



CONSTITUTION AND CITIZENSHIP DAY 2021

What is Constitution and Citizenship Day? Constitution and Citizenship Day is celebrated nationally every year on September 17. Constitution Day commemorates the signing of the U.S. Constitution on September 17, 1787 by the delegates to the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia.

Throughout the months of September and October, the Public Outreach Committee of the United States District Court for the District of Connecticut invites schools and community groups to participate in any of the following Constitution and Citizenship Day activities District of Connecticut.

- **READ A PICTURE BOOK TO ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS:** A judge, attorney, or member of the Court's staff can visit an elementary school class via Zoom to read a picture book about citizenship and the Constitution.
 - We the Kids: The Preamble to the Constitution of the United States by David Catrow (Grades K-3)
 - Democracy for Dinosaurs: A Guide for Young Citizens by Laurie Krasny Brown (Grades K-3)
 - A Very Important Day by Maggie Rugg Harold (Grades K-3)
 - Granddaddy's Turn: A Journey to the Ballot Box by Michael S. Bandy and Eric Stein (Grades 1-3)
 - What Can a Citizen Do? By Dave Eggers (Grades K-2)
- **PLAY GAMES THAT TEACH ABOUT THE CONSTITUTION:** The court can provide a Constitution Day word search game for grade 3-12 students.
- **PARTICIPATE IN THE CONSTITUTION QUIZ BOWL:** Students are invited to answer Constitution Bowl questions posted on the court's website. This challenging and fun game is offered in September to coincide with Constitution and Citizenship Day. Prizes can be awarded.
- **TEACH A 30-MINUTE CLASS:** Middle or high school classes and community groups, with or without the involvement of a judge and/or attorney, can show a 5-minute video that focuses on the importance of a fair and impartial judiciary. If a judge and/or attorney is involved, the participants can pose questions to them on the principles of fair and impartial judiciary.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AIOIm4-wnE>

- **WATCH INTERVIEWS FROM NATURALIZED CITIZENS:** Schools and community groups can show videos of naturalized citizens as they reflect on their experiences of becoming our nation's newest citizens.
(<https://youtu.be/zvgQn55Nxro>)
- **ART CONTEST:** The court can invite elementary, middle, and high school students to submit artwork and photographs depicting what the Constitution and citizenship means to them. The court can display some artwork in the courthouse and can display digital artwork and photography during a Zoom session. Certificates and/or prizes can be awarded.
- **ESSAY CONTEST:** The court can invite middle or high school students to submit short essays about the meaning of the Constitution and/or citizenship in their lives. The essays will be judged by court staff, attorneys and/or judges. The court can invite contributing students and their families to attend a Zoom session with a judge who can invite the winning students to read their essays. Certificates and/or prizes can be awarded.
- **WRITE NOTES TO NEW CITIZENS:** Elementary and middle school students can write welcome notes to new citizens. The notes can be displayed at Naturalization ceremonies, distributed to new citizens, or read aloud during ceremonies.
- **TEACH A 50-MINUTE CLASS:** A judge and/or a volunteer attorney can teach middle or high school students about immigration through a video lesson plan that draws chiefly upon four film clips from Ken Burns. The purpose of this lesson is for students to examine the connection between the Statue of Liberty and immigration to the United States and to analyze the perspectives of particular immigrants, refugees, and other Americans. Teachers could consider incorporating this lesson into a unit on the Gilded Age, the early 1900s, or post-WWII United States, particularly after significant immigration policy changes in 1965. The lesson can also easily be incorporated into a government/civics or contemporary topics class in making historical connections to current immigration policy.
- **TEACH A LESSON THROUGH CONSTITUTION IN THE CLASSROOM:** A judge and/or volunteer attorney can teach elementary through high school students lessons on voting rights, the Fourteenth Amendment, Separation of Powers, Freedom of Speech, the Fourth Amendment, and the Sixth Amendment offered through Constitution in the Classroom. <https://www.acslaw.org/get-involved/volunteer-opportunities/constitution-in-the-classroom/>
- **ENGAGE IN A DISCUSSION ABOUT THE MEANING OF THE PREAMBLE:** A judge and/or volunteer attorney can engage in a discussion with middle and high school students or community groups about the meaning of the phrases in the Preamble, how the Preamble reflects the Founders' values and goals for the future of the United States, and how the Preamble would read if written today.
- **MEET A JUDGE:** The court can host a virtual Q&A session with middle or high school students or community groups to meet a federal judge. The judge will talk to the participants about the journey to becoming a judge and the role a judge has in naturalizing new citizens.