



CLOVIS VETERANS MEMORIAL DISTRICT

2024 Veterans Day Essay Contest Teacher's Guide- MIDDLE/INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL

2024: “Standing Up For Freedom & Democracy”

The mission of the Clovis Veterans Memorial District (CVMD) is to provide a permanent living memorial honoring U.S. Military and Veterans; provide facilities and support programs to promote a legacy of service for preserving our community's and country's foundational ideals. Veterans Day is an opportunity to honor and give thanks to those who have served or are serving in the military, those who preserve the American way of life.

The resources included in this Teacher's Guide can be used to talk to your class about the history of Veterans Day and introduce them to this year's theme: “Standing Up for Freedom & Democracy.”

History of Veterans Day:

Veterans Day is held on November 11th, which began as a celebration of peace after World War I ended. It was originally called Armistice Day, to celebrate the truce signed between America and Germany during World War I. In 1954 the name was changed to Veterans Day, to honor all veterans.

Resources for teaching your students about Veterans Day:

[Veterans Day and the Meaning of Sacrifice](#)

[History of Veterans Day \(Video\)](#)

[The History of Veterans Day](#)

What is a freedom and democracy?

Freedom is the power or right to act, speak, or think as one wants. Democracy is a system of government by the whole population or all eligible members of the state, typically through elected representatives. The United States is a representative democracy. This means that our government is elected by citizens. These officials represent the citizens' ideas and concerns in government.

How is the history of democracy in the United States and why does it matter?

America was not always a separate country; it used to be 13 colonies ruled by the King of England. The people living in these colonies were unhappy because the King was taxing them and imposing rules without giving them a say in the decisions. On July 4, 1776, the colonists signed the Declaration of Independence, declaring their freedom from England and establishing the United States of America. Democracy means that everyone has a voice in deciding what to

do together as a community In a democracy, people have the freedom to choose their leaders and the rules they live by. This means that they can help shape their communities and countries to make them a better place by voting and participating in local government.

How can you stand up for freedom and democracy?

First, you must understand the rights and responsibilities that come with living in a free nation under a representative democracy. Basic freedoms include freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom from want and freedom from fear. The responsibility of those freedoms is that you must be an informed and engaged citizen- participate in elections, attend civic events, model democratic behavior, and think critically about how you can make your country and community better.

Starting a conversation...

Introduce Veterans Day to your students, and the reason we celebrate our Veterans as heroes. Review what the definitions of freedom and democracy, and what they mean to your students.

Discuss with the students.

- What is freedom worth to you?
- What are the 4 basic freedoms every American has?
- What is the relationship between freedom and responsibility?
- How do we exercise freedom in our homes, at school and in our communities?
- Why is it important to be an informed and engaged citizen?

Resources

[National Constitution Center's Freedom Day Curriculum Guide](#)

[Teaching Laws, Rights, & Responsibilities](#)

[This is What Democracy Looks Like](#)

[Civic Skills: Engaging Your Community Through Voter Education](#)

“Standing Up For Freedom & Democracy” Prompt:

Write a 2-4 page essay around the theme “Standing Up For Freedom & Democracy.”

How to Enter:

Submit your essay with Entry Form to the Clovis Veterans Memorial District, 808 Fourth Street, Clovis, CA 93612. If you have any questions regarding the contest, please call the Clovis Veterans Memorial District at (559) 299-0471.

Related Common Core Standards:

7th Grade

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.7.2b

Develop the topic with relevant facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.7.7

Conduct short research projects to answer a question, drawing on several sources and generate additional related, focused questions for further research and investigation.

8th Grade

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.2

Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.9

Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis and research.