

WRITE the WORLD REVIEW

A LITERARY JOURNAL PUBLISHING
STANDOUT TEEN WRITERS AGES 13 TO 19

Special Edition



RULE OF LAW

TEEN WRITING *on*
JUSTICE, RIGHTS, AND
CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

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Meet the Judges

Meet the U.S. federal judges who volunteered their time as guest judges for the writing competition. They each selected the winning piece and peer review in their category and provided short commentary included in this journal.



“In law, writing is everything. Oral advocacy is important, too, but written advocacy is far more important. That said, the goal of written and oral advocacy is the same: Analyze and explain even the most difficult, controversial, or arcane concepts, and communicate them clearly and persuasively to the reader.”

- The Hon. James Ho, Judge for the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit

“Law is what knits our society together. What is understood to be acceptable usually appears in law even though its origin lies within how we relate to one another. Law creates many of the rituals that bind us together (e.g., graduation after 12 grades of school). Thus, law is much more than the way we resolve disputes; it sets the boundaries for society.”

- The Hon. Seth Aframe, Judge for the U.S. Court of Appeals for the First Circuit

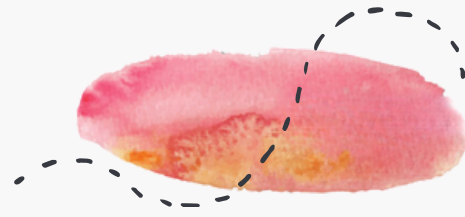


“...Law is not abstract, it is lived, and I carry that belief into my role as a judge, striving to make the law both accessible and just.”

- The Hon. Melissa DuBose, Judge for the U.S. District Court of Rhode Island



About the Rule of Law Writing Competition



For the Rule of Law writing competition, sponsored by the Supreme Court Historical Society in October 2025, we invited teens to explore themes of justice, equity, fairness, rules, and/or laws in any (or all) of three genres: personal narrative; opinion writing; and creative writing (e.g. poetry, fiction, screenwriting).



The Prompt

“Unjust laws exist: shall we be content to obey them or shall we endeavor to amend them, and obey them until we have succeeded, or shall we transgress them at once?”

We’re surrounded by rules—from curfews to dress codes, the rules of the road to those that govern towns, states, and countries. Rules reflect and inform our rights. While they can sometimes feel restrictive, they also allow us to make decisions about our lives and communities.

But the quote above—penned by Henry David Thoreau in his 1849 essay, “[Civil Disobedience](#),” which he wrote after refusing to pay taxes in protest of the Mexican-American War—reminds us: not all rules are fair, and not all people agree with them.

No matter your age or location, YOU have been affected by—and affect—the rule of law, defined by [The World Justice Project](#) as “a durable system of laws, institutions, norms, and community commitment.” We want to hear about your experience.



Your Opinion



OP-ED WINNER

Educate Her: Stop Child Marriage in Pakistan Through Rule of Law

Alina Khan, United States, age 17

My last trip to Pakistan was a blur of rickshaw drives, late-night Qawalli, the smell of kebabs, and the sound of children playing cricket on the streets. All the moments and events pile up in my memory like a stack of unwashed laundry. But the one that never leaves my mind is the engagement of my family friend, one of the quietest, hard-working, and kind souls I have ever met.

She had been forced to leave school at only fourteen, despite being the top of her class, and was just seventeen when her engagement was announced to a man she had never met. Her older sister, at nineteen, was already the mother of two children. Malala Yousafzai once said, “I tell my story, not because it is unique, but because it is not. It is the story of many girls.” Her and my friend’s story is representative of the fates of countless young girls in Pakistan, who have been taught to keep their heads down and mouths shut. Who can only dream of being able to dream.

The Pakistani Constitution contains explicit provisions intended to prevent such undertakings. For example, Article 25-A of its constitution makes it clear that Pakistan “shall provide free and compulsory education to all children of five to sixteen years.” Yet, nearly 40% of children are no longer in school by sixteen, many of them girls. And, only half of the girls enrolled in secondary education schools actually complete it. In May 2025, Pakistan established a federal law known as the “Islamabad Capital Territory Child Marriage Restraint Act” to set the minimum age of marriage to eighteen for both girls and boys. Yet, the law is being challenged in courts across the country, which believe it to be “un-Islamic,” preventing provincial governments from enforcing it at the local level. Families continue to marry their daughters off with the encouragement of religious and tribal leaders. Clearly, there are laws on paper, and laws that are not being practiced, leading to a serious undermining of the rule of law.

Cultural norms, societal pressure, and poverty are among the many reasons why laws in Pakistan meant to protect girls’ rights are being so weakly enforced. In many rural

communities (especially in provinces of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Balochistan, and parts of Punjab), early marriage is seen as a way to protect the “family honor” and prevent “shameful relationships.” In many cases, it is also seen as a way to avoid financial instability, since the average Pakistani household already supports around four children. The strong influence of religious leaders, or jirgas, on family matters can potentially outweigh federal laws. Decisions regarding one’s marriage is often decided in the masjid, not courtrooms, and even law enforcement officers are hesitant to intervene out of fear of backlash. Poverty, especially since the 2022 floods throughout Pakistan, has been another significant factor linked to girls dropping out of school. Even if families want to educate their daughters, they simply cannot afford to make it an immediate priority. Still, local governments and NGOs continuously work to provide cash stipends and scholarships to keep girls enrolled.

Again and again, a Pakistani girl leaves school and receives an engagement she does not want. The gap between official rules and lived reality in Pakistan has to be closed to put an end to the social injustice that has become normalized in too many communities. Laws need to be enforced with real accountability, and government officials and police officers should be trained to respond immediately to any violation of girls’ rights, rather than dismissing them as family or religious matters. Courts and legal systems need to act with more efficiency and ensure equal application of the law for all. Building more schools in rural areas, providing methods of transportation, and recruiting teachers will open more opportunities for girls to be educated. Existing

harmful social norms that allow for corruption need to be challenged with awareness campaigns and strategic partnerships. And of course, Pakistani society must work cooperatively with its religious and tribal leaders to open more minds and create new conversations: that a girl’s honor is strongest in her voice and education.

My friend should have been in a classroom, pursuing her education, and enjoying her right to work towards a future she desires for herself. Instead, she has been let down by her community and government, and lives in an obedient silence. This does not have to be the outcome of more young girls in Pakistan, and it is still not too late for the country to uphold the Rule of Law and keep its daughters luminescent. The moment a girl in the country feels it is in her power to hold the reins of her education and life is a moment Pakistan keeps its promise to its people and laws.



Judge's Commentary

“Educate Her” tells a powerful tale about the heart-wrenching injustice suffered by girls in Pakistan. As the op-ed argues, it doesn't matter if there are laws on the books to protect girls: without enforcement, laws are nothing but parchment promises. And there is no enforcement unless there are people of character in office and on the bench who are ready and able to do their duty, without regard to public pressure. This piece elegantly intertwines personal storytelling with legal discussion, effectively reaching both the reader's heart and mind. Well done.



The Hon. James Ho

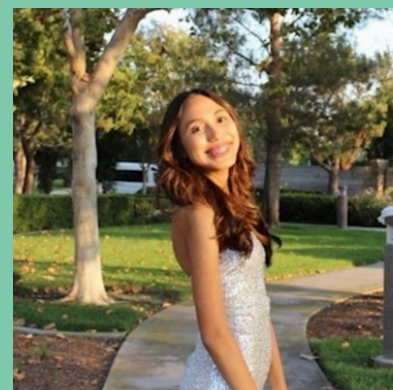
Author's Commentary

What was your research process for grounding claims in your op-ed, and did that research change your original perspective?

...My perspective on education barriers and the marriage of underage girls in Pakistan did take a shift after my research. Although I am glad the nation's federal government is taking huge steps to prevent social injustice (especially with the passing of a recent law against child marriage this year), the issue at hand remains extremely prominent, especially in rural communities. My research led me to realize that the problem isn't just with poverty or social norms, but also the weak enforcement of existing laws and [lack of urgency] of individuals in courts. The major problem is the undermining of the Rule of Law.

How did the research or real-world examples you used (if any) influence your choices in tone and structure?

...The experience of my family friend and the fact that it occurs in the country I am from influenced my tone, due to how close to home the issue is. I made sure to sound firm and weave my opinion into my writing. I used diction and the structures of my sentences to highlight how frustrating the problem is. Right now, many girls are losing their education and voices, and it's a real issue that needs to be continuously addressed. My piece captures this urgency and connects these lived realities with the Rule of Law to call for action.



Alina Khan
United States
Age 17



Your Story



PERSONAL NARRATIVE
WINNER

Between Cruelty And Courage

Najaf Zahra, Pakistan, age 19

I saw a girl no older than ten, her dupatta sliding off one shoulder as she balanced two tiny plastic bottles under the heat of the day.

The rubber pipe hissed on the street, a thin stream of water trickling out like a fragile lifeline.

I sat in my car. The engine hummed. My mother had left moments ago; I was alone, watching. The guard noticed how the girl adjusted the bottles to the pipe's mouth. Then I saw the guard's fingers curl around the pipe. Soon the

water came like a torrent.

The girl shrieked and stepped back. The guard advanced, drenching her. His lips upturned in amusement.

My thoughts froze like leaves in a dead storm. Her bottles thudded onto the cracked tiles. Wet dust rose. Anger surged inside me but my feet stayed rooted.

I told myself: I was too small, too confined by the glass and steel of my privilege. My voice stayed trapped.

She clutched the fabric slipping from her head, shivering as her clothes cemented to her skin. The guard laughed cruelly.

Her footsteps echoed against something I had long buried. I remembered my elder sister asking why the rules for the boys in our house bent like open gates while ours stayed shut and the answer was simple: "Because they are boys."

When I glanced out the rolled-up window, I saw the guard's predator eyes sparkling with merriment. I remained seated, spectator to a play I might have changed if I had tried.

I killed time by counting the minutes until my mother returned and until the world resumed its rhythm. The questions hummed in the engine:

Is silence cruel or protective? Is survival cowardice or resilience?

That morning fixed itself into me not because of anyone else, but me and my failure.

Years passed like fireflies; I came back again,
like a nursery rhyme.

It was Friday. Friday prayer was minutes away.
The street was different, but the shadows
remained.

A woman in her thirties was being accused by a
man in a white shalwar kameez. He shouted
above his lungs, “You are the kind of woman
who deserves to be locked at home!”

I was stepping out of the supermarket when his
voice cracked like thunder. A fruit seller froze,
an orange half-cut in his hand; pigeons
fluttered up.

The woman’s stole was drawn tight; her chin
held high though her knuckles whitened.

“And what about men like you?” she snapped.
“What are you making a fuss about?”

He reached into his pocket. “You don’t know
who I am!”

“Go away! I’ve had enough,” she said, starting
to walk away.

He shoved a shiny badge into her face. “I’m an
army officer. Had you known, you’d have
stayed in your limits.”

A murmur moved through bystanders. Some
nodded by habit; others looked at their shoes
as if the tips of their shoes held more comfort
than what was in front. I felt the old questions
rise:

If everyone claims powerlessness, who will stand?

*How can we expect help when we turn away from
those who scream?*

She stared at him. “Had I known, I would have
talked the same.”

Crowd gasped. A rickshaw driver clutched his
bar; two men muttered it wasn’t their fight.

I finally stepped forward, swallowing my fear
because yesterday had clung to today since
forever.

I stood beside her like a silent pillar. The man’s
palm slapped a car window with a satisfying
crack.

“I want to slap her face!” he barked.

She flinched.

I moved in. “She’s with me.”

He sneered. “This horrendous lady is
accompanied by another pathetic young lady.”
He tried to wound us with words.

She turned on him. “Go tell your wife and
daughters that. That’s what men like you do.”

I faced him. “No one owes you respect unless
you earn it. Courage doesn’t bow to men like
you.”

His eyes hardened. “M-move away—children
don’t lecture adults.”

“When adults forget how to grow up, children
may teach,” I said. “Every soul deserves dignity.
Stop measuring the world with your arrogance.”

He checked his watch. “I nearly missed my prayer because of you fools.” He sprinted to his bike.

I called after him, “Do prayers count for those who parade holiness while they cow others?”

He didn’t look back. Silence was his shield.

The woman’s eyes softened as she took my hand. “Thank you.”

“No need,” I said, pressing her hand.

She looked away, tired: “Inferiority wrapped in arrogance is so common nowadays,” she murmured. “While I was driving my car, he stopped midway like the road belonged to him.”

I listened quietly.

“All I said was, ‘It’s a bike, not a crane.’ There was enough space for the bike to move.” Her gaze drifted into the fast-moving crowd.

I smiled bitterly. “Nothing pierces deeper than wounded ego.”

We said our goodbyes and she slipped back into the crowd, while I drifted to a puddle.

The water caught the fading light like molten glass. My reflection wavered.

“The water lies still,” I whispered. “But I am no longer still.”

I lifted my chin and saw across the street that a young girl sat in a warm car, windows up, watching. Her wide, unblinking eyes met mine. In that look I saw the morning beside the pipe and the lessons I carried.

I realized one act of courage is never wasted; someone might be learning. A small ripple can break the stillness of the water inside us.



Footnotes

Dupatta: Scarf

Shalwar kameez: A shirt and trouser (Pakistani national dress)

Rickshaw: A small two- or three-wheeled passenger vehicle

Judge's Commentary

“This is a truly incredible piece of writing. You tap into themes of failure and courage. You show what it means to challenge authority and demonstrate the difference between law and power. You also show that power bends to justice when justice acts. The problem is how do we muster the courage to fight unjust power. Your explanation is so moving! And I love the line, “I finally stepped forward, swallowing my fear because yesterday had clung to today since forever.” So many of us feel the last part of the sentence (shamed by fear), but so few can do the first part!”



The Hon. Seth Aframe

Author's Commentary

Readers may react differently to an argument contextualized within a personal story rather than a straight op-ed or policy. How did you balance personal voice and broader civic claims so readers could both relate and be persuaded?

I tried to share my personal experience honestly while shedding spotlight on the larger societal and ethical issues connected to it, so readers could relate emotionally while also understanding the broader civic significance.

What led you to choose this particular incident, observation, or event to write your essay around?

I chose this particular incident because it stayed with me vividly as a feeling. It shows how a small step of courage can help erase cruelty, especially when the world has turned far scarier. With this story, I hope to inspire others.



Najaf Zahra
Pakistan
Age 19



Your Imagination



CREATIVE WRITING WINNER

Forty-Two Folds

Anna Elyssa Cerezo, Philippines,
age 17

When you fold a paper forty-two times, you can reach the moon.

That's what Ma'am Tolentino says, chalk dust blooming around her like smoke. You're thirteen, your shirt sticking to your back, the air outside humming with engines. You write it down in your notebook, Forty-two folds, then draw a small rocket in the margin.

Years from now, when your mother smooths the same paper against your coffin, she will trace those folds with her finger and wonder what they were for.

-

You are folding the paper now, sitting at your desk.

You don't know that your mother, somewhere in another version of this day, is holding it too: same creases, same corners, only softer from the years. She's reading your handwriting, the one that leans slightly to the right. On the back, your notes from physics class:

1. A body stays at rest unless acted upon.
2. Force equals mass times acceleration.
3. For every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction.

Maybe the universe itself obeys what this country forgets, that every act must answer to something.

When you told her you wanted to be an astronaut, she laughed first. Then she said, "Bring rice home before you bring back the moon."

Still, she bought glow-in-the-dark stars from Divisoria, taped them to your ceiling. You watched them pale as dawn crept through the grilles, and thought: one day I'll leave this place.

But even then, you knew the law of gravity better than anyone: everything falls here.

-

It's night again, but not the same one. You're walking home, bag heavy with papers, the streets rinsed in rain.

There's a poster peeling off the electric post, about eradicating the addicts and keeping discipline. Next time a student your age passes by, these tarpaulins will be marred with graffiti of 'justice for' alongside your name.

Your shoes will slap against the wet pavement, echoing louder than you expect.

You'll think of the moon then too, how it seems to be following you but in reality is drifting farther away from Earth.

-

The morning the police came, the neighborhood dogs went quiet first. Then the shouting began. The captain said there was a list, that you fit the description. He didn't say which description or who made the list. Your mother stood in the doorway, her hand still wet from washing rice, asking them to wait, to listen.

But the law doesn't wait in Manila. It moves fast, and it never looks back.

They said you ran. They said you fought back. They said a lot of things.

Your mother only found your body, your school ID, and the folded paper, still in your pocket, damp with rain.

-

In another fold of time, Ma'am Tolentino is still writing your grade on the test paper.

97% — Excellent work.

Later, she will tell the class that paper has memory when folding an origami, that each fold makes it harder to forget where it's been. That is why you can't always start over and expect a clean slate.

You'll smile, not knowing how true that is.

Years later, your mother will press her palm to that same paper, the creases still visible. She'll remember how carefully you wrote your name, how she once scolded you for smudging the ink.

-

You don't know about the law yet.

Not the way your mother will come to know it: in forms signed in triplicate, in folders stamped CASE CLOSED.

Not the way Anton will whisper it years later, when he folds his exam papers twice before every test, a learned habit.

The law, here, is not a thing you learn but a thing that finds you.

It exists in voices raised behind iron gates, in the barked orders from the barangay outpost, in the radio that keeps saying the same words—peace, order, justice—within symbols of clenched fists.

-

The wake was held in the small sala. There wasn't enough room for everyone, so people stood outside under the awning. Candles burned low, pooling wax that hardened into small white ridges. Someone hung a bedsheet behind the

coffin to hide the cracks in the wall.

Anton came, holding his old test paper folded once down the middle. He kept it in his hand the whole time, thumb pressed against the crease. He didn't talk much. When he did, he said, "He wanted to be an astronaut."

And someone answered, "He shouldn't have walked home alone that night."

The candles flickered. The power went out for a few minutes. In that dark, it felt for a second like the moon might be near. Close enough to touch if only anyone had the strength left to reach.

-

Your mother will dream of you often.

In one dream, she's on the moon, where everything smells faintly of the only things she has come to know: fresh laundry in contrast with your uniform reeking of sun. You are there too, building something from tin can lids and notebook scraps.

When you wave, she tries to move toward you, but her steps are slow, heavy. The gravity of grief.

She wakes up breathless, the dream collapsing around her like another fold.

She reaches for your paper, folds it again.

Footnotes

Fiat justitia ruat caelum: "Let justice be done though the heavens fall"

Seven creases now. She presses it to her chest, whispers your name.

-

You're still in the classroom.

Ma'am Tolentino says, "Imagine reaching the moon."

Anton laughs. You laugh too, but quieter.

You fold the paper again. "Maybe the moon doesn't like poor people."

You think of your mother, of the smell of rice, of the stars taped above your bed, and how lately the cheap europium has gotten dimmer.

You don't know you've already reached the point of no return: the last fold before the paper refuses to bend.

On the moon's surface, time travels 56 microseconds faster each day. You think about these moments as you wonder if somewhere in space, the bullet has already hit your chest.



Judge's Commentary

“‘Forty-Two Folds’ is an elegantly crafted narrative that skillfully blends imagery and prose to create a story that is both whimsical and tragic. From the very first sentence, I was captivated by the narrator’s journey, moving fluidly through both space and time. I’m not sure how [the author] did it, but in relatively few words, they managed to create two characters the reader can’t help but love: Ma’am Tolentino and the protagonist’s mother. I was particularly struck by the author’s thought-provoking insight: “[t]he law, here, is not something you learn but something that finds you.” This is a remarkable piece of writing, and I sincerely hope this writer continues to aim for the moon.



The Hon. Melissa DuBose

Author's Commentary

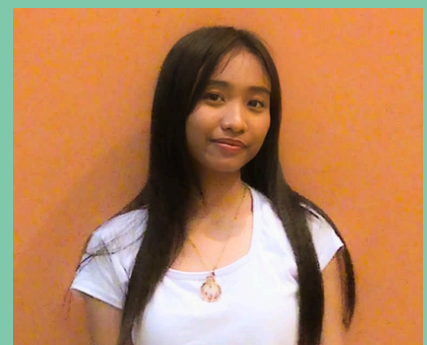
You were invited to write in any creative genre (short story, poetry, etc.). Why did you choose the genre you used, and what did that form let you do that another form would not?

I chose to use fragmented, non-linear flash fiction to tackle the heavy subject of erasure with immediate, raw impact. I think that a longer narrative would have diffused its power, and trying to encapsulate it into a poem would’ve made my message unclear. The chosen structure allowed me to “fold time” much like the creases in the paper itself, instantly shifting between the boy’s hopeful present in the classroom and his mother’s tragic future at his wake.

Creative work often relies on specific, concrete detail to make ethical questions vivid. Which detail in your piece came from a real observation, and how did you shape it for effect?

When the war on drugs started in our country, I was only around eight years old and barely had an idea about its premise. As I grew older and got exposed to journalism, I remember reading countless articles about this pressing issue and contemplating the necessity of this policy. One story about a 17-year-old boy named Kian delos Santos coming home from school getting shot and framed by the police particularly struck me, and I remember thinking that it could’ve been anyone. It could be my friend, myself, my sibling.

Now at the same age as him, there’s this nagging sense of responsibility for me to expose this kind of injustice.



**Anna Elyssa Cerezo,
Philippines,
Age 17**

TEACHING RESOURCE

Four Ways to Support Writing in Social Studies

"It is not freedom from conditions, but it is freedom to take a stand toward the conditions," wrote Viktor Frankl, Holocaust survivor and author of *Man's Search for Meaning*. The abilities to take a stand, exercise freedom, and alter one's conditions are influenced by the rule of law—a concept central to many middle and high school history, social studies, and government teachers.

Below, you'll find four classroom activities designed to introduce students to the topic and build their conceptual understanding. These activities are fully customizable, pursuant to your instructional objectives, and build in intensity so as to scaffold deeper, more nuanced engagement with issues of rights, rules, and justice.

1. The Jigsaw of Justice: Defining "Rule of Law"

Before students develop their conceptual knowledge of the rule of law, they must first have a shared definition of it. But rather than simply sharing its meaning with the class, consider taking an inductive approach by inviting students to hypothesize, debate, and define the term for themselves—encouraging deeper thinking. To do so, divide the class into small groups using a Jigsaw framework (typically, 3-5 students per group is best). Ask each group to research the rule of law using credible sources and to infer its definition based on their findings. If you prefer, rather than assigning open research, you could assign 1-3 different sources to each group, drawing from the Supreme Court Historical Society's Beyond the Bench resources or government or



human rights publications related to your country—or those that take a global perspective, such as the World Justice Project (a possible extension activity is to ask students to compare/contrast global definitions and consider how and why varying cultures define this concept similarly or differently).

Ask each group to assign a notetaker, timekeeper, and presenter. Notetakers can document the sources used and serve as scribes while their group strives to reach consensus on a definition. This activity typically works best when students have 15-20 minutes to delve into multiple sources and compare and contrast their original definitions, drawing on examples from their lived experience.

TEACHING RESOURCE CONT.

At the conclusion of the activity, invite group presenters to share their group’s definition. Share all definitions in a central space—like on a whiteboard or in a shared Google document. Then, ask students what similarities and differences they notice across the definitions. Through a whole group discussion, ask students to engage in respectful debate as they work to create one central definition as a class. Once they’ve done so, fill in any informational gaps by sharing definition(s) you’ve pulled from credible sources—to ensure a shared, validated definition of the concept that learners can return to during subsequent class activities and writing assignments.

2. Brainstorm Map: Degrees of Law

Once students have a shared understanding of the rule of law, leverage their personal experiences to foster their investment in the concept. To do so, use [Bronfenbrenner’s Bioecological Systems Framework diagram](#) (you can easily adapt this in a tool like [Canva](#) or [Magic School](#), creating worksheets designed and tailored to your class). Ask students to engage in a [think-pair-share](#) activity in which they discuss how the rule of law impacts them at each level—as an individual; in their family/school/home; in their community,

local government, and friend/neighbor groups; nationally, through media and dominant cultural messaging; and globally, as citizens of the world.

As they talk, ask them to make notes of concrete examples of the rule of law at each level of the diagram. Then, hang students’ diagrams around the room (anonymously, if desired) and facilitate a silent [gallery walk](#), asking students to think about—and later, as a class, discuss—what they notice and wonder about the diagrams, and how this activity has shifted their thinking about the rule of law.

3. Teach Younger Students About a Case, Conflict, or Leader

As students continue to develop their understanding of the rule of law, invite them to “simplify to solidify,” meaning simplify their understanding of the concept through a writing activity designed to solidify their conceptual knowledge in advance of more in-depth work.

To do so, ask them—independently, or with peers—to create a short children’s story about a court case, conflict, or leader in connection with the rule of law. Invite them to use a medium of their choice (flip-book, slide deck, animation, poster, illustrated pamphlet, etc.). They should consider language, events, and facts appropriate for the age of their intended readers; if you have the capacity to partner with a younger grade in your school, or a local elementary school or youth group, this real-world partnership will further help teen writers tailor their content for an authentic audience.

The act of teaching others, especially those younger than oneself, about a new concept reinforces prior learning and enhances student motivation.



4. Practice Perspective-Taking with the "Step Inside" Thinking Routine

Studying the rule of law can raise strong feelings and opinions, especially related to issues of equity, fairness, and justice. A critical component of honing one's perspective—and requisite arguments—is considering counterarguments and thinking deeply about their origins.

What does the opposing side believe, and why? What life experiences may have led to their opposition? What fears, vulnerabilities, relationships, rights, privileges, or experiences are at the core of naysayers' arguments—and what are at the core of your own?

These questions support students' perspective-taking skills—and one way to channel them is through the "Step Inside" thinking routine from Harvard Graduate School of Education's [Making Thinking Visible](#).

For this activity, ask students to study the 1988 U.S. Supreme Court case *Hazelwood v. Kuhlmeier*, a case exploring students' right to free speech, specifically an instance when journalism students at a high school in Missouri wrote about peers' [experiences with teen pregnancy and the impact of divorce](#). "When they published the articles in the school-sponsored and funded newspaper *The Spectrum*, the principal deleted the pages that contained the stories prior to publication without telling the students," explains the [U.S. Courts summary](#). The Court ruled in favor of the principal, in a 5-3 ruling.

If you teach outside of the US, feel free to use this case or select a case or event relevant to your geographic context.

"STEP INSIDE" THINKING ROUTINE

- Ask students to review the case using [Supreme Court Historical Society resources](#) and the [U.S. Courts summary](#).
- Next, have them zoom in on key excerpts from the [majority opinion](#) and [dissenting opinion](#) to get a sense of both sides of the argument. Ask them to consider their own opinion, after carefully reviewing the materials.
- Once students have taken a side, ask them to follow the "Step Inside" framework and think only about the "other side"—meaning those in favor of the ruling if they, themselves, are against it, or vice versa. Have them write, then talk with a peer or the class, in response to the following questions:
 - *What can this person see, observe, or notice?*
 - *What might the person know, understand, hold true, or believe?*
 - *What might the person care deeply about?*
 - *What might the person wonder about or question?*

In conclusion, ask students to write or talk about how examining and empathizing with "the other side" changed their thinking. How might they tweak their own argument, having now thought more deeply about those in opposition to them? Invite them to write a 2-3 sentence thesis statement for or against the ruling, with this deepened perspective in mind.

Questions? Feedback?

Reach out to educators@writetheworld.org

The Supreme Court Historical Society was thrilled with the results of The Rule of Law Writing Contest, this first partnership with Write the World. The reach of the program and the quality of student submissions is extraordinary. This competition, advancing both writing and civics worldwide, is exactly what is needed in these times. As Chief Justice Roberts points out, "Justice is not inevitable." We will be back next year with our second competition and are looking forward to what is to come.

Martha Meehan-Cohen
Chief Operating Officer



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