



Story of America Essay Contest

Application Form (Must be completed and turned in with essay – please print clearly)

Entry # _____ (leave blank)

Date _____

Name: _____ Grade: _____

School: _____ City: _____

Home Mailing Address: _____

Home Phone Number: _____ Email: _____

Name of Parent Contact: _____ Phone No. _____

STUDENT'S DECLARATION:

I declare that this essay is my original work and that it was written in my social science/government/economics class. If I am chosen for an award, I give permission for my essay to be reprinted and used for educational and promotional purposes related to Operation Protect & Defend.

Student's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Teacher's Name: _____

Teacher's Phone Number: _____

Course Title: _____ Title of Essay: _____

I certify that my student completed this essay under my supervision.

Teacher's Signature _____ Date: _____

Entries must be delivered to your participating teachers no later than Wednesday, March 18, 2014.



Story of America Essay Contest

Essay Prompt and Rules

The goal of **Operation Protect & Defend's** *Story of America* Essay Contest is to encourage critical thinking, active discussion and thoughtful writing about what it means to be a “good citizen” in America today. Americans enjoy a broad range of Constitutional rights that persons living in many other countries do not. These rights include freedom of speech and religion, a right to a fair trial, a right to due process and equal protection, to name a few. Along with these rights, we believe, come certain responsibilities, including the responsibility of each new generation of Americans to maintain and protect those rights in light of the circumstances and challenges facing their lives, their communities and their nation.

Teachers working with Operation Protect & Defend have developed a curriculum related to due process and criminal trials. This course of study includes selected readings provided by your teacher and court opinions. It also involves in-class discussion and in-class writing about questions raised by the readings.

Based on the above, all 12th grade students in participating classes within the Sacramento City Unified School District, Twin Rivers Unified School District, San Juan Unified School District, Natomas Unified School District, Folsom Cordova Unified School District, Elk Grove Unified School District, and the Sacramento County Office of Education are invited to enter this essay contest. Students will compete for cash awards.

PRIZES

Justice Robert K. Puglia Most Original and Inspirational Essays Awards	Awards of \$1,000.00 each
Frank C. Damrell Lawyers' Choice Essay Award	Awards of \$1,000.00 each
Jean McEvoy Memorial Award	Award of \$1,000.00
Bion M. Gregory Essay Recognition Awards	Awards of \$250.00 each
Teachers' Choice Awards	Awards of \$200.00 each

Notification of Winners and Award Dinner: Winners will be notified by the end of April 2014. An awards ceremony and dinner will be held on ***May 7, 2015 at the Sheraton Hotel*** in Sacramento. Details on the dinner and ceremony will be distributed later.



Story of America Essay Contest

Essay Prompt

In all criminal prosecutions, the accused shall enjoy the right to a speedy and public trial, by an impartial jury of the State. . . .

(United States Constitution, Sixth Amendment.)

One of the cornerstones of the American justice system is the right to a jury trial for those accused of committing a crime. For these trials, California's citizens are called to jury duty and are tasked to serve their community as jurors in a fair, honorable and impartial manner. Although many people have seen parts of a criminal trial on television, there are a lot of misunderstandings about the actual constitutional underpinnings of our jury trial system. Based upon what you have learned through the Dialogue on America curriculum and your classroom discussions, please describe your responses to the following questions:

If you were a lawyer picking a jury, what type of citizens would you want on your jury?

Upon selection of your jury, is it more important to make sure that guilty defendants are found guilty or to make sure that no innocent person is wrongfully convicted?

Can a juror who has been exposed to pretrial publicity ever truly decide a criminal trial based only upon the evidence presented in the courtroom?

Please support your answers to each of the questions posed with current events and/or personal experiences.



***Story of America* Essay Contest**

1. The *Story of America* Essay Contest is open to all eligible 12th grade students enrolled in participating social science/government/economics/legal classes within the Sacramento City Unified School District, Twin Rivers Unified School District, San Juan Unified School District, Natomas Unified School District, Elk Grove Unified School District, Folsom Cordova Unified School District and the Sacramento County Office of Education. Relatives of Operation Protect & Defend steering committee members are ineligible.
2. The essay must be based on the reading materials, in-class discussions and in-class writings relating to the topic. The essay must be your original work.
3. Provide ONE copy of your essay. Your essay may be typewritten, word-processed, or neatly handwritten. It must be **double-spaced** using one side of 8-1/2 x 11" paper. Number the pages consecutively (1, 2, 3, . . .). If you handwrite your essay in class, you are strongly encouraged to staple a typewritten or word-processed copy of the essay to your handwritten entry. However, any substantive differences between the handwritten in-class essay and the typewritten or word-processed duplicate may be grounds for disqualifying your essay from the contest. Illegible essays will not be considered.
4. The maximum number of words permitted is 2000. If typed, the type font must be 12 point or larger in a legible font (such as *Times New Roman*).
5. The completed Application Form must accompany the essay. **Your name must NOT appear on the essay itself, only on the application form.**
6. You must do your own work, during class as assigned and under the supervision of a teacher participating in the project. Your teacher must receive a copy of your essay and sign your application form. **Your essay must be turned into your teacher by Wednesday, March 18, 2015** to ensure that you are entered in the Contest.
7. The *Story of America* program sponsors reserve the right to reprint entries. Essays will not be returned. If you want a copy of your essay for your own records, you must make a copy before submitting it.
8. To facilitate the submission of essays and notification of winners, please note the following OP&D liaisons for each of the participating schools:
 - Bruce Timm (Btimm@boutinjones.com) – Kennedy High and Florin High
 - Scott Wyckoff (scott.wyckoff@doj.ca.gov) – McClatchy High and Sacramento High
 - Nancy Doig (Nancy.Doig@doj.ca.gov) - Luther Burbank High & Rio Americano High
 - Marc Koenigsberg (koenigsbergm@gtlaw.com) – Elinor Hickey High and Grant High
 - Stacy Boulware Eurie (boulwas@saccourt.ca.gov) – George Washington Carver, Natomas Pacific Pathways Prep, Natomas Charter & Cordova High



Story of America Essay Contest

Judging Criteria:

A distinguished group of local judges, lawyers, and community leaders will judge the essays. Judging guidelines include:

UNDERSTANDING (Maximum points 10)

10	Demonstrates a meaningful understanding of all key issues
8	Demonstrates a meaningful understanding of some key issues
6	Demonstrates a meaningful understanding of a key issue
4	Demonstrates a basic understanding of some issues
2	Demonstrates a limited understanding of the issues

PERSPECTIVE/ORIGINALITY (Maximum points 15)

15	Expresses original ideas and extraordinary sense of personal commitment that inspires reader
12	Expresses some original ideas and a strong sense of personal commitment that is compelling
9	Expresses personal feelings on the subject that are compelling
6	Expresses a strong statement on the subject
1	Expresses limited personal interest in the subject with few original thoughts

WRITING (Maximum points 5)

5	Demonstrates exceptional command of the language, including clear organization of ideas, grammatical accuracy, and a precise word choice
4	Demonstrates strong command of the language, generally free from errors in grammar and language usage
3	Demonstrates reasonable control of language, with some minor errors in grammar and structure
2	Demonstrates limited writing skills, with errors in word choice and grammar