



## Criteria for Scoring Essays

	<b>1 point</b>	<b>2 points</b>	<b>3 points</b>	<b>4 points</b>
Ability to follow directions, use of proper grammar and spelling	Typed or handwritten in ink, 300-500 words. Poor spelling, grammar and punctuation; uses incomplete sentences.	Typed or handwritten in ink, 300-500 words. Refers to theme. Uses complete sentences, but grammar, spelling and punctuation are poor.	Typed or handwritten in ink, 300-500 words. Refers to theme. Uses complete sentences. Uses average grammar, spelling and punctuation	Typed or handwritten in ink, 300-500 words. Refers to theme. Uses complete sentences. Uses excellent grammar, spelling and punctuation.
Originality	Shows no originality.	Shows some originality, but poor execution.	Shows some originality with average execution.	Uses a completely original approach to the topic and an outstanding execution.
Clear position	Position statement is unclear, ambiguous or missing.	Takes a position, but switches in middle of argument.	Takes a clear position.	Articulates a clear position with depth and specificity.
Supports position by using core democratic values *	Identifies a core democratic value that does not apply or does not identify a core democratic value.	Identifies at least one core democratic value that applies, but does not tell how it supports their position.	Supports position with an application of at least one core democratic value.	Supports position with a clear, in-depth reasoned application of at least one core democratic value.
Supports position with knowledge of history, geography, civics or economics.	Does not identify a piece of social studies content knowledge.	Identifies a piece of social studies content knowledge but does not use it to support their position.	Supports position with one (or more) logically related piece(s) of social studies content knowledge.	Supports and extensively elaborates position with logically related piece(s) of social studies content knowledge.
Uses researched information to compare/contrast or supports position. **	Does not identify or use any accurate researched information.	Identifies a piece of accurate logically related researched information, but does not use in a logical manner.	Uses logically related researched information to support position or to compare/contrast.	Uses and extensively elaborates upon logically related researched information.

\* Core democratic values of American Constitutional democracy include the following constitutional principles: the rule of law, separation of powers, checks and balances, representative government, individual rights, federalism, civilian control of the military, and freedom of religion. Fundamental beliefs include: life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, truth, justice, equality, diversity, popular sovereignty, and patriotism.

\*\* Most of the given "should" questions had Supreme Court cases listed for students to use in their research. While it is difficult for 6th - 8th graders to read and understand a Supreme Court opinion, it is hoped that they will learn how to look one up (or an article that talks about the case) and at least attempt to read it. The opinions and their footnotes and background information may provide students with a fact scenario to compare/contrast, explanations of certain religious practices, or other information that students can related to their "should" questions. Sources other than supreme court cases such as books, articles, encyclopedias are acceptable for other "should" questions. However, researched information may not be from the Constitution or the Declaration of Independence as these are sources of core democratic values. The researched information must be separate from the core democratic value and social studies content requirements.