United States District Court
District of Arizona – Phoenix Division
Semiquincentennial Celebration
Art Contest & Poetry Contest
(Sixth Grade – Eighth Grade)

Rules and Guidelines for the Art Contest (6–8) and the Poetry Contest (6–8)

Who May Enter: The 2026 United States District Court for the District of Arizona, Phoenix Division, Semiquincentennial Celebration Art and Poetry Contests are open to students in 6th through 8th grade in the following Phoenix counties: Maricopa, Pinal, La Paz, and Gila. Students attending public, private, parochial and charter schools, and home-schooled students of equivalent grade status, are invited to participate. Each student may submit one entry to the Art Contest and one entry to the Poetry Contest.

Prizes:[1]

- First Place: $500
- Second Place: $350
- Third Place: $180

Art Contest Prompt: *Create a piece of visual artwork showing how the Declaration of Independence affects our lives today*.

Artwork Format: There are no limitations to artwork size or medium; however, artwork must be transportable.

Poetry Contest Prompt: *Write a poem about what the Declaration of Independence means to you or how the Declaration of Independence still affects us today.*

Poetry Format: Poems must be submitted in PDF format.

Contest Submissions: A photo of your artwork and/or a PDF file of your poem along with a completed and signed entry form must be submitted to Phoenix Semiquincentennial Website If you are participating in both contests, please submit two signed entry forms—one for your poem and one for your artwork. You will receive email confirmation after successful submission of your materials.

Students must retain their original artwork and/or a copy of their poem pending confirmation of contest finalists. Art Contest Finalists must be able to transport their original artwork to the Sandra Day O'Connor

[1]Prizes will be awarded to the winners of both the Art and Poetry Contests.

U.S. Courthouse, 401 W. Washington Street, Phoenix, AZ 85003, at the date and time announced by contest organizers.

Contest Durations: Entries for both contests will be accepted starting **February 4, 2026**. Winners will be announced in May. The deadline to submit entries is **April 30, 2026**, by 11:59 p.m. MST.

Judging Criteria:

1. **Connection to the Declaration of Independence;**

2. **Effort and thoughtfulness;**

3. **Creativity, originality, and depth; and**

4. **Reflection on freedom, equality, or self-governance.**

Release Forms: Each entry will require a submission of an entry form allowing the District of Arizona to display your artwork and poetry at public events, District of Arizona Courthouses, and/or the Court's public website.

Important Notice on Originality and Use of AI:

Your submissions must be your own original work, written or created entirely by you and not generated by or written with the help of artificial intelligence (AI) tools. Submissions may be reviewed using AI-detection tools or other verification methods to ensure authenticity. Submissions found to include AI-generated content will be disqualified.

Compliance with Other Contest Requirements:

Providing any false information, failing to meet the submission deadline or adhere to other contest rules, or failing to provide a requested release form may result in disqualification.

Questions: Email **artandpoetryphx-pct@azd.uscourts.gov** and include "Question" in the subject line.