

# 2024 NINTH CIRCUIT ESSAY CONTEST

## 70 Years Later—The Legacy of Brown v. Board of Education

**Who May Enter:** The 2024 Ninth Circuit Civics Contest is open to high school students residing in Alaska, Arizona, California, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, Washington state, the United States Territory of Guam and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. Students in the 9th through 12th grades attending public, private, parochial and charter schools, and home-schooled students of equivalent grade status, are invited to participate. Children of federal judges, chambers staff and employees of federal court offices are not eligible to participate.

**Contest Theme: “70 Years Later—The Legacy of Brown v. Board of Education”**

2024 marks the 70th anniversary of the United State Supreme Court’s 1954 landmark decision in Brown v. Board of Education. In Brown, a unanimous Supreme Court held that racial segregation in public schools is unconstitutional. The Supreme Court struck down the “separate but equal” doctrine that it had adopted in Plessy v. Ferguson, an 1896 case that addressed whether states could legally require railroad companies to provide equal but separate accommodations for passengers of different races.

Brown v. Board of Education is widely accepted as one of the most momentous Supreme Court decisions, but views differ regarding what impact it has had on the law and our society. **In addressing this topic, discuss what impact you think Brown has had and why.** The following are some examples of questions that you could consider in thinking about these issues:

- Did Brown influence changes in the law, or in society, beyond the decision in that case, or were any changes that happened after Brown inevitable?
- Did Brown affect the way that Americans view the Supreme Court, or affect how the Supreme Court conducts itself?
- Should the Supreme Court consider how its decision on a particular subject impacts society, or how the decision is viewed by the public?

**Students are asked to discuss what impact Brown has had and why.**

**Length and Format:** Individual students can express their thoughts and ideas in an essay of between 500 and 1,000 words. Footnotes and bibliographies will not be included in the word count. **Essays must be submitted and uploaded as a Word or PDF file attachment at**

<https://www.ca9.uscourts.gov/civicscontest>. When completing your information to enter the contest, you will be provided instructions on how to upload your essay entry. You will receive an email confirmation only after you successfully upload your essay. Please make sure to double check your email address before completing the entry process. A student who is submitting an essay is not required to submit a video. You have the option to submit an essay and a video but can only submit one of each.

The essay should **discuss what impact Brown has had and why, supporting your argument with legal and/or historical examples.**

**Contest Duration:** Entries will be accepted starting Jan. 8, 2024. **Deadline for entries is 11:59 p.m. Pacific Time, March 8, 2024.** Finalists will be announced in May and winners in June.

**Judging:** Judging will be based on the following criteria.

- 1. Understanding of constitutional principles** **40 points**  
Essay demonstrates clear understanding of: (a) the decision in Brown v. Board of Education, providing legal and/or historical examples; and (b) the impact of the Brown decision
- 2. Clarity and effectiveness in expressing the theme** **30 points**  
Essay organizes and communicates concepts and ideas clearly
- 3. Grammar, spelling and composition** **25 points**  
Essay uses correct spelling, proper grammar and sentence composition
- 4. Use of footnotes, bibliographies** **5 points**  
Essay properly identifies and attributes information taken from other sources

**Release Forms:** If you are selected as one of the finalists, you will be required to submit a release form allowing the Ninth Circuit to publish your essay in print publications and/or on public websites of federal courts throughout the circuit. Contest winners will be required to provide and authorize use of photographs and/or videos of themselves in contest-related promotional materials.

**Disqualification:**

- (1) **Original Work:** All contest submissions must be original work. Students may not use artificial intelligence (AI), to generate content for their submissions. However, AI systems search engines may be used for research purposes. Any form of plagiarism will result in disqualification. Plagiarism includes copying or paraphrasing someone else’s work without proper citation as well as using or paraphrasing AI-generated content.
- (2) **Compliance with Other Contest Requirements:** Providing any false information, failing to meet the submission deadline or adhere to other contest rules, or failing to provide a requested release form may also result in disqualification.

**Questions:** Contact Katherine M. Rodriguez at [civicscontest@ce9.uscourts.gov](mailto:civicscontest@ce9.uscourts.gov).



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

# 2024 NINTH CIRCUIT VIDEO CONTEST

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**Who May Enter:** The 2024 Ninth Circuit Civics Contest is open to high school students residing in Alaska, Arizona, California, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, Washington state, the United States Territory of Guam and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. Students in the 9th through 12th grades attending public, private, parochial and charter schools, and home-schooled students of equivalent grade status, are invited to participate. Children of federal judges, chambers staff and employees of federal court offices are not eligible to participate.

**Contest Theme: “70 Years Later—The Legacy of Brown v. Board of Education”**

2024 marks the 70th anniversary of the United State Supreme Court’s 1954 landmark decision in Brown v. Board of Education. In Brown, a unanimous Supreme Court held that racial segregation in public schools is unconstitutional. The Supreme Court struck down the “separate but equal” doctrine that it had adopted in Plessy v. Ferguson, an 1896 case that addressed whether states could legally require railroad companies to provide equal but separate accommodations for passengers of different races.

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- Did Brown influence changes in the law, or in society, beyond the decision in that case, or were any changes that happened after Brown inevitable?
- Did Brown affect the way that Americans view the Supreme Court, or affect how the Supreme Court conducts itself?
- Should the Supreme Court consider how its decision on a particular subject impacts society, or how the decision is viewed by the public?

**Students are asked to discuss what impact Brown has had and why.**

**Length and Format:** Individual students, or teams of up to three students, can produce a 3-5 minute video (not including end credits). Submit as MOV, MPEG4, MPEG2 or WMV file. Resolutions of 720x486 pixels to 1920x1080 pixels are acceptable. Files may not exceed 1GB. Videos should be compressed using the H.264 codec. Video entry must be uploaded at <http://www.ca9.uscourts.gov/civicscontest>. When completing your information to enter the contest, you will be provided instructions on how to upload your video entry. If entering as a team, make sure to include all members of your team and their contact information. Make sure to complete the entry process and complete the required information online. You will receive an email confirmation after you upload your video successfully. Please make sure to double check your email address before completing the entry process. A student submitting a video is not required to submit an essay. You have the option to submit a video and an essay but can only submit one of each.

The video should (1) **discuss what impact Brown has had and why, supporting your argument with legal and/or historical examples.**

**Contest Duration:** Entries will be accepted starting Jan. 8, 2024. **Deadline for entries is 11:59 p.m. Pacific Time, March 8, 2024.** Finalists will be announced in May and winners in June.

**Judging:** Judging will be based on the following criteria.

1. **Understanding of constitutional principles** **30 points**  
Video demonstrates clear understanding of: (a) the decision in Brown v. Board of Education, providing legal and/or historical examples; and (b) the impact of the Brown decision
2. **Video exhibits originality and creativity,** **25 points**  
*in a manner connected to the theme*
3. **Video engages the viewer on emotional/subjective level,** **25 points**  
*in a manner connected to the theme*
4. **Video displays good production values** **10 points**  
Audio/video quality and editing
5. **Respects copyright rules or demonstrates creativity in use of the student or team's own artistic and creative abilities** **10 points**  
Properly credits content resources

**Release Forms:** If you are selected as one of the finalists, you will be required to submit a release form allowing the Ninth Circuit to display your video at public events or public websites of federal courts throughout the circuit. Contest winners will be required to provide and authorize use of photographs and/or videos of themselves in contest-related promotional materials.

**Disqualification:**

- (1) **Original Work:** All contest submissions must be original work. Students may not use artificial intelligence (AI) to generate content for their submissions. However, AI systems search engines may be used for research purposes. Any form of plagiarism will result in disqualification. Plagiarism includes copying or paraphrasing someone else's work without proper citation as well as using or paraphrasing AI-generated content.
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