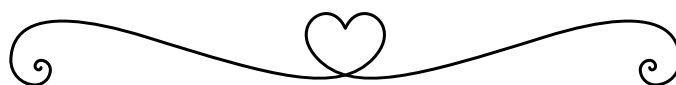


FOUNDATIONS

of DEMOCRACY

Exploring Civics and Government



4th-8th Grade

***Tip for Leaders:** Print pages 3-14, 28-29, 38, 47



girl scouts
of colorado

Activity #1

Introduction

Government Leaders Challenge Game

30-40 minutes

Materials Needed:

Round One

- Three signs labeled with one each: **Local Government, State Government, Federal Government**
- Recommended: Printed and cut-out **Character Cards**
- Recommended: Printed **Government Leaders Reference Sheet**

Round Two

- Recommended: Printed **Government Jeopardy Category Cards**
- **Score Currency Cards** or pieces of paper for category and point-value cards for the Jeopardy board
- Poster board, pocket chart, wall space, or tabletop space for displaying the Jeopardy categories

Round Three

- Recommended: Printed **Community Problem Challenge Scenarios**

Optional Supplies

- Paper to make a score sheet
- Pens or markers
- Bell, buzzer, or other noisemaker
- Small whiteboards, scrap paper, or answer cards for each team
- Tape & scissors

*Printable materials on the following pages



Activity #1
Round One: **Local Government Sign**



Activity #1
Round One: **State Government Sign**



Activity #1
Round One: **Federal Government Sign**



Character Cards

Tip for Leaders: Print this page twice - one for each team



Round One

#1

Government Leaders Reference Sheet

Local Government

- City Council Member
- Mayor
- School Board Member

State Government

- Governor

Federal Government

- U.S. Representative
- U.S. Senator
- President
- Vice President
- Chief Justice of the United States



LOCAL LEADERS

CATEGORY CARD



STATE LEADERS

CATEGORY CARD



FEDERAL LEADERS

CATEGORY CARD



BRANCHES OF GOVERNMENT

CATEGORY CARD



ELECTED OR APPOINTED

CATEGORY CARD



Activity #1
Round Two: Score Currency Cards



Activity #1
Round Two: Score Currency Cards



Activity #1
Round Two: Score Currency Cards



Activity #1
Round Two: Score Currency Cards



Round Three

#1

Community Problem Challenge Scenarios

Scenario 1—Your school wants to add a new after-school program.

Possible Answer: *School Board Member*

Scenario 2—A city park needs new playground equipment and repairs.

Possible Answer: *Mayor or City Council Member*

Scenario 3—Colorado is considering a new law that would affect everyone in the state.

Possible Answer: *Governor*

Scenario 4—You want to share your opinion about a national issue that affects people across the country.

Possible Answer: *U.S. Representative or U.S. Senator*

Scenario 5—People disagree about whether a law follows the Constitution.

Possible Answer: *Chief Justice of the United States*

Scenario 6—You think a problem in your neighborhood needs attention from local leaders.

Possible Answer: *Mayor or City Council Member*

Introduction

#1

Goal:

- Identify leaders at the local, state, and national levels of government.
- Understand the basic responsibilities of different government leaders.
- Distinguish between elected and appointed positions.
- Apply their knowledge to real-world community situations.
- Work collaboratively to solve problems and work as a team.

Pre-Knowledge Check

Before sharing any definitions or explanations, let Girl Scouts know that you are interested in hearing what they already know.

Say:

Before we begin, let's see what you already know about government. Some of these questions are challenging, and it is completely okay if you do not know every answer yet. Take your best guess and share anything you already know.

Ask:

***Tip:** Allow Girl Scouts to answer without correcting or teaching the concepts yet.

- What does the Legislative Branch do?
- What does the Executive Branch do?
- What does the Judicial Branch do?
- Can you name three rights protected by the Constitution?
- How does voting help people influence government decisions?



Introduction

#1

After everyone has had an opportunity to respond, say:

Those were great responses! Some of those questions are very tricky. It is okay if you do not know all of the answers yet. We are going to explore these ideas more deeply as we move through the program.

How Is Government Organized?

Explain that government is organized in two important ways:

1. By the level of government, which tells us where leaders serve.
2. By the branch of government, which tells us the kind of work they do.

Part 1. Levels of Government

Ask:

- Who do you think helps make decisions in your town or city?
- Who helps make decisions for Colorado?
- Who helps make decisions for the entire country?

Explain:

- Local government helps cities, counties, communities, and schools.
- State government helps everyone living in a state, such as Colorado.
- Federal government helps the entire United States.

Some decisions affect only one city or community. Other decisions affect everyone in Colorado, and some affect people across the entire country. That is why we have different levels of government.



Introduction

#1

Part 2. Branches of Government

Explain:

Government is also separated into three branches. Each branch has a different responsibility.

- Legislative Branch: Makes laws
- Executive Branch: Carries out laws
- Judicial Branch: Interprets laws and decides how laws apply

Ask:

Could one branch do all of these jobs by itself?

Invite Girl Scouts to discuss why government leaders need to work together and why it might be a problem if one person or group controlled every part of government.

Explain:

The three branches work together, but each one has its own responsibilities. This helps balance power and makes it harder for one person or group to control every government decision.

*** Did You Know? ***

The U.S. Constitution was signed in 1787. It created three separate branches of government: Legislative, Executive, and Judicial. This system was designed so that no one person or group would have too much power.



Challenge Game

#1

Round One

Levels of Government Sorting

5-8 minutes

1. Place the three printed signs around the room:

- Local Government
- State Government
- Federal Government

2. Explain:

Government leaders help people at different levels. Some leaders help our local communities, some help the entire state, and others help people across the United States.

- Using the **Government Leaders Reference Sheet**, read each role aloud one at a time.
- Teams discuss and move themselves (or the cut-out **Character Cards**) to the sign where they think that leader belongs.
- After everyone has moved, reveal the answer and briefly discuss the role.

Discussion Questions

1. Which level of government has the most leaders?
2. Which leaders are closest to your everyday life?
3. Which leaders help make decisions for the entire country?



Challenge Game

#1

Round Two

Government Jeopardy

15 minutes

1. Set Up

Arrange the printed **Score Currency Cards** and **Category Cards** for use.

***Tip for Leaders:** Prepare in advance by cutting out each card to more easily select categories and award points to each group as they answer questions correctly.

2. Instructions

- Divide Girl Scouts into two teams each with a set of **Character Cards**
- Teams take turns selecting a category and point value
- Read the clue aloud
- Teams may discuss before answering
- Award points for correct responses

Clues & Answer Guide

Category: Local Leaders

- **100 Points**
 - I help make decisions for a city or town.
 - **Answer:** *City Council Member*



Round Two

#1

Clues & Answer Guide

Category: Local Leaders cont.

- **200 Points**
 - I help lead a city and work on things like roads, parks, and community services.
 - **Answer:** *Mayor*
 - **300 Points**
 - I help make decisions about schools and support students, teachers, and families.
 - **Answer:** *School Board Member*
-

Category: State Leaders

- **100 Points**
 - I help lead Colorado.
 - **Answer:** *Governor*
- **200 Points**
 - People across Colorado vote for me.
 - **Answer:** *Governor*
- **300 Points**
 - I work with leaders throughout Colorado to solve state problems.
 - **Answer:** *Governor*



Round Two

#1

Clues & Answer Guide

Category: Federal Leaders

- **100 Points**
 - I help lead the United States and live in the White House.
 - **Answer:** *President*
- **200 Points**
 - I work closely with the President and can step in if needed.
 - **Answer:** *Vice President*
- **300 Points**
 - I represent people from one part of a state in Congress.
 - **Answer:** *U.S. Representative*
- **400 Points**
 - I represent an entire state in Congress.
 - **Answer:** *U.S. Senator*
- **500 Points**
 - I help decide whether laws follow the Constitution.
 - **Answer:** *Chief Justice of the United States*

Category: Branches of Government

- **100 Points**
 - Which branch makes laws?
 - **Answer:** *Legislative Branch*



Round Two

#1

Clues & Answer Guide

Category: Branches of Government cont.

- **200 Points**
 - Which branch carries out laws?
 - **Answer:** *Executive Branch*
- **300 Points**
 - Which branch interprets laws?
 - **Answer:** *Judicial Branch*
- **400 Points**
 - The President belongs to this branch.
 - **Answer:** *Executive Branch*
- **500 Points**
 - The Chief Justice belongs to this branch.
 - **Answer:** *Judicial Branch*



Category: Elected or Appointed?

- **100 Points**
 - Mayor
 - **Answer:** *Elected*
- **200 Points**
 - Governor
 - **Answer:** *Elected*



Round Two

#1

Clues & Answer Guide

Category: Elected or Appointed? cont.

- **300 Points**
 - President
 - ***Answer: Elected***
- **400 Points**
 - U.S. Senator
 - ***Answer: Elected***
- **500 Points**
 - Chief Justice of the United States
 - ***Answer: Appointed***



Challenge Game

#1

Round Three

Community Problem Scenario

5-8 minutes

Using the printed **Community Problem Challenge Scenarios**:

- Read a scenario aloud
- Teams discuss which government leader would be most likely to help
- Teams share their answer and reasoning.
- Award one point for correctly identifying the leader and an extra point for a strong explanation

Reflection Questions

1. Which leader was easiest to remember?
2. Which leadership role surprised you the most?
3. Why is it important to know who your leaders are?
4. How can citizens help improve their communities?

Explain:

Government leaders help make decisions, but citizens are important too. By sharing ideas, helping others, volunteering, and eventually voting, citizens can help make their communities stronger.



Activity #2

Introduction

Meet A Civic Leader

30-45 minutes, option dependent

Materials Needed:

- Paper or journals
- Pencils or pens
- Optional: Printable **Civic Leader Thank-You Letter** template
- Optional: Printable **Civic Leader Interview Notes** worksheet

Goal:

Engage directly or reflectively with public service leaders to better understand their roles, motivations, and how they serve the community.

* Did You Know? *

The idea of electing leaders to represent the people goes all the way back to the founding of the United States. The Founding Fathers believed that citizens should have a voice in their government by voting for people they trust to lead and make decisions on their behalf.



Option One

#2

In-Person Guest Speaker Experience

Preparation:

1. Invite a civic leader (e.g., city council member, mayor, school board representative, parks director) to attend the session.
2. Before the visit, divide girls into small groups to brainstorm questions. Help guide them with prompts like:
 - What does a typical day in your role look like?
 - What inspired you to become a leader in your community?
 - What community issue or challenge are you most focused on right now?
 - How do the decisions you make affect people in our community, including young people?
 - What is the most challenging part of your job?
 - How can young people get involved and make a difference in their communities?
 - What advice would you give someone who wants to create positive change?

Activity:

- During the visit, each group takes turns asking questions
- Encourage active listening and note-taking
- After the Q&A, girls will reflect individually in their journals

Journaling Prompt:

Think about the civic leader you met today. What did you learn from them? What part of their job seems most interesting to you, and why? If you could step into their role for a day, what would you want to do or change in your community?



Option One

#2

Reflection & Thank-You Activity

Invite the girls to write the civic leader a brief thank you note for speaking to them. They can use the following reflection questions to help guide their note:

1. What was the most interesting thing you learned about the community leader/their position?
2. What community challenge or issue stood out to you during our conversation?
3. What surprised you about how leaders make decisions that affect their communities?
4. What is one way young people can help make a positive difference in their community?
5. If you were a community leader, what issue would you want to help solve and why?
6. What advice from our guest speaker will you remember most?



[illegible]

Thank You!



Dear _____,

Sincerely,



Option Two

#2

At-Home or No Guest? No Problem!

Activity:

1. Read a short article or watch a video (with caregiver's help) about a local or national civic leader.
(You can provide examples: [e.g., YouTube: “What does a mayor do?” or brief bios online].)
2. Have Girl Scouts write a simple reflection about what they learned. Use the following prompts to help guide their writing:
 - What leadership role did you learn about?
 - Did you learn something interesting about this role? If so, what did you learn?
 - What kind of decisions does this person make?
 - How does their work help people in the community?
 - What would YOU do if you had their job for a day?

***Tip for Leaders:** Have the girls use the printed **Civic Leader Interview Notes** worksheet to explore the questions above.



Activity #3

Introduction

Be A Senator

30-40 minutes

Materials Needed:

- Optional: pencil/pen and notepaper for brainstorming

Goal:

- Understand how ideas can become laws.
- Practice identifying community needs and proposing solutions.
- Learn how voting helps people influence government decisions.
- Explore how lawmakers debate issues and consider different viewpoints.
- Experience how the Legislative and Executive Branches interact during the lawmaking process.

Say:

Today, you are going to become senators. Senators help create and vote on bills. Some bills become laws, while others do not. You'll work together to come up with ideas, debate them, vote on them, and see whether the Governor, me (the facilitator), decides to sign or veto them.



Introduction

#3

Key Words

Constitution—A constitution is a special set of rules that explains how a government works and how people should be treated fairly.

- The U.S. Constitution helps guide the government for the whole country.
- Each state, including Colorado, has its own constitution that helps guide decisions for people who live there.

Example: *Think of it like a school and a classroom: the school has rules everyone follows, and each classroom may have a few extra rules just for their group.*

Rights—Rights are freedoms and protections that every person has, such as the right to share their ideas, practice their beliefs, and be treated fairly. The Constitution helps protect these rights.

Example: *You have the right to share your opinion in class, as long as you are being kind and respectful.*

Bill—A bill is an idea for a new law or a proposal to change an existing law. Before a bill can become a law, government leaders must discuss it and vote on it.

Example: *A group of lawmakers might introduce a bill to create more parks for families to enjoy.*

Law—A law is an official rule that everyone must follow. Laws help keep people safe and make sure things are fair.

Example: *Wearing a seatbelt is required by law because it helps keep people safe.*



Be A Senator

#3

Part One

Create & Vote On Bills

10 minutes

Step 1: Create a Bill

Ask each Girl Scout, or small teams of Girl Scouts, to think of a change they would like to see in their community, school, state, or country.

Examples might include:

- More parks or recreation spaces
- Cheaper housing
- More recycling programs
- Longer library hours
- Allowing dogs in certain public places
- More community gardens
- Additional after-school programs

Have Girl Scouts complete the following sentence:

"I propose a bill that would _____."

Allow a few minutes for brainstorming and discussion.

Step 2: Present the Bill

Invite Girl Scouts to take turns presenting their bills.

Have them explain:

- What problem does your bill solve?
- Who would benefit from this bill?
- Why do you think it is important?

Facilitators should encourage respectful discussion and questions from the audience.



Part One

#3

Step 3: Vote

After each bill is presented:

1. Allow a brief discussion
2. Ask girls to share reasons someone might support the bill
3. Ask girls to share concerns someone might have
4. Hold a vote using raised hands or voting cards

Record whether the bill passes or fails.

Explain:

Just like in government, not everyone agrees on every idea. Voting allows people to share their opinions and help make decisions.

Step 4: Governor's Decision

The facilitator serves as the Governor.

After a bill passes, the Governor may:

- Sign the bill into law
- Veto the bill

If vetoing a bill, provide a realistic explanation based on information or concerns that might arise during the lawmaking process.

Example Bill #1:

Allow dogs in all restaurants.

Governor Response: *While many people enjoy bringing their pets with them, health and safety experts have raised concerns about animals being in food preparation and dining areas. Because of these concerns, I am vetoing this bill.*



Part One

#3

Example Bill #2:

Build a new community playground.

Governor Response: *This bill would benefit many families and improve community recreation opportunities. I am signing this bill into law.*

Remind Girl Scouts that even popular ideas may face challenges such as:

- Cost
- Safety concerns
- Fairness
- Environmental impacts
- Practical implementation

Record all passed bills for the next activity.

* Did You Know? *

Not every bill becomes a law. Lawmakers often debate ideas, make changes, and vote before a bill reaches a governor or president. This process helps leaders consider different viewpoints and make informed decisions.



Be A Senator

#3

Part Two

The Constitution Test

20 minutes

Materials Needed:

- Recommended: Printed or displayed version of the **Preamble**
- Optional: Note paper or sticky notes for group brainstorming

Goal:

Girl Scouts will use the Preamble and Constitution to evaluate proposed laws and determine whether they help achieve the goals of government.

Introduction

Explain:

When lawmakers create bills, they don't just ask whether an idea sounds good. They also ask whether it helps support the goals of our country and respects people's rights. The Constitution and its introduction, called the Preamble, help guide these decisions.



Part Two

#3

What Is the Constitution?

Ask:

- What do you know about the U.S. Constitution?
- Why do you think countries have constitutions?
- Why might a government need rules about how it operates?

Explain:

A constitution is a set of rules and principles that explains how a government works and what rights people have. The U.S. Constitution is the highest law in the country. It creates our government, outlines its powers, and protects the rights of citizens.

Read the Preamble to the U.S. Constitution out loud.

- Recommended: *Display or distribute a copy of the **Preamble** and read it aloud together.

* Did You Know? *

The Preamble is the introduction to the Constitution. In just 52 words, it explains the main goals of the U.S. government.

*Printable Preamble on the next page





We the People of the United States,
in Order to form a more perfect Union,
establish Justice, insure domestic
Tranquility, provide for the common
defence, promote the general Welfare,
and secure the Blessings of Liberty to
ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain
and establish this Constitution for the
United States of America.



Part Two

#3

Optional:

- Watch [The Preamble of the Constitution](#) (5:55 minutes) 

This video gives a student-friendly overview of the Preamble, its importance, and how it reflects the goals of the U.S. government.

Breaking Down the Preamble

Preamble Goal	What It Means
Form a More Perfect Union	Work together as one country
Establish Justice	Create fairness under the law
Insure Domestic Tranquility	Keep peace and order
Provide for the Common Defence	Protect the country and its people
Promote the General Welfare	Support the well-being of communities
Secure the Blessings of Liberty	Protect rights and freedoms

* Did You Know? *

The idea of separating government power into local, state, and national levels came from the Constitution too! This helps communities make decisions that work best for their own people while still being united as one country.



Part Two

#3

Say:

Now that you know a little bit more about the Preamble and U.S. Constitution, we are going to revisit the bills that I/the Governor passed in the last activity.

We are going to test those bills against the goals of the Constitution to make sure they meet the requirements of the Constitution.

Step 1: Revisit Bills from Part One

Choose several bills proposed during the Senate activity.

Examples:

- Cap housing costs
- Create more parks
- Allow dogs in restaurants
- Require longer recess
- Create more recycling programs



Part Two

#3

Step 2: Constitutional Challenge

For each bill, ask teams:

Constitution Questions

- Which goal of the Preamble does this bill support?
- Does it help people?
- Is it fair?
- Could it affect anyone's rights?
- Are there any unintended consequences?

Teams discuss and share their reasoning.

Example Discussion #1

Bill: Build A New Community Playground

Ask:

- Does this promote the general welfare?
- Could it help people in the community?
- Could there be any challenges?

Possible Answer: *This bill could support the general welfare by creating a safe place for children and families to play.*



Part Two

#3

Example Discussion #2

Bill: Allow Dogs in All Restaurants

Ask:

- Does this increase freedom?
- Does it create any safety concerns?
- Which goal of the Preamble might be affected?

Possible Answer: *It may increase personal freedom, but it could create health and safety concerns that affect domestic tranquility and general welfare.*

Step 3: Constitutional Scorecard

After discussion, have Girl Scouts vote on whether the bill:

- Supports the Constitution's goals
- Needs changes
- Does not support the Constitution's goals

This can be done with:

- Thumbs up / sideways / down
- Raising hands
- Standing in different areas of the room



Part Two

#3

Reflection Questions

1. Did any bill sound good at first but seem more complicated after discussing it?
2. Why is it important to think about different perspectives?
3. How does the Constitution help lawmakers make decisions?
4. Which Preamble goal do you think is most important and why?

Close by saying:

The Constitution is more than a historical document. It helps guide how government leaders make decisions today. Good lawmakers think about how laws affect people, protect rights, and support the goals described in the Preamble. When you evaluated your bills today, you were using the same kinds of thinking that lawmakers use when creating laws.

Post-Knowledge Check

Now that you have learned more about the U.S. government, how it is set up, and why it is important, let's revisit those questions we had at the beginning.

1. What does the Legislative Branch do?
2. What does the Executive Branch do?
3. What does the Judicial Branch do?
4. Name three rights protected by the Constitution.
5. How does voting help people influence government decisions?



Activity #4

Introduction

Civic Solution Showcase

45 minutes

Materials Needed:

- Civic Solution Planning Worksheet
- Chart paper or poster paper
- Markers
- Sticky notes
- Copies of the National Civics Bee® Essay Guide
- Optional: Example Civics Bee® essays or finalist videos

Goal:

Identify a real issue in your community, develop a civic solution, and create an action plan that can later be transformed into a National Civics Bee® essay submission.

Every Community Has Challenges

Explain:

Communities face challenges every day, from environmental concerns and transportation issues to education, public health, and community safety. Civic leaders and engaged citizens help identify these challenges and work together to find solutions.

Today, you'll become a Civic Problem Solver. You'll identify a local issue, explore possible solutions, and create a plan for making a difference in your community.



Civic Solution Showcase

#4

Part 1: Community Problem Lab

10 minutes

Post large sheets around the room with broad community topics, some examples include:

- Community Safety
- Environment
- Education
- Public Health
- Transportation
- Technology & Digital Access
- Accessibility & Inclusion
- Community Spaces & Recreation

Have Girl Scouts walk around the room and at each station, ask them to write:

- Problems they see
- Challenges they have experienced
- Opportunities for improvement
- Questions they have about the issue

After they go through each community topic posted, review what they have written together as a group.



Civic Solution Showcase

#4

Part 2: Choose Your Issue

5 minutes

Ask Girl Scouts to select one issue they care about most. This can be one of the issues they wrote on the poster board, or an idea they got from someone else.

Using the **Community Problem Solver Worksheet** have them write down the following:

Define the Problem	Understand Community Impact
What issue are you trying to address?	How does this issue affect people?
Why does it matter?	Why should others care about it?
Who is affected?	

*Printable worksheet on the next page



Civic Solution Showcase

#4

Community Problem Solver Worksheet

Define the Problem

What issue are you trying to address?

Why does it matter?

Who is affected?

Understand the Community Impact

How does this issue affect people?

Why should others care about it?

Civic Solution Showcase

#4

Part 3: Build Your Civic Solution

10 minutes

Now ask Girls Scouts to think like the civic leaders they have learned about today.

Discussion Questions

1. What would you change?
2. Who could help solve this problem?
3. Which government leaders or agencies might be involved?
4. Which community organizations, schools, businesses, or nonprofit groups could help?
5. What challenges might you encounter?
6. How could people work together to make your idea successful?



Civic Solution Showcase

#4

Part 4: Connect to Founding Principles & Civic Virtues

5 minutes

Ask participants:

1. Which Founding Principle applies?

Examples:

- *Equality*
- *Rule of Law*
- *Natural Rights*
- *Consent of the Governed*

2. Which Civic Virtue applies?

Examples:

- *Responsibility*
- *Respect*
- *Integrity*
- *Perseverance*
- *Civic-Mindedness*

Ask:

How does your solution reflect the values that help our democracy work?

Have Girl Scouts add their response to the reverse of their worksheets.



Civic Solution Showcase

#4

Part 5: Civic Solution Pitch

15 minutes

Instead of writing immediately, have girls present their idea as a short pitch.

Each participant shares:

- The problem
- Why it matters
- Their proposed solution
- Who they would work with
- Which democratic values support their idea

Allow 1–2 minutes per participant.

After each presentation, invite positive feedback and questions.

Possible questions:

1. What do you like about this idea?
2. What challenge might this solution face?
3. Who else could help?



Activity #5

Introduction

National Civics Bee® Essay Connection

Remaining Time

Materials Needed:

- Printed copies of the [2027 National Civics Bee® Essay Application Guide](#)
- Pencils or pens
- Optional: Sample essays or excerpts for inspiration (available on the National Civics Bee® [website](#))

Congratulations! You've already completed most of the thinking needed for a National Civics Bee® essay.

Through today's activities, you've identified a community issue, explored who is affected, considered different perspectives, connected your ideas to the Constitution and the goals of the Preamble, and developed a potential solution. These are the same skills civic leaders, community advocates, and National Civics Bee® participants use when addressing real-world challenges.

If time allows, invite Girl Scouts to begin organizing and drafting their essays using the National Civics Bee® Essay Application Guide. If additional time is needed, send participants home with the guide and encourage them to continue developing their ideas and submit their completed essays to the National Civics Bee®.



National Civics Bee®

#5

About the National Civics Bee®

The National Civics Bee® is an annual nonpartisan civics competition for middle schoolers (grades 6–8), organized by The Civic Trust® of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation in partnership with local and state chambers of commerce across the country. It aims to increase civics knowledge, skills, and disposition among young Americans, their families, and communities.

Through writing, students in grades 6–8 identify real-world issues, explore possible solutions, and demonstrate how their actions are grounded in civic responsibility and core democratic values. Students who participate strengthen their civics, writing, and public speaking skills, and form friendships with other young leaders along the way.

Finalists can move on from local and state rounds to the National Championship, where they compete for recognition, trophies, cash prizes, and a \$100,000 529 education savings plan.

Students submit their entries online via the National Civics Bee® [website](#) or via mail following directions in the Essay Application Guide. 



National Civics Bee®

#5

Essay Outline

Your presentation can become your essay by organizing your ideas into three sections:

Question 1: Identify the Issue

- What is the problem?
- Why does it matter?

Question 2: Build Your Solution

- What action would you take?
- Who would help?

Question 3: Connect to Democracy

- Which Founding Principles or Civic Virtues support your idea?
- How does your proposal strengthen your community?

* Did You Know? *

Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, and John Jay wrote a series of essays called The Federalist Papers to explain how the Constitution would work. Today, young people can use their own writing to influence their communities—just like the Founding Fathers did!



National Civics Bee®

#5

Writing Support Tips

Encourage Girl Scouts to:

- Reflect on what they learned about government leaders, the Constitution, and civic engagement throughout this program.
- Choose a community issue they genuinely care about and can explain clearly.
- Consider who is affected by the issue and why it matters to the community.
- Think about which government leaders, community organizations, businesses, or other partners could help create change.
- Use examples from their own experiences as Girl Scouts, students, volunteers, or community members.
- Draw inspiration from service projects, Bronze Award or Silver Award ideas, or challenges they have observed in their schools and communities.
- Explain how their proposed solution reflects one or more Founding Principles or Civic Virtues.
- Be specific about the actions they would take and the impact those actions could have.
- Use their own voice—passion, personal experience, and creativity can make an essay more memorable and persuasive.



National Civics Bee®

#5

Submitting Your Essay

Once your essay is complete, you can submit it to the National Civics Bee® through their official website. Submissions for the 2026-2027 competition will be due on **February 2, 2027**, so be sure to check the National Civics Bee® website for the most up-to-date information, deadlines, and eligibility details.

If you're in 6th–8th grade, you're encouraged to finalize and submit your essay for a chance to be recognized as a local, state, or even national finalist. Students in 4th–5th grade can save their work and build on it for future years when they become eligible.

Remember:

Your voice matters. The ideas you share today can spark real change—and this contest is your chance to make that change happen.



National Civics Bee®

#5

Celebrate Your Civic Leadership!

Finish by saying:

Today, you took real steps toward becoming a civic leader. You explored how to identify challenges in your community, brainstorm solutions, and connect your ideas to the values that shape our democracy. That's what civics is all about—using your voice, your knowledge, and your passion to make a difference.

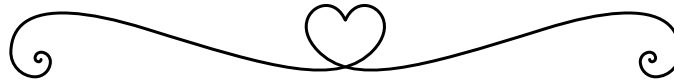
Whether you submit your essay or keep refining it, you've started the important work of civic storytelling—and that's something to be proud of.

If you're in middle school, consider entering your essay into the National Civics Bee® for the chance to earn recognition, make new connections with other young leaders, and compete for exciting prizes, including a \$100,000 529 education savings plan.

If you're not quite eligible yet, don't worry—you're building the skills now to shine when your time comes. You can complete this program every year to deepen your understanding and prepare for future opportunities like the National Civics Bee®.



Congratulations!



You have earned your Foundations of Democracy: Exploring Civics and Government patch as well as met the requirements for the following badges:

- Democracy for Juniors
- Inside Government (Juniors)
- Democracy for Cadettes

To claim your **Foundations of Democracy: Exploring Civics and Government patch**, please complete the feedback form [here](#). 

