



State of Vermont

Office of the Secretary of State

128 State Street
Montpelier, VT 05633-1101

[phone] 802-828-2363

[fax] 802-828-2496

www.sec.state.vt.us

James C. Condos, Secretary of State

Christopher D. Winters, Deputy Secretary

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Contact: Liz Ryder, 802-828-2148

Vermont Secretary of State's 2016 Poster and Essay Contest

The Vermont Secretary of State's Poster and Essay Contest is an annual event to promote awareness of Vermont history, the Vermont Constitution, and the importance of civics among students in Grades K-12. The program was started in 2000, making this its 16th year.

The essay topics this year, for older students, focus on youth involvement in politics and governance and asks students to imagine creative ways in which we can encourage and increase their participation. The younger students, in keeping with tradition, are asked to create their own rendition of state symbols and posters by thinking about what Vermont means to them.

Every year, we receive great submissions from students across the state. We then select winners in each category and invite their entire class to join us for a day in Montpelier where they tour the State House, the Vermont History Museum, and are recognized in an awards ceremony.

We ask teachers to share this opportunity with their students and encourage them to participate. The deadline for submissions is May 1. We are excited to see what new and thoughtful submissions we receive this year from our talented Vermont students!

More information about the contest, the class topics, and submission forms can be found below.





Vermont Secretary of State 2016 Poster and Essay Contest

Registration Form

Entries must be submitted or postmarked by May 1, 2016

Contest Information

Participation in the Poster and Essay Contest is determined by the entrant's grade level as follows:

- **Grades K-2: Official Vermont Symbols Poster Contest** (e.g. state flag, state seal, state bird).
 - Draw your own version of a Vermont symbol.

- **Grades 3-5: Vermont History Poster Contest:** Artwork must relate to Vermont history.
 - Create a poster which you think represents VT or an important moment in VT history.

- **Grades 6-8:** Choose one of the following two options for submission.

Young people have more access to technology than ever before. Many students now have cell phones, iPads, and constant access to the internet.

Young people are stereotyped as being more interested in celebrities and social media than VT history and civics and are viewed as disengaged from the political process.

Option 1: Political Participation Essay

Provide an answer the following question:

- Do you agree that students your age do not pay much attention to the Vermont political process and Vermont history?
 - Why or why not?
 - What can we do to improve?

Option 2: Political Participation Project

Show us how you think technology can be used to help young people be more engaged in Vermont history and the political process. Either **create** your own example or **describe** it in a written submission.

- Examples: create a fun YouTube video that teaches about VT history or politics; think up an idea for a video game that includes historical facts or involves political elections; create a fun online quiz; be reporters for a news station just for kids and report on a VT political topic.
 - We will accept video submissions created by participants, links to websites/quizzes created by participants, or written outlines of ideas about how to engage young people in the political process with the help of technology.

- **Grades 9-12:** Choose one of the following two options for submission.

Option 1: Voter Participation Project for 9-12

Young people consistently have the lowest rate of voter turnout compared to any other demographic. Only 38% of people ages 18-25 voted in the last Presidential Primary. Vermont now allows 17 year olds who will be 18 by November to vote in primaries. Many high school students are now of voting age.

- Part 1: Provide a brief answer to the following question.
 - Why do you think young people are the least likely to vote?
- Part 2: How do you think we can help increase young voter participation? Either **create** your own example or **describe** it in a written submission.
 - Examples: create a “get out the vote/rock the vote” style YouTube video which makes it exciting to vote; design posters and hang them around school or your town (send us a copy of the poster and let us know where you put it up); write an outline of the ways State government could help increase voter registration and turnout for the younger demographic.

Option 2 Presidential Electoral Process and Democracy

- Consider the United States electoral process for electing a new president. Do you think this process is representative of a true democracy?
 - Consider topics such as: a two party system, direct versus representative democracy, the Electoral College, campaign finance, voter registration, voting accessibility, the influence of media, etc.

Format note! Individual and group entries are accepted for Grades 6-8 and Grades 9-12. These entries may be submitted in one of these formats: a traditional written essay, a PowerPoint or Prezi presentation, a YouTube video, or a link to a self-made online blog or website. Entries should be e-mailed to civics@sec.state.vt.us or mailed to the below address with all contact information.

All entries must either be submitted or postmarked by May 1, 2016

Contest Rules

- **Posters** may not exceed 15" x 24" in size. They should be sent in secure, sturdy packages that can be reused for returning after the contest is over. Tubes are not recommended. **Clearly label entries with the student's name, grade, teacher and school. Mail to Civics Department, Office of the Secretary of State, 128 State St., Montpelier, VT 05633-1101**
- **Written essays** should be between 500 and 1000 words, double-spaced, 12 point font and submitted in a Word document attachment. **PowerPoint or Prezi** presentations should be between 6 and 12 slides and in a compatible format.

- **Send e-mail entries to civics@sec.state.vt.us and be sure to include name, grade, teacher, and school.**
- **Please e-mail the YouTube or website link to civics@sec.state.vt.us, and be sure to include name, grade, teacher, and school.**
- **Group submissions** must be no more than 5 students per group, with each student contributing in a clear way.

All entries will be judged on the following criteria:

- Originality
- Dedication to contest theme and knowledge of topic
- General aesthetic quality, including but not limited to design composition, materials used, production values, etc.

Return of posters cannot be guaranteed. If you would like an entry returned, be sure that the registration form and each submission is clearly marked with contact information.

Contest Winners

First Place winners, their families, and their classes, as well as any Honorable Mention recipients and their families, will be invited to an awards ceremony in May at the State House in Montpelier. In addition, they will have the opportunity to tour the State House and visit the Vermont Historical Society Museum with the Supreme Court as an option for older students.

All entries must be submitted or postmarked by May 1, 2016, and sent to:

**Civics Department
2015 Poster and Essay Contest
Office of the Secretary of State
128 State Street
Montpelier, Vermont 05633-1101**

Contact Elizabeth Ryder with any questions at 802-828-2148, or civics@sec.state.vt.us

Contest Entry Form:

Student/Class, Name/Grade: _____

** If registering more than one student, see note below*

School Name: _____

School Mailing Address: _____

Contact Person: _____

Telephone Number: _____

Email: _____

Write in the **number of entries** being submitted to the contest category. Use a separate entry sheet for each different category.

Grades K-2 Official Vermont Symbols Poster Contest - # of entries: _____

Grades 3-5 Vermont History Poster Contest - # of entries: _____

Grades 6-8 Essay, Power Point, Website link, or YouTube video - # of entries: _____

Grades 9-12 Essay, Power Point, Website link, or YouTube video - # of entries: _____

***Multiple Entries:** Poster or essay entries for an entire class or group submission may be submitted with one registration form. Include a list of **ALL** participating students on a separate sheet. Be sure that each individual entry is labeled on the backside with **ALL** of the information requested above.

For e-mail entries (written essay, Power Point, website, or YouTube link), send to civics@sec.state.vt.us with name, grade, teacher and school.

Entry forms and submissions must be submitted or postmarked by **May 1, 2016** to:

2016 Poster and Essay Contest
Office of the Secretary of State
128 State Street
Montpelier, Vermont 05633-1101

Contact Elizabeth Ryder with any questions at 802-828-2148, or civics@sec.state.vt.us

