



# If I led my community...

## Tip Sheet for Students

Thank you for entering our essay contest, *"If I Led My Community..."* – and best of luck. Here are some things that mayors, councilors and select board members in your community can and cannot do.

### THEY CAN:

- Work with fellow elected officials to decide where businesses and housing should go.
- Apply for grants (most likely from the state or federal government) to make parks nicer, roads safer and introduce programs to serve residents.
- Work with the council or select board to decide how the municipality should spend its money on things like: fire and police protection; street paving and maintenance; recycling; parks and recreation; and, town or city employee salaries.
- Make laws or "ordinances" that discourage people from littering, smoking and the like.
- Recommend hiring key municipal employees such as managers, police and fire chiefs (if applicable), building inspectors and others.

### THEY CANNOT:

- Pass ordinances to ignore or override state or federal laws.
- Give everyone money, fancy cars or free trips to theme parks.
- Make a law that says parents or teachers need to be less strict.

### RESEARCH HELP:

- The Maine Municipal Association website is a great place to learn more about municipal government before you start writing. Go to <https://www.memun.org/Training/Citizen-Education>.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT  
*begins with* **YOU**

Maine Municipal Association  
7th Grade Essay Contest

# Contest Rules & Judging Criteria

## TOPIC

If I led my community, how would I make my city or town a better place to live?

Start the essay with the phrase: "If I led my community..."

## SUBMISSION DATE

On or before FRIDAY, JANUARY 24, 2025

## PRIZES!

### Students:

\$250 Gift Card for the top three essays

### Teachers of Participating Students:

Names to be entered into a drawing for a gift card to be used for classroom supplies.

## CONTEST RULES

- Each Maine 7th grade student during the 2024-2025 school year may submit one essay.
- Essays may be typed or handwritten, but they **must** be legible.
- Length should be 500 words or less, and begin with the phrase: "If I led my community..."

- One entry form may be submitted with an entire class's grouped essays, but each student's name and the teacher's and school's name **MUST** be in the upper right-hand corner of the first page of each student's essay. This is crucial, as during the judging process, the essays get separated from the group they arrive in.
- By submitting an essay, permission is given for Maine Municipal Association to use it for publication purposes.

## JUDGING CRITERIA

- Understanding of local government - Are the major ideas about the role of a government leader understood by the student?
- Proper use of grammar and punctuation - Does the essay contain proper spelling, grammar, and punctuation?
- Clarity of thought - Is the essay well organized and clearly thought out?
- Originality - Does the student demonstrate curiosity and creative thinking?

## Official Entry Form

School Name: \_\_\_\_\_

School Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

The number of essays attached is: \_\_\_\_\_

*In signing this I certify that each submitted essay is the student's own original work and we agree to comply with the contest rules.*

Signature of Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

*By submitting an essay, permission is given for Maine Municipal Association to use it for publication purposes.*

**Completed entry form and essays must be postmarked by JANUARY 24, 2025 to:**

**Maine Municipal Association  
Essay Contest  
60 Community Drive  
Augusta, ME 04330**

**Questions?  
Please contact  
Carol Weigelt at 207-623-8428.**