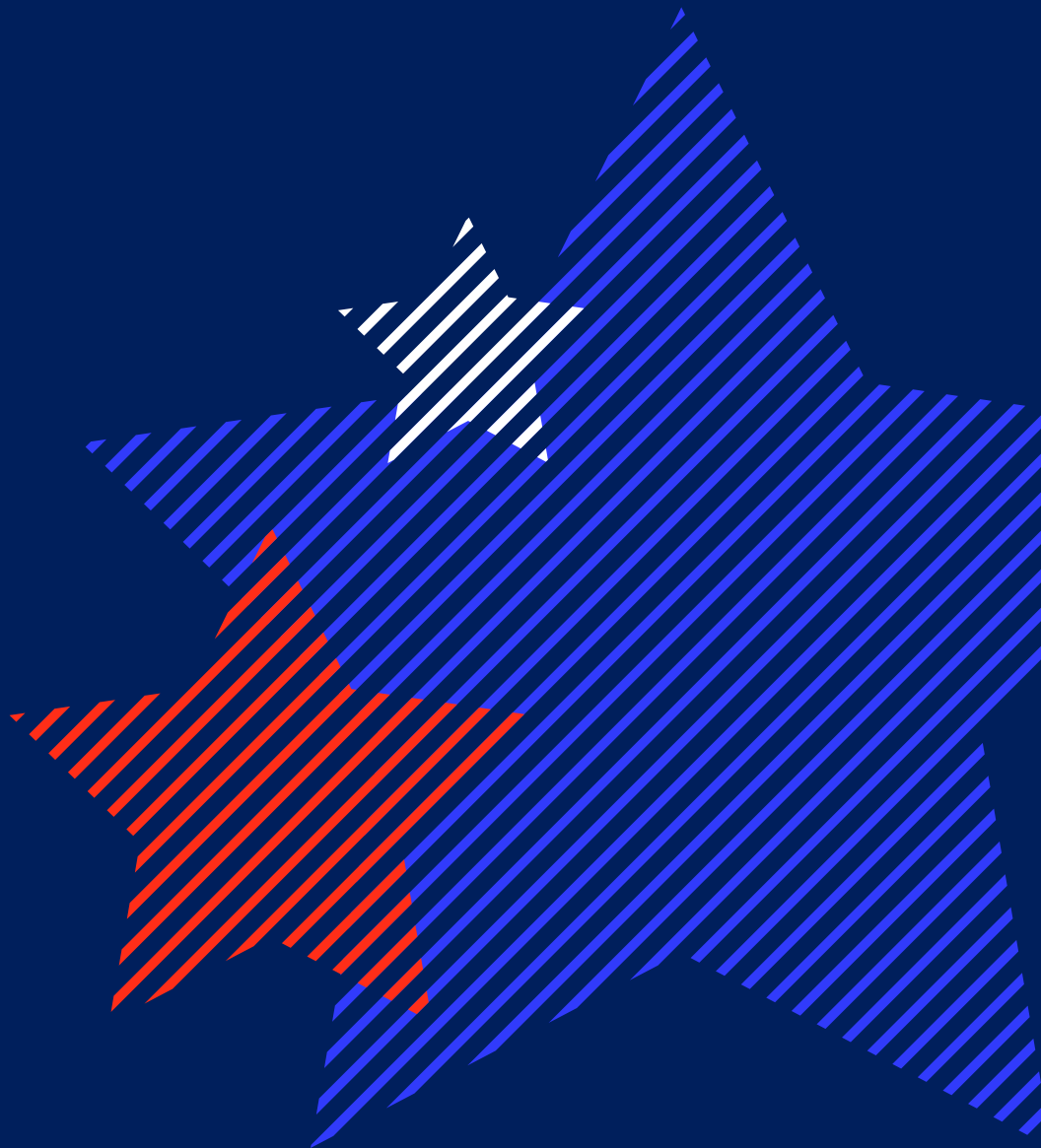


**National
Civics Bee®**

by the U.S. Chamber of
Commerce Foundation

Educator Toolkit

2026-2027



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CONTENT & RESEARCH PARTNERS



This material is provided for general informational purposes only. It offers an overview of the National Civics Bee process and expectations but does not constitute the official Competition Rules. All competition procedures, requirements, and advancement criteria are governed by the applicable Competition Rules and may be modified as necessary. In the event of any inconsistency, the Competition Rules control.

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 2027 National Champion.

Your Role as an Educator:

Promote or assign essay

Support submission

Celebrate participation



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 Washington, D.C. to compete in the National Championship.
- Click [here](#) to watch the 2025 National Championship!

Prizes

REGIONAL BEES

- 1st Place: **\$500***
2nd Place: **\$250***
3rd Place: **\$125***

STATE FINALS

- 1st Place: **\$1,000***
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

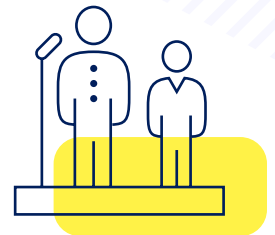
Students submit responses to four essay questions through the online application portal.



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 from each State Final receives a trip to compete for big prizes at the National Championship.



How to Get Started

Important Dates

Monday, September 7, 2026	Essay Application portal opens at 6:01pm Hawaii Standard Time
Tuesday, February 2, 2027	Essay Application portal closes at 11:59pm Hawaii Standard Time
Friday, March 12 to Saturday, May 1, 2027	Regional Bees
Monday, March 15 to Saturday, July 31, 2027	Statewide Bees
Saturday, May 15 to Saturday, July 31, 2027	State Finals
2027	National Championship

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:** Check eligibility, entry deadlines, contest prizes, judging criteria, and more.
civics.uschamberfoundation.org/ncb-how-it-works/#resources

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 2, 2027. 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.

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 2, 2027) on your calendar and work backwards to build in time for brainstorming, drafting, revisions, and submission.
- If you're short on time, you can use the Fast Track Guide on page 26. This resource helps you share the National Civics Bee with your class in one period or as a homework assignment.



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 20.



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 22. If you are supporting your students to submit their National Civics Bee application, you can review the IT Guide on page 31.



Notify Parents

Consider sending a note to parents, like the Sample Parent/Guardian Email, well before the application deadline. Find it on page 18.

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 18.

Stay Informed

Sign Up for Our Mailing List

Join the [National Civics Bee mailing list](#) for the latest updates and information on upcoming information sessions.

Explore Videos & Resources

Watch Highlight Videos Visit the [National Civics Bee YouTube Playlist](#).

Spotlights

- [2024 "How It Works"](#)
- [2024 "Student Testimonials"](#)
- [Meet the First National Civics Bee Champion](#)

Essay Round Application Tips

Students should apply online, or may request a mail-in application.

Online Application

**Deadline: Tuesday, February 2, 2027 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.
- 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](#)

Backup Method: Mail-in Application (by request only)

If a student does not have access to the internet or a computer, they may request a paper application to submit by mail. In order to request a mail-in application form, please email nationalcivicsbee@uschamber.com

Postmark Deadline: Tuesday, February 2, 2027

Mail-in Applications Must:

- Follow the mail-in instructions described in the [2027 Essay Application Guide](#);
- Include a completed Mail-In Application Form;
- Be legible if handwritten;
- Be postmarked by the application deadline and arrive by February 13, 2027.
- **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](#) for more ideas on how students may prepare.

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? Barrett H., 2025 National Championship runner-up from Indiana, learned about the National Civics Bee when it was assigned by his English teacher. Multiple teachers, including his social studies teacher, supported him throughout the application.

To help celebrate Barrett's success, his teacher flew to D.C. to support him at the 2025 National Championship!



Barrett H.,
2025 National
Championship
runner-up

Testimonials

In 2026, the Bee engaged nearly 20,000 students in all 50 states, Washington, D.C., and American Samoa. Check out the testimonials below from educators, parents, and students 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



“

I learned about the Bee from my teacher, Ms. Stevens. I thought this would be a perfect opportunity for me because history, government, and civics are some of my main fields of interest.

—Student

“

I’ve had so much fun seeing Washington and meeting other kids from around the country. Learning about civics has given me a voice and a belief that I can make a change on the issues I care about.

—Student

“

Now that I’m here and I’m meeting all these other people who are passionate about civics, I’m realizing that it’s not just a study of the people and the government, it’s also a way of bringing people together.

—Student



“

It’s absolutely great for public school students who really don’t have as much access to civics learning and education. The projects students do also dovetail nicely with them beginning to do their community service hours for high school graduation.

—Parent

“

My son learned a lot about American government. He became more civically engaged. He couldn’t believe how accessible city officials were. He talked to city managers! He never thought of himself as a participant. Now he does.

—Parent

“

One of the things that makes the National Civics Bee great is that kids can actually ‘take the thing with them.’ They do all this work and preparation and it actually goes into making a difference with their community action projects and learning about civics.

—Parent



Frequently Asked Questions

Q Is the Bee in my state?

- A** The National Civics Bee is in all 50 states, Washington, D.C., and American Samoa. To see the most recent list of competition hosts, use our Bee Near Me map:
civics.uschamberfoundation.org/ncb-how-it-works/#locations
-

Q Is there a cost to apply?

- A** No, it is free to apply and compete in the Bee.
-

Q How do students submit their essay applications?

- A** Students should apply online by first creating an account on the [official application portal](#).

Online application is the preferred method. However, students without internet access may request a mail-in application form by emailing nationalcivicsbee@uschamber.com.

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, their parent/guardian should email nationalcivicsbee@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.

If you are supporting your students to submit their National Civics Bee application, please review the IT Guidance on page 31.

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 Q&A round.

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 Addresses: noreply@reviewr.com, nationalcivicsbee@uschamber.com
- Application Portal: civics.uschamberfoundation.org/ncb-how-it-works/

Key Resources

Website	nationalcivicsbee.org
Direct Link to Student Application Portal	civics.uschamberfoundation.org/ncb-how-it-works/
Contact Email	nationalcivicsbee@uschamber.com
Student Flyer	civics.uschamberfoundation.org/ncb-flyer/
Essay Application Guide	civics.uschamberfoundation.org/student-essay-guide/
Contest Rules	civics.uschamberfoundation.org/resources-coming-soon/
Privacy Policy	civics.uschamberfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/24-12748_USCCF_NCB_Privacy-Policy_DIGITAL_144ppi.pdf
<i>Study Guide Intro Video</i>	billofrights institute.org/videos/how-to-use-the-national-civics-bee-study-guide/
<i>Study Tips Video</i>	billofrights institute.org/videos/studying-for-the-national-civics-bee/

Customizable Templates

Sample Parent/Guardian Announcement

Dear Parent/Guardian,

I am excited to share our class will be participating in the 2027 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 Washington, D.C. to compete in 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 2, 2027.

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 2026–2027 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: _____

Choose Your Own Adventure

Explore three flexible ways to launch the National Civics Bee in your classroom:

01

Extended Classroom Plan

2-4 weeks

02

Writing Workshop Lesson Plan

1-2 class periods

03

Fast Track to the National Civics Bee

1 class period or homework assignment

Extended Classroom Plan

Designed for 2-4 weeks of instruction

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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: <i>What is Virtue?</i>, <i>Constitutional Principles</i>, and <i>Responsibilities of Citizenship</i> • Analyze primary sources: <i>Aristotle's Politics</i> (circa 350 BCE), <i>John Locke's Second Treatise of Government</i> (1689), and <i>Alexis de Tocqueville's Democracy in America</i> (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: <i>Magna Carta</i> (1215); <i>Mayflower Compact</i> (1620), and <i>Declaration of Independence</i> • Use activities: <i>The Pilgrims' Courageous Journey</i>, <i>Rights and the Declaration of Independence</i>, and <i>The Purpose of Government</i>	• 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, <i>Federalist Papers</i>, and <i>The Bill of Rights</i> • Use activities: <i>Constitutional Convention</i>, <i>The Ratification Debate</i>, and <i>The Bill of Rights and the Founders</i>	• 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: <i>Separation of Powers with Checks and Balances, Federalism, The Constitutional Powers of Congress, and Presidents and the Constitution</i>	• 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 Judicial Branch • Use the research organizer for landmark Supreme Court cases • Use activities: <i>The Supreme Court and the Bill of Rights, The Rule of Law, and Federal Courts in History</i>	• Explain the function and independence of the judicial branch. • Analyze how the Supreme Court interprets 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: <i>Citizenship Oath of Allegiance and Naturalization Requirements</i> • Use research organizers to explore key figures and responsibilities • Use activities: <i>Defining Citizenship and Responsibilities of Citizenship</i>	• 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

Writing Workshop Lesson Plan

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Designed to fit in 1-2 class periods

This Writing Workshop 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.

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: [2025 National Civics Bee Championship Highlights](#) (optional)
- Video: [National Civics Bee: How it Works](#) (optional)
- Whiteboard 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: [2025 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*:
 - IMAGINE one change—big or small—that would make life better for people in your school or community in the future. Share your idea and how it could make a positive impact on your community.
 - DESCRIBE how you would bring your idea to life. Explain how you would build trust, understand different viewpoints, and collaborate with people who care about the idea.
 - FIND support to help you bring your idea to life. Who could help you, and how would they contribute?
 - CONNECT your idea to the values that shaped our country. How does your idea reflect the [Founding Principles and Civic Virtues](#)?
- 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 structure of the four essay responses:

- **Paragraph 1:** IMAGINE one change—big or small—that would make life better for people in your school or community in the future. Share your idea and how it could make a positive impact on your community.
 - **Paragraph 2:** DESCRIBE how you would bring your idea to life. Explain how you would build trust, understand different viewpoints, and collaborate with people who care about the idea.
 - **Paragraph 3:** FIND support to help you bring your idea to life. Who could help you, and how would they contribute?
 - **Paragraph 4:** CONNECT your idea to the values that shaped our country. How does your idea reflect the 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.
- Participating in the Bee could open future opportunities.

Fast Track to the National Civics Bee

Designed by
BILL of RIGHTS
INSTITUTE

Designed to fit in 1 class period or assigned as a homework assignment

This Fast Track activity helps educators guide students through a complete National Civics Bee essay draft in a single class period or as a homework assignment. Using focused prompts and a structured worksheet, students move efficiently from idea generation to submission.

This lesson prioritizes clarity, efficiency, and accessibility:

- No outside research required
- No multi-day scaffolding needed
- Built-in structure supports all learners

If students complete this worksheet, they will have a submission-ready essay draft. Revision time strengthens quality, but is optional.

Objectives

Students will:

- Generate a civic idea for improving their community.
- Organize their thinking using a structured essay framework.
- Submit their complete National Civics Bee essay.

Materials

Introductory video: billofrights.org/videos/a_students_guide_to_the_national_civicsbee_classroom_kickoff_video/

Essay Builder Worksheet

Anticipate

Introduce the National Civics Bee and the students' participation. Briefly explain the Bee using [this overview](#).

Show the introductory video: billofrights.org/videos/a_students_guide_to_the_national_civicsbee_classroom_kickoff_video/

Frame the goal: "Today, you will create a full draft of your National Civics Bee essay by identifying a real community issue and proposing a meaningful solution."

STEP 01

IMAGINE

Students imagine one change—big or small—that could improve their school or community.

Teacher Guidance:

- Encourage focused, realistic ideas (not overly broad topics)

If students are stuck, try one of these prompts:

- “What’s something people notice every day but don’t always fix?”
- “What’s a small change that would make school or the community better for others?”

STEP 02

DESCRIBE

Students describe a realistic sequence of actions and how they would build trust with people along the way.

Teacher Guidance:

- Focus on logical progression, not perfection

If students are stuck, try one of these prompts:

- “What’s one small step someone your age could take?”
- “How does this step show others they can rely on you or your idea?”
- “What could you say or do in this step to show you are listening, being honest, or following through?”

STEP 03

FIND

Students identify people or groups who would help and explain their roles.

If students are stuck, try one of these prompts:

- “Who would need to say ‘yes’ for this to work?”
- “Who might be affected, even if they’re not in charge?”

STEP 04

CONNECT

Students connect their ideas to civic principles and virtues.

Transition Script:

- “You’ve explained how your idea could happen. Now you’ll connect it to the civic values and principles that make it meaningful in a democracy.”
- Share the [shortened list](#) of Founding Principles and Civic Virtues. For the full list, [see here](#).

Teacher Guidance:

- Focus on application, not memorization.
- Encourage students to explain ideas in their own words.

If students are stuck, try one of these prompts:

- “This idea connects to ____ because people have the right to...”
- “This shows ____ because it requires people to...”
- “Without this principle, this idea wouldn’t work because...”

continued on next page

PEER REVIEW

If time allows, students exchange worksheets and provide feedback.

Peer Review Questions:

- Have they answered all the questions clearly?
- What is one thing they did really well?
- What is one suggestion to make this even better?

SUBMIT

Students transfer their responses into the online submission form before leaving class.

A few notes:

- Read the [Essay Round Contest Rules](#). You'll need a guardian's permission to apply.
- Students need to create accounts and submit their applications at: civics.uschamberfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/Essay-Round-Rules-Digital-1.pdf
- The online application has four text boxes, one for each question. Students need to type each of their responses directly into one of the four boxes—do not upload a file.

Essay Builder Worksheet

STEP 1: IMAGINE

Think about your school or community in the future.

One change—big or small—that could improve my school or community is: _____

It would make life better for people by: _____

It would strengthen the community by making it more: _____

Overall, this change matters because it would: _____

TIP: Help your reader understand why your idea matters.

STEP 2: DESCRIBE

Describe the realistic steps you would take to make your idea happen and how you would build trust with others along the way.

To get started, I would: _____

How this builds trust: _____

After that, I would take the next step by: _____

How this builds trust: _____

As the idea moves forward, I would: _____

How this builds trust: _____

ESSAY TIP: Don't just list what you would do. Explain why each step matters and how your actions help others trust you, your ideas, or your leadership.

STEP 3: FIND

List the people or organizations who could help make this happen. Fill in what they would do to help and why their support matters.

SUPPORTER	WHAT THEY WOULD DO	WHY THIS SUPPORT MATTERS

ESSAY TIP: Strong civic ideas rely on many roles, not one hero.

STEP 4: CONNECT

This idea connects to the Founding Principle of: (circle one or write one)

Natural Rights

Liberty

Consent of the Governed

Bill of Rights

Justice

Equality

Other:

This connection makes sense because: _____

AND the Civic Virtue of:

Courage

Justice

Respect

Responsibility

Other:

This connection makes sense because: _____

ESSAY TIP: Use accurate civic vocabulary and explain it in your own words.

STEP 5: SUBMIT

Transfer your responses into the online form and submit before leaving class. A few important notes about submitting your essay:

- Write your essay by responding to the four short-answer prompts.
 - The online application has four text boxes, one for each question below.
- Aim for 150–200 words in each box. This is the best length to fully explain your ideas.

IT Guidance for Educators

Helping Students Submit Essays from School

Purpose

This guidance supports teachers who plan to have students submit National Civics Bee essay applications during class. It outlines **what to request from IT**, plus a fallback option if school access is restricted or delayed.

At a Glance

- Students apply as individuals (not on behalf of a school or district).
- Parental/guardian consent is required.
- Students submit essays using their own accounts.
- Teachers may support students in class, as permitted by school/district policy.
- If school IT access is limited, students may use their personal emails.
- Questions or access issues: nationalcivicsbee@uschamber.com (Subject: School Access Issue)

OPTION A

Support Students Using School Email & Devices

Share the following with your school or district IT team to support classroom participation.

Ask IT to Allowlist:

Email addresses:

- noreply@reviewr.com (account and submission confirmations)
- nationalcivicsbee@uschamber.com (status updates and support)

Web access:

- my.reviewr.com
- [.reviewr.com](https://reviewr.com)
- [.uschamberfoundation.org](https://uschamberfoundation.org)
- [.uschamber.com](https://uschamber.com)

TIP: Student networks are often more restricted than staff networks. If possible, IT should test using a student account on a student device.

OPTION B

Students Use Personal Emails & Devices

If allowlisting is difficult or delayed, students may use a **personal email** address and/or device with parent/guardian permission to create an account and receive all application emails.

Student Privacy & School Role:

- The National Civics Bee is an individual student competition.
- Students submit entries directly; schools do not manage accounts.
- The Bee relies on students to confirm parental/guardian consent.
- The full Privacy Policy is available, [here](#).

Sample Email to School/District IT

Tip: You may find it helpful to use the sample email below when reaching out to your school or district IT team.

Subject: School IT Support Request—National Civics Bee Student Applications

Hello [IT Team/IT Contact Name],

Our school has students participating in the National Civics Bee, a middle school civics competition. As part of the application process, students may use their school issued email addresses to create accounts and submit essays through an external application platform.

We're hoping you can help confirm that student accounts and devices can successfully:

- Receive automated emails related to account creation and submission status
- Access the online application portal used for submissions

To support this, could you please allowlist the following if they are not already permitted:

1. Email address:

noreply@reviewr.com

2. Email sender domains:

@reviewr.com

@uschamber.com

3. Web domains / URLs:

my.reviewr.com

.reviewr.com

.uschamberfoundation.org

.uschamber.com

The online essay application deadline is **Tuesday, February 2, 2027**. IT-related questions may be directed to nationalcivicsbee@uschamber.com using **Subject: "School Access Issue."**

If it is not feasible for students to access the submission portal using school emails/devices and receive automated emails and/or if it is likely to cause delays (e.g. due to quarantine or automated filtering), please let me know as soon as possible so we can plan an alternate approach for our students.

Thank you for your help in supporting students' participation in this competition.

Best regards,

[Name]

[Title/School]

[Contact information]