

2026-27 Essay Contest Prompts

Presidential Powers

What are the purposes of executive orders and emergency powers? Explain the constitutional basis of executive orders and emergency powers and whether their recent increased use by presidents of both parties has been an abuse of executive power.

In your entry, choose one specific use of executive power — a particular executive order or emergency declaration. Explore what action the president took, what legal or constitutional authority was used to justify it, and how other branches responded. Then take and support a position on whether that use was an abuse of executive power.

Recommended video:

- [Executive Orders](#)

Digital Privacy

How much privacy should we have online? Why are some people concerned about online privacy? How much—if any—personal information should the government require private companies to collect from individuals for online access? Should the government require age verification to prevent young people from accessing certain web content? If so, who in the government should decide? How might age verification interfere with individuals' privacy?

Analyze how digital identification requirements and online verification affect privacy, security, and/or freedom. Does it even matter? Support your position with examples and evidence.

Recommended video:

- [Privacy Module](#)

Fraud in Government Programs

Government programs distribute billions of taxpayer dollars every year. What are the consequences when some of that money is lost to waste, fraud, and abuse? Examine the economic idea of opportunity cost by considering what those resources could have been used for and by whom. How might the concept of concentrated benefits/disbursed costs limit government investigations into waste, fraud, and abuse of government programs?

Evaluate proposed reforms or propose your own to reduce waste, fraud, and abuse.

Recommended video:

- [Fraud Nation](#)

Interest in Democratic Socialism / Communism

Surveys show increased interest among young people in democratic socialism and communism. What factors help explain this trend? Who are the leaders and influencers driving this increased interest? What are the messages and why are they so appealing?

Examine this growing interest and evaluate how the historical experiences of countries governed under socialist or communist systems support or refute the messaging of these influencers.

Recommended videos:

- [Economic Systems Module](#)
- [Both Sides: Democratic Socialism Revisited](#)
- [Equal Shares – Why Collectivism Fails](#)
- [Both Sides: Does Capitalism Reduce Poverty?](#)