



2024



Jacksonville Division Essay Prompt

The First Amendment protects the right to receive information and express viewpoints without government interference. In a series of landmark cases, the Supreme Court has held that students in public schools have First Amendment rights, but those rights are limited in light of the special characteristics of the school environment.

The degree to which public schools may limit student speech is an ever-evolving area of the law, particularly in light of new technologies. For instance, when the First Amendment was drafted, there was no social media, instant messaging, or artificial intelligence programs such as ChatGPT. Now, students regularly use these technologies, among others, to communicate both inside and outside of school and complete coursework. However, school officials sometimes restrict, require, or sanction the use of certain technologies, thereby potentially impacting students' First Amendment rights.

How has your personal experience with technology in school affected your understanding of the First Amendment? Describe a situation in which rules related to the use of technology in a public educational environment impacted or could have impacted a student's ability to communicate, learn, or express an opinion. How would you balance protecting the First Amendment rights of public-school students with the special characteristics of the school environment as identified by the Supreme Court?

Because private schools and home schools are not governmental entities, students in these environments do not benefit from the same First Amendment protections. For purposes of this essay, all students should respond from the perspective of a public-school student.

PRIZES:

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| 1st Place: | \$2,000.00 |
| 2nd Place: | \$1,000.00 |
| 3rd Place: | \$500.00 |
| 4th-10th Places: | \$150.00 |

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| Teacher Grant for Top Three Winners: | \$500.00 |
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| School Grant for Most Qualifying Submissions: | \$1,000.00 |
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DATES:

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| Submission Deadline: | 9/29/24 |
| Top 10 Announced: | 11/12/24 |
| Ceremony for Top 10: | 12/4/24 |



The Jacksonville Division Contest is open to high school students in Baker, Bradford, Clay, Columbia, Duval, Flagler, Hamilton, Nassau, Putnam, St. Johns, Suwannee, and Union Counties

Essay Contest Sponsors:

