

2026 RULE OF LAW ESSAY CONTEST FOR BC SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS: SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

2026 Essay Topic

The topic for the Law Society of British Columbia's 2026 Rule of Law essay contest is:

In a famous case in 1958 called *Roncarelli v. Duplessis*, the Supreme Court of Canada held that the rule of law was a fundamental postulate of the Canadian constitutional structure. What do you think the Court meant by that, and give examples of how the Court's judgment may still be relevant today.

Eligibility Criteria and Submission Guidelines

The essay contest is open to all Grade 11 or 12 students who are enrolled in the 2025-2026 academic year and any secondary school students currently enrolled in Law 12, Political Studies 12, Social Justice 12, Social Studies 11 or a similar course in British Columbia.

Deadline for submissions is 11:59pm Sunday, April 12, 2026. Late entries will not be accepted.

- Students will be expected to submit an original essay that addresses the topic and demonstrates their understanding of the Rule of Law, its principles, and its significance in civil society.
- The submission must be the original work of the student. Research, writing and editing must be done solely by the student, including without assistance from generative AI models such as ChatGPT or others.
- The essay must be a minimum of 1000 words to a maximum of 1500 words.

- Students must cite at least 3 varied sources such as reference materials, government documents, legislation, and published articles in the body of the essay using any academically acceptable referencing style, and must include a bibliography.
- Citations or bibliography are not included in the word count.
- After a submission is received, further submissions on the same topic with revisions will not be accepted.
- Essays must be typed and double spaced, and include a cover sheet with the student's full name, name of school and grade, confirmation of enrollment, email address, and phone number. Confirmation of enrollment can be noted by including the student's student number, school name and teacher when the essay is submitted.¹
- Entries must be submitted as a PDF or MS Word document by email to the Law Society at essay@lsbc.org or by mail to the Law Society of British Columbia, 845 Cambie Street, Vancouver BC V6B 4Z9, to the attention of the Policy and Planning Department.

Judging Criteria

Entries will be judged on a clear expression of ideas, an understanding of the topic, originality, and excellence in writing.

- Content 70%, presentation 30%.
- A winner and runner-up will be chosen by a judging panel representing the Law Society and the education community.
- Any submissions that do not comply with the eligibility criteria and submission guidelines will not be considered.
- The Law Society reserves the right to not make an award of a first place or runner-up if, in the estimation of the judging panel, there are no submissions of sufficient quality to merit such awards.

¹ This information is collected under authority of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, RSBC 1996, c. 165, s. 26(c). The information will be used for the purposes of determining eligibility for the rule of law essay contest for BC secondary students. If you have any questions about the collection, use or disclosure of this information, contact the Manager, Privacy, Records and Information Management, Law Society of British Columbia, 845 Cambie Street, Vancouver, BC, V6B 4Z9, Tel. (604) 669-2533.

Award Presentation and Publication

- The winner will receive an award of \$1000; the runner-up will receive \$500.
- The winner and runner-up will be invited to attend, by Zoom or another virtual platform, a meeting of the Law Society's Governing Board (the Benchers) for a presentation of their award.
- Both the winning and runner-up essays will be profiled on the Law Society's website. The Law Society will issue a news release announcing the names of the winner and runner-up.