handwritten;
- Be post-marked by the application deadline and arrive by February 24, 2026.
- **TIP:** Mail applications as early as possible to account for possible delivery delays.

Supporting Your Finalists

If your student is chosen as a finalist, there are resources available to help them prepare to compete in their live Bee.

Key Resources

National Civics Bee Study Guide
All finalists will receive a copy of the National Civics Bee Study Guide, which contains sample questions, tools, activities, and resources to provide them with the full scope of knowledge needed to succeed in the competition.

Tip: Watch this Study Guide Intro video for an overview of the Study Guide and strategies for using it.

Khanmigo AI Tutor
All finalists receive free access to Khanmigo®, Khan Academy's AI tutor for students. Finalists may use the custom National Civics Bee activity in Khanmigo to prepare for the third-round of the Bee, where they will participate in a Q&A with the judges based on their essay ideas.

Did multiple students from your school get picked? Congrats! You may want to consider organizing a **Study Group** where students can prep together, share ideas, and support one another to stay motivated throughout the process.

Tip: Check out this Study Tips video by the Bill of Rights Institute.

Celebrate Participation

Whether they are selected as a finalist or not, every student who takes part in the Bee deserves to be recognized for their effort, curiosity, and civic leadership! Celebrating their participation reinforces the value of getting involved and helps inspire future changemakers.

Here are some fun and meaningful ways to honor students:

- Give them a shout-out during morning announcements
- Recognize participants at a pep rally or other school-wide event
- Treat the class to a pizza party
- Create hallway posters highlighting participants and their work
- Host a classroom or school-wide watch party
- Take a field trip to watch a nearby Bee
- Feature them in a school newsletter or on your school website

Need more inspiration? Click here to see how Michael O., 2025 National Championship Runner-up from Iowa, was celebrated by his school and community!

Encourage students to keep engaging in the community—even after the competition ends. The Bee is just the beginning of their civic journey!

Michael O'Mara, 2024
2nd place winner
from Iowa

Testimonials

In 2025, the Bee engaged nearly 12,000 students in 40 states. Check out the testimonials below from educators and parents from over the years!

"The Program offers students who are hitting the ceiling academically something else that's fun and challenging to keep them engaged."

—Teacher

"I'm always looking for real-world applications for students to build their content knowledge. This program gives us options and can even connect subjects like social studies and ELA to create a more immersive experience."

—Teacher

"This is a great opportunity for students to learn and understand multiple viewpoints. As a democratic community, we may not always agree but we need to be respectful of others. The Bee offers a way to practice building comfort with those skills needed for American society to function as it should."

—Teacher

"This has been good for the whole family. We've learned together."

—Parent

"This is a high-impact way for students and families to engage in a fun, meaningful way."

—Parent

"This is a great vehicle to get students thinking about important issues."

—Parent

Frequently Asked Questions

Q Is the Bee in my state?

A To see the most recent list of participating states and Bee locations, use the map located here: civics.uschamberfoundation.org/ncb-how-it-works/#locations

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Q Is there a cost to apply?

A No. It is free to apply to the Bee, and there is no cost for finalists to participate.

Q How do students submit their essay applications?

A Students should apply online by first creating an account for the official application portal.

Online application is the preferred method. However, students without internet access may mail their applications using the Mail-in Application Form and instructions specified in the Essay Application Guide.

Q What should students do if they experience a technical difficulty while submitting their online application?

A If a student experiences a technical difficulty with submitting an online application, they should email civictrust@uschamber.com immediately *and* before the application deadline with the subject, "**Technical Difficulty—National Civics Bee Application**" and provide as much detail as possible.

Q Can a student enter independently, or do they need a teacher's support?

A Although teachers are encouraged to promote or assign the Bee in class, students must submit an individual entry and include their parent/guardian's contact information. Review the eligibility requirements in the Contest Rules for additional information.

Q What are some different ways to engage students in the Bee?

A There are multiple ways to promote the competition to your students and engage them in the Bee, including:

- Assign the essay as an in-class assignment or for homework;
- Award extra credit to students who enter the Bee by having them turn in their confirmation email;
- Plan a civics-themed week, month, or longer planning block and incorporate Bee activities;
- Ask students to pitch their essay ideas to the class.

Q What happens after a student submits their essay?

A After essay judging, Bee hosts will contact the parents/guardians of finalists selected to advance using the contact information provided in their applications. Finalists are invited to compete at live events that include two rounds of multiple-choice quiz questions and a judge Q&A.

Q Can my students use their school email addresses to apply?

A Yes. We recommend talking to your school's IT department about whitelisting the application portal website and email address to ensure successful access and email delivery. They may also want to review the Privacy Policy, available here.

- Email Address: noreply@reviewr.com
- Application Portal: LINK

Key Resources

Website	nationalcivicsbee.org
Direct Link to Student Application Portal	link
Contact Email	civictrust@uschamber.com
Student Flyer	link
Essay Application Guide	link
How to Apply Video	link
Contest Rules	link
Privacy Policy	link
Finalist Study Guide	link
Study Guide Intro Video	link
Study Tips Video	link

Customizable Templates

Sample Parent/Guardian Announcement

Dear Parent/Guardian,

I am excited to share our class will be participating in the 2026 National Civics Bee®. The Bee is an annual competition that encourages 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students to learn civics and engage in their communities.

Throughout the year, students will participate in class discussions, writing assignments and civics-focused activities. As part of our regular course work, all students will be required to write a civics-themed essay using the National Civics Bee essay prompt.

Students who are interested may choose to submit their completed essay to the National Civics Bee for official contest entry. Submitting the essay to enter the competition is optional and free of charge. Finalists will be invited to participate in live regional and state rounds, and the State winner will receive a trip to the National Championship. The grand prize includes a $100,000 contribution to a 529 education savings account!

If your child chooses to enter the competition, they will be asked to provide the email address and phone number of a parent or guardian in their application. The deadline to apply is February 17, 2026.

To learn more about the Bee, including the rules, prizes, and official deadlines, visit nationalcivicsbee.org and check out the attached flyer.

We're excited to offer students this unique and meaningful opportunity to share their ideas and deepen their understanding of civics. Please feel free to reach out with any questions.

Sincerely,

[Insert Teacher Name]

Sample Parent/Guardian Opt-Out Form

Dear Parent/Guardian,

During the 2025–2026 academic year, our class will participate in the National Civics Bee®. The Bee is a free annual competition that encourages students to engage in civics and contribute to their communities. There is no cost to participate. Finalists have the opportunity to win trophies, recognition, and cash prizes as they advance through regional, state, and national rounds.

As part of our regular course work, all students will be required to write a civics-themed essay using the National Civics Bee essay prompt. **Submitting the essay to enter the competition is voluntary.** If you would like your child to enter the competition, no further action is needed.

If you prefer that your child does not enter the competition, please complete the opt-out form below and return it to me by [insert deadline]. There are no penalties for choosing not to enter, and all students will benefit from the experience of writing the essay and exploring civics-related topics.

To learn more about the National Civics Bee, including the prizes, rules, and deadlines, please see the attached flyer and visit nationalcivicsbee.org.

Thank you,

[insert Teacher Name]

_____

[Insert Teacher Name]

Student Name (print): _____

Parent/Guardian Name (print): _____

I, the parent/guardian, request that my child be opted out of entering the National Civics Bee.

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Date: _____

Sample Planning Blocks

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These planning blocks are designed to help seamlessly integrate **civic learning and National Civics Bee preparation** into regular U.S. history instruction. Each block connects major themes in American history with core civics concepts from the National Civics Bee Study Guide, ensuring students develop both historical understanding and civic readiness.

Each planning block is designed to fit within **2–4 weeks of regular class instruction**, making it easy to align with your existing curriculum pacing. Teachers can use the suggested activities from the Study Guide and primary sources to reinforce key civic knowledge while meeting general middle school social studies standards.

Focus	Key Activities & Resources from the Study Guide	General 6–8 Standards Addressed
Foundations of Civic Life (Ancient Thought to Enlightenment)	Topic 1 Principles & Virtues & Topic 2: Community & the Citizen • Read the introduction essays for both topics. • Use activities: *What is Virtue?, Constitutional Principles, and Responsibilities of Citizenship* • Analyze primary sources: *Aristotle's Politics (circa 350 BCE), John Locke's Second Treatise of Government (1689), and Alexis de Tocqueville's Democracy in America (1835, 1840)*	• Identify key Founding Principles and Civic Virtues. • Analyze how ideas from historical eras influenced the U.S. government. • Describe the roles and responsibilities of citizens in a democracy.
Colonial Foundations and the Road to Independence (1607–1783)	Topic 3: The American Experiment • Study key documents: Magna Carta (1215); Mayflower Compact (1620), and Declaration of Independence • Use activities: *The Pilgrims' Courageous Journey, Rights and the Declaration of Independence, and The Purpose of Government*	• Analyze the influence of key documents and ideas on the founding. • Evaluate the political and economic development of the colonies. • Explain the causes of the American Revolution and the impact of the founding documents.
Revolution and Founding Documents (1763–1789)	Topic 4: Structure of American Government • Explore the U.S. Constitution, Federalist Papers, and The Bill of Rights • Use activities: *Constitutional Convention, The Ratification Debate, and The Bill of Rights and the Founders*	• Analyze the structure and function of government under the Constitution. • Explain how foundational documents established core democratic principles. • Evaluate key debates and compromises in the formation of the U.S. government.

Focus	Key Activities & Resources from the Study Guide	General 6–8 Standards Addressed
Structure and Powers of Government *(Constitutional Design and Function)*	Topic 5: The Operations and Powers of Government, Topic 6: Legislative Branch, Topic 7: The Executive Branch • Use research organizers for legislation and executive orders • Use activities: *Separation of Powers with Checks and Balances, Federalism, The Constitutional Powers of Congress, and Presidents and the Constitution*	• Describe the three branches of government and the separation of powers. • Explain the legislative process and executive responsibilities. • Identify checks and balances in the federal government.
The Role of the Courts in American Democracy	Topic 8: The Court • Use the research organizer for landmark Supreme Court cases • Use activities: *The Supreme Court and the Bill of Rights, The Rule of Law, and Federal Courts in History*	• Explain the function and independence of the judicial branch. • Analyze how Supreme Court decisions interpret the Constitution. • Describe the role of the courts in protecting individual rights.
Civics and Citizenship in the Modern Era	Topic 9 American Citizenship & Topic 10 Civics and You • Analyze primary sources: *Citizenship Oath of Allegiance and Naturalization Requirements* • Use research organizers to explore key figures and responsibilities • Use activities: *Defining Citizenship and Responsibilities of Citizenship*	• Define citizenship and civic identity. • Explore methods of civic participation and public service. • Analyze how individuals and groups influence government and society.
Practice & Review for National Civics Bee Competition	• Use sample questions (easy, medium, hard) • Review key ideas from each topic • Run a mock Q&A using Khanmigo or peer practice	• Reinforce knowledge and practice for Rounds I–III

Quick Start Guide for Essay Submission

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This Quick Start Guide is designed to help educators efficiently launch their students' participation in the National Civics Bee. It outlines a clear, step-by-step path for guiding students from orientation to final essay submission, using tools and activities from the Educator Toolkit and Essay Application Guide. Each phase is designed to fit into regular instructional time, making it easy to integrate into your existing schedule.

Focus	Key Activities & Resources	Student Goals
Orientation & Goal-Setting	• Review the Educator Toolkit, focusing on: Welcome, Contest Overview, How to Get Started • Explore the Study Guide: Read the Welcome and Competition Rounds sections • Review competition structure in the Educator Toolkit: Essay Round Application Tips and Supporting Your Finalists	• Understand contest structure and timeline • Set personal goals for preparation
Essay Writing Workshop: Brainstorming & Organizing Ideas	• Engage with part one of two of an Essay Writing Workshop. Directions are located in the Essay Application Guide. • In this workshop, students will brainstorm their ideas and prepare to write their 4-paragraph essay.	• Identify a local community improvement opportunity. • Develop and communicate well-reasoned solutions that consider feasibility and impact. • Make connections between their ideas and to Founding Principles and Civic Virtues to strengthen their arguments.
Essay Writing Workshop: Refining and Peer Review	• Engage with part two of the Essay Writing Workshop. Directions are located in the Essay Application Guide. • In this workshop, students will write their 4-paragraph essay, peer review, and finalize their essays.	• Write clearly and persuasively, structuring their ideas effectively for a strong submission to the National Civics Bee. • Engage in peer review to refine their writing, providing and incorporating constructive feedback.
Submitting Essay	• After reviewing and refining their essays, students submit their essays.	• Successfully submit their essay to the National Civics Bee Website.

Essay Writing Workshop

Designed by BILL of RIGHTS INSTITUTE

Grade Level: 6–8

Estimated time: 2 Class Periods (45 MINUTES EACH)

Objectives

Students will:

- Identify a local community improvement opportunity.
- Develop and communicate well-reasoned solutions that consider feasibility and impact.
- Make connections between their ideas and to Founding Principles and Civic Virtues to strengthen their arguments.
- Write clearly and persuasively, structuring their ideas effectively for a strong submission to the National Civics Bee.
- Engage in peer review to refine their writing, providing and incorporating constructive feedback.

Resources

Teacher Resources

- National Civics Bee Essay Application Guide
- Video: 2024 National Civics Bee Championship Highlights (optional)
- Video: National Civics Bee: How it works (optional)
- White board or projector
- Timer

Student Resources

- Preparing your Essay Organizer (from the Essay Application Guide)
- Thinking about Founding Principles Organizer (from the Essay Application Guide)
- Thinking about Civic Virtues Organizer (from the Essay Application Guide)
- Device to submit their essay (if time allows or assigned as homework)

Class Period 1

Brainstorming & Organizing Ideas (45 MINUTES)

Anticipate (10 MINUTES)

Step 1: Engage with a Think-Pair-Share Activity

- Write on the board: "*What's one small change that could make our school or neighborhood better?*"
- Divide students into small groups or partners and have them discuss the prompt.
- Think: Students jot down 2–3 ideas.
- Pair: Students discuss with a partner and expand on their ideas.
- Share: Groups share their best ideas with the class. Record responses on the board.
- Examples may include:
  - Adding more recycling bins
  - Creating a buddy system for new students
  - Improving bus stop safety
  - Supporting small businesses in town

Step 2: Introduce the National Civics Bee

- Say: "Did you know you could turn an idea like that into a real solution—and even get recognized for it?"
- Briefly explain the National Civics Bee: civics.uschamberfoundation.org/national-civics-bee/
- Optionally, show:
  - Video: 2024 National Civics Bee Championship Highlights (2–3 minutes)
  - Video: National Civics Bee: How it works (1–2 minutes)

Engage (30 MINUTES)

Step 3: Brainstorming (15 MINUTES)

- Distribute: *Preparing Your Essay Organizer* and *Thinking About Founding Principles and Civic Virtues Organizer.*
- Instruct students to complete the following sections on their copy of the *Preparing Your Essay Worksheet*:
  - IDENTIFY a specific opportunity, problem, or challenge in your community. What is something in your school, neighborhood, or town that could be improved?
  - DESCRIBE the steps you would take to make this change. What will you do to make a positive impact, and why does it matter?
  - FIND support to help bring the idea to life. Think about student groups, teachers, local businesses, community organizations, city leaders, or others.
- Interactive Element: Engage in a Four Corners Activity.
- Post signs around the room with labels: School, Neighborhood, Environment, Local Businesses.
- Have students move to the corner that best fits their idea.
- Each student shares their idea with a partner in the same category to continue developing their ideas and sharing insights.

Step 4: Connect their ideas to Founding Principles and Civic Virtues (15 MINUTES)

- Using the *Thinking About Founding Principles and Civic Virtues Organizers*, ask: "Which Founding Principle or Civic Virtue does your idea connect to?"
  - Example: If the idea is about student representation, it may connect to Popular Sovereignty.
  - Example: If the idea is about improving safety, it may relate to Justice or Responsibility.
- It can be helpful to review the Founding Principles and Civic Virtues. You can use the "Helpful Definitions" in the *Essay Application Guide* on pages 6 and 7.
- Encourage students to jot down their thoughts on the *Thinking About Founding Principles and Civic Virtues Worksheets*.
- If you need more support and guidance on Founding Principles and Civic Virtues watch the following videos with students:
  - Founding Principles and Civic Virtues | Government & Politics: Civics for the American Experiment
  - Founding Principles | Government & Politics: Civics for the American Experiment
  - Civic Virtues | Government & Politics: Civics for the American Experiment

Facilitation Note

Show definitions of Founding Principles and Civic Virtues on the projector or whiteboard for easy reference.

Reflect (5 MINUTES)

Exit Ticket: Students write 2–3 sentences summarizing their ideas.

Class Period 2

Refining & Peer Review (45 MINUTES)

Anticipate (5 MINUTES)

- Start class with a question, *"What makes a strong, realistic solution?"*
- Examples might be:
  - **Feasibility:** Can it be implemented with available resources?
  - **Impact:** Will it create real change for the community?
  - **Support:** Are there people or groups who would back it?
  - **Clarity:** Is the idea explained in a way others can understand?
  - Students review their notes from yesterday's brainstorming.

Explore (40 MINUTES)

Step 5: Writing (15 MINUTES)

Explain the 4-paragraph essay structure:

- **Paragraph 1:** IDENTIFY a specific opportunity, problem, or challenge in your community.
- **Paragraph 2:** DESCRIBE the steps you would take to make this change.
- **Paragraph 3:** FIND support to help bring the idea to life.
- **Paragraph 4:** CONNECT to Founding Principles and Civic Virtues.

- Students begin drafting their essay.
- Encourage students to focus on clear ideas, not perfection.

Review the full Essay Prompt on page 3 of the Essay Application Guide

Step 6: Peer Review (10 MINUTES)

After students finish drafting their essays, have them exchange drafts with a classmate for peer feedback. Provide a simple peer review checklist with questions such as:

- Does the essay clearly state the problem and solution?
- Is the solution realistic and well-supported?
- Are Founding Principles or Civic Virtues clearly connected?
- Is the writing clear and easy to understand?

Teacher note: You may also use the Essay Judging Rubric as a guide.

Step 7: Final Revisions (10 MINUTES)

Students apply peer feedback and make final improvements.

Step 8: Submitting Their Essay (5 MINUTES)

Option 1 (Best): Students submit directly to the National Civics Bee during class by going to the website: civics.uschamberfoundation.org/national-civics-bee/

Option 2: Have students finish their essay at home and submit via the provided link.

Reflect (2-3 MINUTES)

Reflect with students by reminding them:

- Their voices matter.
- Their ideas could become a real solution.
- Winning the Bee could open future opportunities.