



**Subject:** 2021-2022 Oratorical Contest

**Date:** 12 November 2021

**From:** Department Oratorical Committee

**To:** Post Oratorical Chairs

Preparations are underway for the 2022 American Legion High School Oratorical Scholarship Program! Last year scholarships exceeding a combined total of \$14,000 were awarded by the Department of Oregon to high school students in Oregon winning post, district and department oratorical contests.

The Department of Oregon increased the scholarship awards significantly last year as well as revised the contest format. This year we look forward to building upon that by increasing youth participation at each level and further strengthening our program visibility. We cannot, however, be successful without you. In advance, thank you for the outstanding work you do! We look forward to working together for another exciting year of oratorical contests and in developing our youth to be contributing citizens to our state and nation.

Getting started –

1. Establish the date, time and location for your post contest in January. Students have many extracurricular events so establish your date as soon as possible so that it can be shared.
2. Notify the district and department oratorical chairmen once you establish your contest date.
3. Review the contents of the oratorical chairman's packet and the student/contestant's packet.
4. Spread the news of the contest!
  - Contact your local high schools and schedule a time to meet with school officials. (*Meeting in person is preferred; however, given current restrictions on gathering, a video conference or teleconference will work.*)
  - Meet with the students and school leaders to share details of the scholarships available, contest rules, and the date, time and location of the post contest.
  - Edit the oratorical media release and public service announcements provided for you with details of your post and post contest and share it with your local news outlets.
5. Begin developing your pool of volunteers that will assist in conducting a successful post contest!

Communication is vital in growing our program participation and in conducting a well-organized contest!

After you have contacted high schools and students, continue to maintain routine and clear communications to ensure everyone is current on contest dates, times and locations, as well as, the required documentation – the Acknowledgement Form and the Certification Form – which must be completed and submitted on time at each level of the contest.

**Important:** Given the current, and varying, restrictions on gathering and in social distancing practices, it is possible a virtual contest may be conducted in place of an in-person contest. Additional details will be provided as warranted if/as any changes are made.

An excellent source of information for The American Legion Oratorical High School Scholarship Program may be found online at the national American Legion and Department of Oregon websites.

Oratorical Dashboard: <https://www.legion.org/oratorical>

- An excellent starting point for oratorical information! The dashboard provides links for details to About the Contest; How to Participate; Assigned Topics; State Contests; National Finals; and, much more.

Oratorical Resources: <https://www.legion.org/oratorical/resources>

- This link accesses resources such as Contest rules; Chairman's Guide; volunteer tools; past contestant videos; and, more.

Department of Oregon Oratorical Program: <https://orlegion.org/oratorical/>

- This link accesses the required forms for the post, district and department level contests, as well as, contest details and official rules. (*Information will continue to be updated as it becomes available.*)

Contest Forms – Forms may be duplicated as needed for students and contest management. The completed original forms will be forwarded as warranted through each level of the contest.

- *Oregon Oratorical Contest Acknowledgement Form*
- *Certification Form*
- *Oratorical Contest Summary Form*
- *Post Chairman's Contest Survey Form*

**Students:** Will submit the completed original *Oregon Oratorical Contest Acknowledgement Form*, the *Certification Form*, and a copy of their prepared oration, to the Post Oratorical Chair by December 1, 2020; or, prior to the post oratorical contest in conducted earlier.

**Post Oratorical Chairman:** Upon completion of the Post Contest, immediately forward the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> place finishers' original *Oregon Oratorical Contest Acknowledgement Form*, *Certification Form*, a copy of their Prepared Oration, along with the completed *Oratorical Contest Summary Form* and *Post Chairman's Contest Survey Form* to the District Oratorical Chairman no later than one week prior to the District Oratorical Contest date.

**District Oratorical Chairman:** Upon completion of the District Contest, immediately forward the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> place finishers' original *Oregon Oratorical Contest Acknowledgement Form*, *Certification Form*, a copy of their Prepared Oration, along with the completed *Oratorical Contest Summary Form* to the Department Oratorical Chairman at Department of Oregon no later than two weeks prior to the Department Contest date.

**The Department Contest is tentatively scheduled for Saturday, March 5 & 6 2022. The location is to be at Post 51 in Lebanon, Oregon.**

Dates, times and locations for Post and District Contests should be forwarded as soon as established to the Department Oratorical Chairman and Department Adjutant for distribution and publication in the Oregon Legionnaire.

Lastly, enclosed please find the Post Chairman Oratorical Packet and High School Contestant Packet of materials for your use and distribution. Digital copies of these packets will be available on the department website when it gets posted to further aid you in distribution to contestants, parents and schools. Below is a listing of the contents of those packets, respectively.

Post Chairman Oratorical Packet

1. Oratorical Program Chairman's Guide
2. Oratorical Program Information
3. Oratorical Contest Explanation
4. Oratorical Rules Brochure
5. Oratorical Promo Brochure
6. The Prepared Oration Information Sheet
7. Assigned Topics Information Sheet
8. Oratorical Contest Acknowledgement Form
9. Certification Form
10. Contest Summary Form
11. Post Chair's Contest Survey Form
12. Oratorical Suggested News Release
13. Oratorical Suggested PSA

High School Contestant Packet

1. Contestant Welcome letter
2. Oratorical Program Information
3. Oratorical Contest Explanation
4. Oratorical Rules Brochure
5. Oratorical Promo Brochure
6. The Prepared Oration Information Sheet
7. Assigned Topics Information Sheet
8. Oratorical Contest Acknowledgement Form
9. Certification Form

For more information contact: Maria Tye, Department Oratorical Committee Chairman  
Ph: 281-785-5402 Email: corey0071@gmail.com

Again, thank you for your outstanding efforts in supporting our youth in this important youth program. With your help we continue to make a positive difference in our youth...and in our future.

**Enclosures**

Post Chairman Oratorical Packet  
High School Contestant Packet

**Cc:**

Flynn Phillips, Department Adjutant  
Gea Clausier, Chairman, Department Americanism Commission  
District Oratorical Chairmen  
District Commanders  
Department Oratorical Committee

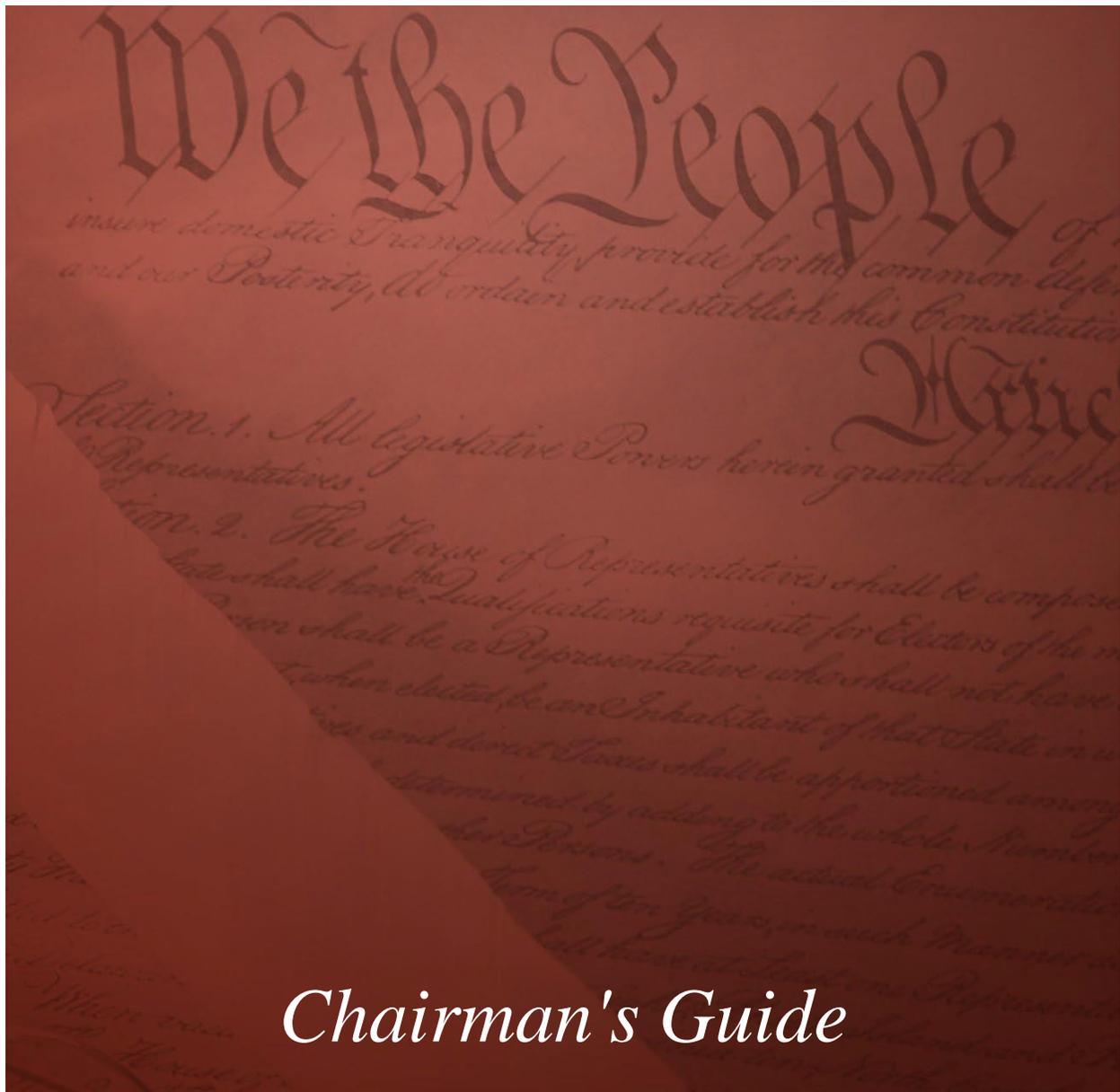




The American Legion

# HIGH SCHOOL ORATORICAL SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

*A Constitutional Speech Contest*



*Chairman's Guide*

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# Introduction

This guide has been developed to assist Oratorical program chairmen at all levels in organizing and conducting a successful contest. It is intended only as an aid and should not be used as a promotional piece, distributed to schools or given to prospective participants. To improve this revision of the *Chairman's Guide*, we have incorporated material previously included in the *Oratorical Contest Guidelines Manual*.

Arrangements for contests leading to the department finals are the responsibility of each department. In some states, rules and regulations below the department finals level may vary from those used in the national contest; contest chairmen at the post and district levels should be familiar with their respective department's rules.

When preparing for and conducting an Oratorical contest, remember that you are serving young men and women. They are the ones most affected by mistakes, so be thoroughly prepared and familiar with the rules.

The American Legion wants every high school to provide an opportunity for its students to participate in this citizenship education program. However, it is up to local American Legion posts to make the program work.

## Chapter 1

# Contest history and purpose

## History

William A. Kitchen, a past department commander of Missouri, is credited with founding The American Legion's National High School Oratorical Contest. He experimented with the contest in a few high schools in and around Kansas City, Mo., during the 1934-1935 school year. He went on to become the first Department of Missouri Oratorical chairman and conducted a statewide Oratorical program in 1935 and 1936.

Kitchen encouraged The American Legion to adopt the Missouri Oratorical Contest plan as a national program. The first national contests were held in 1938, with 11 departments and 4,000 participants competing. At the national finals in Norman, Okla., John Janson of Phoenix won first place. The national finals returned to Missouri for its 50th anniversary in 1987, hosted by Lee Summit Senior High School in Lee Summit.

In 1997, the week-long regional, sectional and national finals format was changed to a weekend competition of quarterfinal, semifinal and national final contests in The American Legion's headquarters city of Indianapolis. In 2007, the contest's official name became the American Legion High School Oratorical Scholarship Program – A Constitutional Speech Contest.

Since its beginning, the contest has awarded more than \$3 million in scholarships to participants at the national level of competition. It currently awards \$203,500 annually to department winners competing at the national level. Thousands more are awarded in scholarships to winners at the department, district and post levels.

## Purpose

The Oratorical program was developed primarily to instill a deeper knowledge and appreciation of the U.S. Constitution in high school students. Participants also grow in leadership ability, their capacity to think and speak clearly and intelligently, and understanding of the rights, responsibilities, obligations and privileges of U.S. citizens.

The program also assists students in affording a college education, with the first-place winner receiving \$25,000 and the next two finishers taking home \$22,500 and \$20,000, respectively. First-round participants in the national contest receive a \$2,000 scholarship. Second-round participants who do not advance to the final round receive an additional \$2,000 scholarship.

## Past national champions

For a complete list of past national champions, visit [legion.org/oratorical/champions](http://legion.org/oratorical/champions).

## Chapter Two

# Promoting your contest

## Working with the National Speech and Debate Association

The American Legion has a corporate relationship with the National Speech & Debate Association (NSDA). Your department chairman has contact information for your local NSDA representative, usually a high school teacher or speech and debate coach. This is an opportunity to promote the Oratorical program to local students who already participate in speech competitions. Students earn double NSDA points when they compete in an American Legion Oratorical contest.

## Working with your schools

To effectively promote the Oratorical program in your school and community, post chairmen and others involved with the contest must be in contact with school officials.

During the first visit with school staff, determine the best methods of informing students about the Oratorical program. Consider addressing them directly through assemblies, classes or other gatherings if the school allows it. You can also try school bulletin boards, the school newspaper and social media. Use any and every opportunity to tell students about the Oratorical program.

The more you spread the word in your community and promote participation, the better chance you'll have of gaining participants. Ask other post members, your Auxiliary unit and your Sons of The American Legion squadron to help get the word out.

Another way to build interest is invite a youth audience to your contest, with a goal of attracting future participants. If the contest is conducted during school hours, it may be possible to schedule it at a high school.

Also, get local elementary students studying the Constitution by sponsoring essay and speech contests with less stringent requirements than the Oratorical contest. Involvement at an early age could attract youth once they become eligible.

Do not overlook parents when seeking support for the Oratorical program. Contact the PTA or a similar organization to explain the contest and request its support during a meeting.

## Suggested talking points

When addressing an audience, your mission is to persuade those in attendance that the Oratorical program is worth their time to participate or promote. Here are some suggested talking points for school assemblies and civic groups. Adapt them to fit your needs.

- Ladies and gentlemen, this opportunity to appear before you is an honor and privilege for me as an American Legion member.

- We Legionnaires are proud of our organization, and we are particularly proud of our youth activities, which do so much for the development of our nation's young people. Few organizations can match in size and scope the youth service program carried on by The American Legion under the direction of its Americanism Commission.
- This occasion is an opportunity for you as well as for me, as I explain an American Legion program that can benefit high school students educationally and financially.
- Established in 1938, the American Legion High School Oratorical Scholarship Program is designed to instill in high school students a greater knowledge and appreciation of the U.S. Constitution. Participants also grow in leadership ability, their capacity to think and speak clearly and intelligently, and understanding of the rights, responsibilities, obligations and privileges of U.S. citizens.
- Each contestant must give a prepared oration on some phase of the Constitution, emphasizing a citizen's duties and obligations to our government.
- Some states require the "assigned topic" portion at local levels. Refer to your respective state rules.
- Include remarks on how and where to register and the dates and locations for the contest.
- To date, The American Legion has awarded more than \$3 million in scholarships to Oratorical contestants at the national level. The three national finalists receive \$25,000, \$22,500, and \$20,000 respectively. In addition, contestants who win their state finals contest and represent their states at the national contest receive no less than \$2,000.
- Awards offered by Post \_\_\_\_\_ include \_\_\_\_\_.  
\_\_\_\_\_. Other awards offered in the state of \_\_\_\_\_ include \_\_\_\_\_.
- America's future depends on the success of today's youth. Knowledge of the Constitution will help prepare them to meet the challenges of tomorrow's world.
- Thank you, ladies and gentlemen, for your kind attention.

# Chapter Three

## Rules and regulations

### Department contests

Arrangements for contests leading to the department finals shall be the responsibility of each department (state) organization of The American Legion. For levels of competition prior to the department finals, the rules and regulations set forth in this guide are not mandatory; they are offered as a guideline. However, all department finals contests shall conform with national contest procedures, rules and regulations if the department wishes its finalist to compete in the national finals.

A winner certified to The American Legion's National Americanism Division by a department that did not conduct its final competition in conformity with the rules and regulations may, in the judgment of the Americanism Division's director or the director's representative, be disqualified from the national contest.

Each department may certify one contestant for the national contest. If the department winner is unable to compete for any reason, the department's first runner-up may be substituted following approval by The American Legion's Americanism Commission. A department first runner-up accepted into the national contest is entitled to all national awards and compensation that the department winner would have received had he or she participated.

Department chairmen are required to review all scorecards from the department final within 48 hours to ensure that the appropriate winner was certified based on official rules, regulations, scoring and tiebreaking procedures. If a mistake is found within 48 hours, the chairman will contact National Headquarters at **(317) 630-1204** for further instruction. Exactly 48 hours after department final results are announced, those results become official and cannot be changed.

Department winners must be certified to the Americanism Division by the certification date listed in the current year's Official Rules brochure, which is updated annually and online at [legion.org/oratorical/resources](http://legion.org/oratorical/resources). Department Oratorical chairmen and department adjutants will receive a link via email to certify their department winners.

### Scholarships

Scholarship awards are presented to the three finalists in the national contest's final round as follows: first place \$25,000, second place \$22,500, third place \$20,000. Each department winner who is certified for and participates in the first round of the national contest will receive a \$2,000 scholarship. Each first-round winner who participates in the second round but does not advance to the final round will receive an additional \$2,000 scholarship to pursue education beyond high school.

Scholarships awarded by The American Legion to the three national finalists, department winners and first-round winners eliminated during the second round of competition may be used to attend any U.S. college or university.

Contestants must give both their prepared oration and assigned topic discourse to receive the scholarship.

In addition to scholarships awarded by the national organization, several hundred scholarships are awarded to Oratorical participants at post, district/county and department levels.

## **Eligibility**

Eligible participants in The American Legion's High School Oratorical Scholarship Program shall be citizens of or lawful permanent residents of the United States.

Contestants must be bona fide students, described as any student younger than 20 on the date of the national contest who is presently enrolled in a high school or junior high school (public, parochial, military, private or homeschool), commencing with grade 9 and terminating with grade 12. Students must be enrolled in high school or junior high school when participating at any level of the program.

High school students who graduate early during the school year are eligible to compete if they are not enrolled in a college, university, trade school or other institution of higher learning at the time of the department finals contest.

Contestants must be legally domiciled within or attend an educational institution within the department (state) where they enter competition. Contestants can enter competition in only one department.

The three national finalists will be ineligible to participate again.

## **The prepared oration**

The prepared oration must be on some aspect of the U.S. Constitution, with emphasis on citizens' duties and obligations to our government. The same subject and oration used in the department contest must be used in the national contest.

The prepared oration must be the original effort of each contestant and not take up less than eight minutes or more than 10 minutes for delivery. It must be delivered in English.

Contestants may have in their possession a copy of their prepared oration in the first holding room, electronic or hard copy. They may consult the copy until they exit the first holding room to begin the contest, at which time it will be surrendered to the contest official monitoring the first holding room.

Quotations must be indicated as such. Where quotations are more than 10 words in length, the author's name must be given in the manuscript and cited orally.

## **Assigned topic discourse**

The assigned topic discourse must not be less than three minutes or more than five minutes for delivery. The purpose of the assigned topic discourse is to test the speaker's knowledge of the subject, the extent of his or her research, and the ability to discuss the topic as related to the basic principles of government under the U.S. Constitution.

The assigned topic shall be drawn by the contest official in full view of the audience immediately before delivery of the last speaker's prepared oration and will be made known to the audience and each contestant approximately five minutes prior to the time of delivery. Generally, the assigned topic is a constitutional amendment; it could be the entire amendment or specific articles. Each year, the list of assigned topics is made available prior to the contest and posted online at [legion.org/oratorical/topics](http://legion.org/oratorical/topics).

Contestants may have in their possession their assigned topic notes in the first holding room, electronic or hard copy. They may consult these notes until they exit the first holding room to begin the contest. At that time any notes will be surrendered to the official monitoring the first holding room.

Quotations must be indicated as such. Where quotations are more than 10 words in length, the author's name must be given in the manuscript and cited orally.

## **No foreign languages or songs**

All contestants at each contest level are required to speak in the English language.

It is acceptable to utilize or incorporate short phrases of a foreign language into the prepared oration and/or assigned topic to develop the argument, establish a point, etc. However, the vast majority of the prepared oration and/or assigned topic must be delivered in English.

Singing a song in any language is not permitted and will result in immediate disqualification. The contestant may, however, quote a verse(s) of a song provided proper attribution is made.

## **Dress**

Uniforms of any kind are not permitted. Appropriate business attire is required. Contestants are not permitted to wear awards and medals from previous competition.

## **Contest regulations**

A drawing shall be held by the official in charge of the contest to determine the order in which the contestants will appear. The contest chairman shall announce the title of the contestant's

prepared oration immediately after introducing him or her as contestant No. 1, contestant No. 2, etc. The chairman will request the audience refrain from applause until the judges have made their decision.

A raised platform is not compulsory but strongly recommended. The use of notes, amplification, lectern or speaker's stand by contestants or prompting in any manner is not permitted. Props are not permitted.

The use of any type of electronic/digital data gathering, receiving and/or transmitting equipment in any form by contestants or members of the audience is prohibited.

The time allotted for contestants to deliver their prepared oration shall be between eight and 10 minutes, and between three and five minutes for the assigned topic.

The contest chairman will name an official timer who will keep an accurate time record of each contestant. The timekeeper will be on the main floor in full view of the contestants. The timekeeper shall begin timing each contestant at the start of the prepared oration. The timer should be equipped with a stopwatch and time cards for the prepared oration with the figures 8, 9 and 10. When eight minutes have been used, the time warning card with the figure 8 shall be placed in full view of the speaker, following with 9 and 10 as the speaker progresses. The same procedure shall be used with cards bearing 3, 4 and 5 during the assigned topic discourse. The contest chairman shall announce the time used by each contestant for the prepared oration and the assigned topic immediately after each contestant speaks.

Contestants will remain in a private room where the discourse of other speakers cannot be heard until it is their turn to speak; they will be under the supervision of a person appointed by the contest chairman. As the contestants conclude their prepared orations, they will return to a soundproof waiting room. As speakers conclude their assigned topic discourse, they shall not be allowed to associate with contestants who have not fulfilled the assigned topic requirement.

About five minutes prior to the time of the delivery of the assigned topic discourse, contestant No. 1 will be informed of the topic drawn for the assigned topic and shall retire to privacy under the direction of a person appointed by the contest chairman, whose duty it shall be to see that no contestant is permitted to consult any text or notes having any connection with the subject matter upon which he or she is to speak, other than the actual words of the topic on the card drawn.

Succeeding contestants will be called on in the order in which they previously appeared. They shall also, in turn, be informed of the topic of the assigned topic discourse and escorted to privacy in the manner provided for contestant No. 1.

The contest chairman will be expected to introduce each contestant by name immediately before announcing the judges' decision.

## Judges

Judges are an integral part of an Oratorical contest. Their qualifications are considered carefully, as the decision of the judges is final and must be reached without bias. Impartial judging in all contests is the key to fairness and success of the program, which results in the selection of a national champion.

All department finals and the national contest must utilize five judges. No publicity shall be given to the names of judges in advance of the contest. During the contest, judges will be seated in different locations and render their final decision without consultation with other judges or any other person.

Judges will be advised that a lack of emphasis in the prepared oration and assigned topic discourse must result in their downgrading the contestant. Judges are permitted to downgrade a contestant up to a maximum of 10 points for failure to speak on the U.S. Constitution. The contest chairman will announce any violation of time for each contestant. A penalty of one point for each minute, or fraction thereof, shall be assessed against the contestant's total score.

Following the last assigned topic discourse, the judges, timekeepers, tabulators and contest chairman may proceed to a private room for final review and tabulation.

## Tabulators

The contest chairman will appoint no less than three tabulators for the department finals. It is their responsibility to review the judges' scorecards to be certain they are fully tabulated and signed before they are submitted for final tabulation.

## Tabulation procedures

Judges' scorecards will be numbered 1 through 5 in the upper right-hand corner. Utilizing the tabulation card, the tabulators will enter the judges' position number for each contestant (by speaking order). When this is accomplished for all five judges' scorecards, the contestants' scores are totaled. When totaling the tabulation card, the contestant receiving the low score will be declared the winner. (**Example:** If one contestant receives two firsts, two seconds and a third on the judges' scorecards and tabulation card, his or her total position number points will be nine; if the second contestant receives two firsts, two seconds, and a fourth, his or her total position number points will be 10. Even though the second contestant receives two firsts, his or her total position number point score of 10 will place them second.

## Tiebreaking procedures

If, after tabulation of the judges' position number, two or more contestants receive the same placement point score (not total points) total, the tie shall be broken by comparing the position number of scores of the five judges for the tied contestants. One of the contestants will be the

winner over the other by a majority of the judges' position number when only the placement of the tied contestants is considered.

In the examples on below and on the following page, the highest rank in record of choice (one being the highest) for each judge is circled. The contestant that receives the majority of the judges' record of choice will be declared the winner.

## TWO-WAY TIEBREAKING EXAMPLE

Contestants - Record of Choice

| Judges | 1  | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5  |
|--------|----|----|----|----|----|
| 1      | ①  | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5  |
| 2      | 3  | ②  | 5  | 1  | 4  |
| 3      | 5  | ④  | 1  | 3  | 2  |
| 4      | 2  | ①  | 3  | 4  | 5  |
| 5      | ①  | 3  | 2  | 5  | 4  |
| Totals | 12 | 12 | 14 | 17 | 20 |

  
**WINNER**

In the two way example, Contestant No. 2 is the winner since that contestant received the highest ranking in the majority of the judges' record of choice.

## THREE-WAY TIEBREAKING EXAMPLE

Contestants - Record of Choice

| Judges | 1         | 2         | 3         | 4  | 5  |
|--------|-----------|-----------|-----------|----|----|
| 1      | 3         | 2         | ①         | 5  | 4  |
| 2      | ①         | 3         | 4         | 2  | 5  |
| 3      | 4         | 3         | ②         | 1  | 5  |
| 4      | 2         | 3         | ①         | 4  | 5  |
| 5      | 2         | ①         | 4         | 3  | 5  |
| Totals | <b>12</b> | <b>12</b> | <b>12</b> | 15 | 24 |

  
**WINNER**

In the three way example, Contestant No. 3 is the winner since that contestant received the highest ranking in the majority of the judges' record of choice.

The decision of the judges shall be final.

Judges' scorecards for department finals and the national contest will not be divulged to anyone at the site of the contest. All national contest judges' scorecards become the property of The American Legion National Headquarters.

### National finals contest

For information regarding the national finals, visit [legion.org/oratorical/finals](http://legion.org/oratorical/finals).

### Travel expenses

The national organization of The American Legion will pay the travel and lodging expenses of department winners and one chaperone to the national contest. All contestants **younger than 18** must be accompanied by a parent or legal guardian. The preference for those **older than 18** is that they be accompanied by a parent or legal guardian as well.

The national organization of The American Legion will not assume liability for personal injury, property damage or loss sustained by any contestant or chaperone en route to or from the contest; however, The American Legion does carry a nominal group accident insurance policy on contestants certified into the national contest.

National finals contestants will travel by an air carrier selected by The American Legion or personal automobile if previously approved by the national organization of The American Legion.

## **TV and radio**

Live television and radio broadcasts are permitted in all contests as well as recording or other types of media for later showing, provided: 1) the lighting and other site conditions are the same for all contestants; 2) the recording or broadcasts shall in no way distract the contestants or interfere with the pre-announced scheduled time of the contest; 3) the normal speaking voice of the contestant is not interfered with or amplified within the auditorium; and 4) The American Legion is in no way financially obligated without its prior approval.

## Chapter Four

# Suggested contest script

### Opening remarks

Good morning, ladies and gentlemen, and welcome to the (contest level) of The American Legion High School Oratorical Scholarship Program.

Before we begin the contest, I ask that Legionnaires uncover and everyone please rise for the invocation given by \_\_\_\_\_.

### INVOCATION

Please join \_\_\_\_\_ in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

### PLEDGE

You may re-cover.

### Audience briefing

This is the \_\_\_\_\_ annual American Legion High School Oratorical Scholarship Program Contest, and this morning you will be hearing \_\_\_\_\_ speakers. I have several introductions, but I will save them until after the conclusion of the contest. You will notice that the contestants are not in the auditorium at this time. Throughout the competition portion, they will appear on stage only to deliver their respective orations.

In fairness to all contestants, I ask that you do not applaud until the contest is completed. I would also remind you that there will be no photos or video during these proceedings. It would be a good idea to put your cameras and phones away until the end of the contest. There will be an opportunity to take photos at the end of this round. In addition, if anyone in the audience is carrying a phone or any other electronic device, please make sure that it is turned off. I would also ask that anyone wearing an alarm type watch deactivate it.

Our speakers will be introduced by number only. Prompting in any manner is not permitted. Doing so may result in the disqualification of the speaker. Each speaker is about to deliver an eight- to 10-minute prepared oration on some phase of the Constitution of the United States. The contestants are not allowed to use notes, a podium or a sound system.

The contestants will be shown a time card at the \_\_\_\_\_ th, \_\_\_\_\_ th, and \_\_\_\_\_ th minute mark of their oration. If there is a violation of the time requirement, a penalty of one point for each minute, or fraction thereof, shall be assessed against the contestant's total score.

## Prepared oration

There will be a short pause between contestants to allow the judges time to mark their score cards. Before introducing the last speaker, I will ask a member of the audience to draw an assigned topic from the four provided. When the last contestant has spoken for seven minutes on the prepared oration, contestant No. 1 will be taken to a private room and given the topic card and allowed five minutes to prepare his or her assigned topic presentation. I will read the assigned topic to you before contestant No. 1 is introduced. All contestants then speak for three to five minutes on the same subject.

If everyone is ready, I will call for contestant No. 1. The title of his/her oration is \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

(ORATION IS GIVEN)

The time for contestant No. 1 is \_\_\_ minutes and \_\_\_\_\_ seconds.

There is (no) time penalty.

(PAUSE)

(Follow the same procedure for the remaining contestants.)

## Assigned topic discourse

For the past five minutes, contestant No. 1 has been in a private room preparing for the assigned topic presentation. The topic the contestants will address during this portion of the contest is (read the topic).

Now, if everyone is ready (pause and look around), I will call for contestant No. 1.

(ASSIGNED TOPIC IS GIVEN)

The time for contestant No. 1 is \_\_\_ minutes and \_\_\_\_\_ seconds. There is (no) time penalty.

(Follow the same procedure for the remaining contestants.)

## Introductions and winner announcements

This concludes the contest. Will the judges and tabulators please go directly to the tabulation room for determination of the contest results?

After the contest is completed, introduce judges and contestants by name, city and state. Make any other introductions at this time.

Announce the winners and present awards.

The contest may be closed with a benediction prayer if desired.

## Chapter Five

# Contest briefings

### Overview

To conduct a successful contest, everyone involved – contestants, judges, tabulators, timers, escorts, ushers, assigned topic preparation room monitors and audience members – must know what is expected of them. For many, it may be their first Oratorical contest.

The contest must be conducted by officials who thoroughly understand their jobs. We owe it to all to conduct the contest in as professional a manner as possible using well-informed, capable people. We do that by taking the time to thoroughly brief everyone associated with the contest.

### Contestants

Contestants should have an opportunity to visit the contest site and familiarize themselves with the facility and contest procedures. Along with their coaches and/or parents, they should be given time alone to test the contest room's acoustics. This often-overlooked practice helps reduce a contestant's fear of speaking in an unfamiliar place.

Take every opportunity to put contestants at ease while still keeping the contest on schedule.

The chairman or their designated representative should meet contestants as they arrive and welcome them to the contest. At a designated time, the contestants, their parents and coaches should meet as a group for the briefing.

Explain the contest operation to them. Don't assume they know the basics. Advise them they will have from eight to 10 minutes to deliver their prepared oration, that the drawing for the assigned topic will be just prior to the last speaker, and that each contestant will have five minutes to prepare for their three-to-five minute assigned topic presentation. If contestants are competing in their first contest, spend more time to make sure they thoroughly understand how it operates.

At times, distractions arise that are beyond the control of the contest officials. For example, determine what to do if a fire alarm should sound and advise contestants what will happen. Point out other possible distractions, like uncontrollable noise that might come from an adjoining room or even from the auditorium.

Advise contestants where the timekeepers will be seated and at what point they will raise the numbered timecards. It is standard procedure for the timers to raise the cards on the minute, not 15 seconds before or after the minute.

Advise contestants that the judges will be scattered throughout the audience, but under no circumstances should they be told their exact locations.

The chairman should give a thorough briefing, providing adequate time to answer any questions contestants might have and to make them comfortable in what may be a stressful environment.

Just prior to the start of the contest, the chairman should have contestants draw for speaking order. The best method is to have numbers written on small pieces of paper and have each of the contestants come forward, one at a time, and draw a number.

Throughout the briefing and prior to the actual contest, there should be no contact between the judges and the contestants. Always keep the two groups separated, preferably in different rooms.

Briefing contestants and others involved is important. Take the time to do it right.

## **Judges**

The general responsibilities of contest judges were covered earlier in Chapter Three. However, it is important they receive a thorough orientation prior to the contest.

Judges should be instructed to report to a private room away from the contestants and others attending the event at least 45 minutes prior to the contest so that adequate time is available for the briefing. The room in which the briefing is held should be off-limits to everyone except the judges and contest chairman (or the chairman's designated representative).

The chairman should welcome the judges, thank them for serving, and distribute the official scorecards, scratch tally sheets, pencils and clipboards. The chairman should cover all aspects of the contest, especially how it will be conducted and the procedures for arriving at a winner.

## **Scorecard and scoring system**

Judges should carefully study and understand the scorecard and scoring system. As a guideline, judges are encouraged to award their top choice (speaker) approximately 90 points with others proportionally lower. (This is particularly important in the event of a tie.)

Lack of emphasis in the prepared oration and the assigned topic on the duties and obligations of a citizen to our government must result in the judges downgrading the contestant involved. Judges may downgrade a contestant up to a total of 10 points for failure to speak on the Constitution.

Each judge shall insert the total number of points credited to the contestant and also insert in the placement column the placement for each contestant in accordance with the highest total point scores. If a tie exists in the total point scores on a judge's scorecard, the judge must adjust the scoring of the tied contestants so that no two contestants have the same total point score. This will enable the judge to rank one contestant above the other in the placement column.

Judges shall refrain from discussing any phase of the contest or their judging methods with anyone but the contest chairman following the contest.

**Note:** Judges should be provided study materials prior to the contest including the national rules brochure and a copy of the U.S. Constitution. But before that, the chairman should have given much thought to the selection of judges. Appointments should be based on ability and not on political or personal favor. Select them with care, then make sure they know their responsibilities.

## **Timekeepers**

There must be two timekeepers for the contest seated on the main floor and in full view of the contestants as they deliver their orations.

A chairman often takes for granted that a timer knows how to operate a stopwatch. There are several types of stopwatches, so the chairman should meet with the timekeepers to discuss their responsibilities and practice using the stopwatches.

The chairman also should ensure timers have the materials needed to fulfill their responsibilities, including two stopwatches, a timekeeper record card, time cards numbered 8, 9, and 10 for the prepared oration, and time cards numbered 3, 4, and 5 for the assigned topic discourse.

Timers must understand they are to begin timing when a contestant begins to speak and stop when the contestant ceases to speak. The timers will enter the exact time consumed on the timekeeper record card.

## **Tabulators**

The tabulation of judges' scorecards is crucial to avoid a scoring problem. The tabulators should have a thorough knowledge of the scoring process, be adept with a calculator (to check judges' addition totals), and be familiar with the tie-breaking procedures (discussed in Chapter Three). The tabulation process should be thorough and not expedited or abbreviated by time restraints. Before the results are announced, all tabulators and the contest chairman should be certain that the proper procedures were followed and the correct winner identified.

## **Ushers**

The number of ushers required for a contest must be determined by the contest chairman based on the number of doors affording entrance to the contest room or auditorium. The contest chairman should meet with ushers prior to the contest and advise them of their responsibilities, which are to assist in seating the audience and to distribute programs. They will control the entrance to the auditorium while a contestant is speaking and ensure there is no interruption.

## **Escorts**

Contest chairmen must determine the number of escorts needed for the contest. Some appoint one escort for each contestant; escorts remain with their designated contestants throughout the contest, except when they are giving their prepared oration or assigned topic presentation.

Other chairmen appoint one or two escorts to assist in moving contestants from the holding room to the auditorium stage. Either method is permitted and the layout of the contest facility or the availability of help will dictate which method will work best.

Ushers and escorts are often overlooked by chairmen when they give instructions. This should not happen, as every official's role is critical to the contest's overall operation.

### **Assigned topic preparation room monitor**

The assigned preparation room monitor's responsibility is to make sure that the contestant understands the five-minute preparation time and that no outside notes have been brought into the room. The contestant can use a blank sheet of paper to assemble thoughts, if desired. The contestant must return the scratch paper to the monitor following the preparation time. The door to the room should remain open, and the monitor will ensure that any noise in the area is kept to a minimum.

## Chapter Six

# Key points to remember

1. Make certain all contest officials understand their duties and responsibilities. Provide thorough instructions to the judges, making certain each understands the scoring system and timing/penalty requirement.
2. Instruct contestants regarding contest rules. Allow them time to inspect the contest site prior to the contest, including holding and assigned topic preparation rooms.
3. Announce that there will be no applause or photography during the contest, and that the audience must remain seated and quiet during a contestant's presentation.
4. Have contestants draw for speaking order and remain in a soundproof room until called on to speak. Contestants will be introduced by number and must return to the waiting room after their presentation.
5. Introduce contestants by name, city and state only after final tabulation, but prior to announcing the results. Judges and contest officials may also be introduced at this time.
6. Select an American Legion official to award prizes to the winners.
7. Provide instructions to the contest winner regarding their next level of competition.



## Chapter Eight

# Chairman's checklist

### Facilities required

- Name of school or other facility
- Name of auditorium
- Seating capacity
- Stage or raised platform
- U.S. flag
- Acoustics (quality)
- Waiting room(s) with at least 10 chairs
- Soundproof, close to auditorium
- Waiting room(s) for assigned topic preparation
- Class bells disconnected
- Parking facilities available

### Materials required

- Clipboards for judges
- Stopwatches (2)
- Pencils
- Calculator or adding machine
- Judges' instructions/scorecards
- Judges' scratch tally sheets
- Tabulator instructions/tabulation card
- Timekeeper instructions/timekeeper record card
- Numbered time cards
- Assigned topic cards
- Printed programs
- National rules brochures
- Certificates of appreciation for contest workers

## **Appointments**

- Judges (5)
- Tabulators (3)
- Timekeepers (2)
- Escorts
- Ushers
- Assigned topic preparation room monitors
- Publicity chairman
- Transportation chairman

## **Audience**

- Local high schools
- Speech teachers
- Civic leaders
- American Legion, Auxiliary and SAL officials

## **Publicity arrangements**

- Invite local news media
- Photographer

## **Entertainment (contingent on contest arrangements)**

- Banquet/luncheon

## **Acknowledgments**

- Thank-you notes, certificates of appreciation, etc., for all contest personnel

## Chapter Nine

# Contest follow-up

1. Notify the contest chairman at the next level of competition who won your contest. If the name of the contact at the next level is not known, notify your department adjutant.
2. Show your appreciation to judges by presenting them with certificates of appreciation or plaques. It may also be proper to honor contestant coaches with some form of recognition.
3. Provide a post-contest press release to the media. Go to [legion.org/oratorical/resources](http://legion.org/oratorical/resources) to download an example.
4. Write thank-you notes or letters to all contest personnel.
5. Schedule contest winners to present their oration before other school and/or civic groups.
6. Follow your contest winner through future levels of competition.

## Chapter Ten

# Contest forms and materials

The following contest forms are examples. They may be reproduced locally for your use, or you may contact your department headquarters for additional copies.

- Judge's scorecard
- Tabulation card
- Timekeeper record card
- Judge scratch tally sheet (prepared oration)
- Judge scratch tally sheet (assigned topic)

Additional materials for use in preparation for an Oratorical contest include the following items:

- Contest promotional brochure
- Contest files are available for download at [legion.org/oratorical/resources](http://legion.org/oratorical/resources), including:
  - » National rules brochure. Current year's rules.
  - » *How to Conduct the National High School Oratorical Contest* video series
  - » National finals video. Video of the most recent National Oratorical Contest.
  - » Sample news releases to send to local media to promote the contest. One promotes the upcoming event and the other names the winner.
  - » Sample PSAs to send to local broadcast media to promote the contest
  - » Contest PSA video
  - » Excel judge's scorecard and tabulation card spreadsheet
  - » Judge scratch tally sheet (prepared oration)
  - » Judge scratch tally sheet (assigned topic)
- Declaration of Independence and U.S. Constitution. The text of both documents. Stock No. 755.206. Consult Emblem Sales catalog for pricing. Available at [emblem.legion.org](http://emblem.legion.org).

For current contest information on The American Legion's High School Oratorical Scholarship Program, go to [legion.org/oratorical](http://legion.org/oratorical).



# THE AMERICAN LEGION

## HIGH SCHOOL ORATORICAL SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM - "A CONSTITUTIONAL SPEECH CONTEST"



### JUDGE'S SCORECARD

NAME OF JUDGE: \_\_\_\_\_

| A. CONTENT  |                            | Contestants |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|----------------------------|-------------|---|---|---|---|---|
|   |                            | 1           | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 1. Was the speech original, fresh, and direct, applying the contestant's knowledge?                         | Prepared Oration 12 points |             |   |   |   |   |   |
|   | Assigned Topic 4 points    |             |   |   |   |   |   |
| 2. Did the contestant skillfully select examples, descriptions, analogies, and specific data?               | Prepared Oration 12 points |             |   |   |   |   |   |
|   | Assigned Topic 4 points    |             |   |   |   |   |   |
| 3. Was the speech logical, well organized, and developed?   | Prepared Oration 12 points |             |   |   |   |   |   |
|   | Assigned Topic 4 points    |             |   |   |   |   |   |
| 4. Did the contestant show a comprehensiveness of knowledge of the subject matter?                          | Prepared Oration 16 points |             |   |   |   |   |   |
|   | Assigned Topic 6 points    |             |   |   |   |   |   |
| B. SPEAKING SKILLS  |                            | 1           | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 1. Did the contestant use volume, rate, pitch, and diction effectively?                                     | Prepared Oration 6 points  |             |   |   |   |   |   |
|   | Assigned Topic 4 points    |             |   |   |   |   |   |
| 2. Rate the contestant's style: language use, word arrangement and selection, and transitions.              | Prepared Oration 6 points  |             |   |   |   |   |   |
|   | Assigned Topic 4 points    |             |   |   |   |   |   |
| 3. Were body actions -- poise, eye contact, posture, gestures, facial expressions -- appropriate?           | Prepared Oration 6 points  |             |   |   |   |   |   |
|   | Assigned Topic 4 points    |             |   |   |   |   |   |
| SUB-TOTAL   |                            |             |   |   |   |   |   |
| PENALTIES: 1 point for each minute or fraction thereof over or under allotted time                          | Prepared Oration           |             |   |   |   |   |   |
|   | Assigned Topic             |             |   |   |   |   |   |
| 1-10 points for failure to speak on the Constitution  |                            |             |   |   |   |   |   |
| Final Total Points  |                            |             |   |   |   |   |   |
| Position Number - 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6<br>(Highest Points = 1st place, second highest points = 2nd place, etc.) |                            |             |   |   |   |   |   |

Score all contestants - NOTIES PERMITTED

Judge's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_



# The American Legion

## High School Oratorical Scholarship Program



### TABULATION CARD

| JUDGES | CONTESTANTS RECORD OF CHOICE |   |   |   |   |   | CONTESTANTS – FINAL TOTAL POINTS<br><i>*(for 3-way tiebreaker only)*</i> |   |   |   |   |   |  |
|--------|------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|--|---|---|---|---|---|--|
|        | 1                            | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 1  | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |  |
| 1      |                              |   |   |   |   |   |  |   |   |   |   |   |  |
| 2      |                              |   |   |   |   |   |  |   |   |   |   |   |  |
| 3      |                              |   |   |   |   |   |  |   |   |   |   |   |  |
| 4      |                              |   |   |   |   |   |  |   |   |   |   |   |  |
| 5      |                              |   |   |   |   |   |  |   |   |   |   |   |  |
| TOTALS |                              |   |   |   |   |   |  |   |   |   |   |   |  |

NOTE: all TABULATOR'S signatures are required below.

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# The American Legion

## High School Oratorical Scholarship Program



### TIMEKEEPER RECORDCARD

| CONTESTANT | Time Consumed<br>PREPARED ORATION |         | Time Consumed<br>ASSIGNED TOPIC |         |
|------------|-----------------------------------|---------|---------------------------------|---------|
|            | Minutes                           | Seconds | Minutes                         | Seconds |
| 1          |                                   |         |                                 |         |
| 2          |                                   |         |                                 |         |
| 3          |                                   |         |                                 |         |
| 4          |                                   |         |                                 |         |
| 5          |                                   |         |                                 |         |
| 6          |                                   |         |                                 |         |

NOTE: both TIMEKEEPER'S signatures are required below.

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# SCRATCH TALLY SHEET FOR JUDGES

## PREPARED ORATION

QUARTER FINAL/ SEMI FINAL/ FINALS (CIRCLE ONE)  
 NO. \_\_\_\_\_  
**CONTESTANT**  
 NO. \_\_\_\_\_

DOES THE CONTESTANT'S ORATION RELATE TO SOME ASPECT OF THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES WITH EMPHASIS ON THE DUTIES AND OBLIGATIONS OF A CITIZEN TO OUR GOVERNMENT?

Yes      No

| SCORE        | A. CONTENT   | REMARKS OR NOTES |
|--------------|--|------------------|
| (12)         | 1. Was the speech original, fresh and direct, applying the contestant's knowledge?             |                  |
| (12)         | 2. Did the contestant skillfully select examples, descriptions, analogies and specific data?   |                  |
| (12)         | 3. Was the speech logical, well organized and developed?                                       |                  |
| (16)         | 4. Did the contestant show a comprehensiveness of knowledge of the subject matter?             |                  |
| SUBTOTAL     |  |                  |
|              | B. SPEAKING SKILLS   | REMARKS OR NOTES |
| (6)          | 1. Did the contestant use volume, rate, pitch and diction effectively?                         |                  |
| (6)          | 2. Rate the contestant's style: language use, word arrangement and selection; transitions      |                  |
| (6)          | 3. Were body actions - poise, eye contact, posture, gestures, facial expressions- appropriate? |                  |
| SUBTOTAL     | ADDITIONAL NOTES OR COMMENTS   |                  |
| PENTALTY PTS |  |                  |
| TOTAL        | FOR JUDGES USE ONLY FOR ADDITIONAL SCORING   |                  |

# SCRATCH TALLY SHEET FOR JUDGES

## ASSIGNED TOPIC

|   |
|---|
| QUARTER FINAL/ SEMI FINAL/ FINALS (CIRCLE ONE)<br>NO. _____<br><br><b>CONTESTANT</b><br>NO. _____ |
|---|

DID THE CONTESTANT SPEAK ON THE SUBJECT OF THE ASSIGNED TOPIC?

Yes      No

| SCORE       | A. CONTENT   | REMARKS OR NOTES |
|-------------|--|------------------|
| (4)         | 1. Was the speech original, fresh and direct, applying the contestant's knowledge?             |                  |
| (4)         | 2. Did the contestant skillfully select examples, descriptions, analogies and specific data?   |                  |
| (4)         | 3. Was the speech logical, well organized and developed?                                       |                  |
| (6)         | 4. Did the contestant show a comprehensiveness of knowledge of the subject matter?             |                  |
| SUBTOTAL    |  |                  |
|             | B. SPEAKING SKILLS   | REMARKS OR NOTES |
| (4)         | 1. Did the contestant use volume, rate, pitch and diction effectively?                         |                  |
| (4)         | 2. Rate the contestant's style: language use, word arrangement and selection; transitions      |                  |
| (4)         | 3. Were body actions - poise, eye contact, posture, gestures, facial expressions- appropriate? |                  |
| SUBTOTAL    | ADDITIONAL NOTES OR COMMENTS   |                  |
| PENALTY PTS |  |                  |
| TOTAL       | FOR JUDGES USE ONLY FOR ADDITIONAL SCORING   |                  |



## The American Legion

P.O. Box 1055  
Indianapolis, IN 46206  
(317) 630-1204  
americanism@legion.org

 [legion.org](http://legion.org)

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 [twitter.com/AmericanLegion](https://twitter.com/AmericanLegion)

## **ORATORICAL PROGRAM INFORMATION**

The Oratorical Program is a part of the Americanism Commission and is known as The American Legion High School Oratorical Scholarship Program. "A Constitutional Speech Contest."

The purpose of The American Legion High School Oratorical Scholarship Program "A Constitutional Speech Contest" is to develop a deeper knowledge and appreciation of the Constitution of the United States among high school students. Other objectives of the contest include the development of leadership qualities, the ability to think and speak clearly and intelligently, and the preparation for acceptance of the duties and responsibilities, rights, and privileges of American citizenship.

### **Who is eligible to participate?**

Eligible participants in the contest shall be citizens of or lawful permanent residents of the United States.

All contestants must be bona fide students herein described as any student under the age of 20 years on the date of the national contest who is presently enrolled in a high school or junior high school (public, parochial, military, private or state accredited home school) in which the curriculum of said high school is considered to be of high school level, commencing with grade nine and terminating with grade 12. Students must be enrolled in high school or junior high school during the time of participation at any level of The American Legion National High School Oratorical Contest.

High school students that graduate early during the school year are eligible to compete if they are not enrolled in a college, university, trade school or other institution of higher learning at the time of the department finals contest.

Contestants must be either legally domiciled within or attend an educational institution within the department (state) where they enter competition. Contestants can enter competition in only one department.

### **What Topics Do Contestants Speak On?**

Two orations are given - the Prepared Oration and the Assigned Topic. The subject to be used for the prepared oration of the contest must be on some aspect of the Constitution of the United States with emphasis on the duties and obligation of a citizen to our government. The same subject and oration used in the Department Contest must be used in the National Contest.

The Prepared Oration must be the original effort of each contestant and must not take up less than eight (8) minutes or more than ten (10) minutes for delivery. It must be delivered in the English language.

The purpose of the Assigned Topic is to test the speaker's knowledge of the subject, the extent of his or her research, and the ability to discuss the topic as related to the basic principles of government under the Constitution. Four Assigned Topics are determined each year by National Oratorical program officials. At each contest one of the four topics is selected and used for that competition. The assigned topic must take no less than three (3) minutes and must not exceed five (5) minutes for time delivery.

## Department of Oregon Contest

In the Department of Oregon three contest levels are conducted culminating in the department oratorical champion. Those levels are: Post, District, and Department. Post contests are held in December, District contests in January, and the Department contest in February/March.

The Department contests are conducted as follows:

Every contestant must begin at the Post level; only Post level winners will advance to the District Contest. The District contest winners will advance to the Department contest. The winner of the Department contest will represent the Department of Oregon in the National Oratorical Contest Finals in Indianapolis, Indiana which is usually held in April.

The scholarships awarded at the Department level are:

|            |         |
|------------|---------|
| 1st place: | \$5,000 |
| 2nd place: | \$3,500 |
| 3rd place: | \$2,500 |
| 4th place: | \$2,000 |

## National Finals Contest

The National Finals contest is conducted in Indianapolis, Indiana and consists of three rounds culminating in a national contest winner. The national organization of The American Legion will pay the travel and lodging expenses of department winners and one chaperone to the national contest. All contestants must be accompanied by a chaperone over 21 years of age, preferably a parent of the contestant.

The scholarships awarded at the National Finals are:

|                        |   |
|------------------------|---|
| Quarterfinal:          | \$2,000 for the Department contestant participating in the National Finals. |
| Semifinal:             | \$2,000 for each Contestant eliminated; winners advance to Finals.          |
| 1 <sup>st</sup> Place: | \$25,000.00   |
| 2 <sup>nd</sup> Place: | \$22,500.00   |
| 3 <sup>rd</sup> Place: | \$20,000.00   |

The national organization of The American Legion shall not assume liability for personal injury, property damage or loss sustained by any contestant or chaperone en route to or from the contest; however, The American Legion does carry a nominal group accident insurance policy on contestants certified into the national competition.

Contestants will travel by an air carrier selected by the national organization of The American Legion or personal automobile if previously approved by the national organization of The American Legion. Reference the official contest rules for further details.

## **EXPLANATION OF THE AMERICAN LEGION HIGH SCHOOL ORATORICAL SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM**

The purpose of The American Legion High School Oratorical Scholarship Program “A Constitutional Speech Contest” is to develop a deeper knowledge and appreciation of the Constitution of the United States among high school students. Other objectives of the contest include the development of leadership qualities, the ability to think and speak clearly and intelligently, and the preparation for acceptance of the duties and responsibilities, rights, and privileges of American citizenship.

Contact your local American Legion post for a copy of the official contest rules and for details on the post and district contest dates, times and locations.

**The Department of Oregon** American Legion Oratorical Contest conducts three levels of contest in supporting the National High School Oratorical Scholarship Program, which culminates in determining the department oratorical champion. Those contest levels are post level, district level, and department level. Contestants must begin at the Post level and winners at each contest level advance to compete at the department level contest.

The winner of the Department of Oregon American Legion Oratorical Contest will automatically advance to the National High School Oratorical Contest, earning the opportunity to attain additional scholarship funds.

Scholarships are awarded at each contest level – Post, District, Department and National. The Department and National contests award established scholarships which are prized and highly regarded. Post and District level scholarships vary and are at the discretion of the respective governing body.

**Important:** Given the current, and varying, restrictions on gathering and in social distancing practices, it is possible a virtual contest may be conducted in place of an in-person contest. Additional details will be provided as warranted if/as any changes are made.

### **Post Oratorical Contest**

With 114 posts within the Department of Oregon there is a good likelihood that one is relatively close to your high school – check your local directory listings for the nearest American Legion post. Also, inquire of The American Legion High School Oratorical Scholarship Program through your school’s speech and debate teacher, or your school’s scholarship contact and/or guidance counselor.

All eligible contestants begin at the Post level contest and compete for the opportunity to advance to the District contest. Scholarship awards are made at the discretion of the local post.

Post Contest Date, Time and Location: Contact your local American Legion Post.

### **District Oratorical Contest**

There are 10 districts comprised within the Department of Oregon and each district contains a varying number of posts. Each District will conduct a District contest comprised of the Post contest winners within each respective district.

The District contest winners will advance to the Department contest. Scholarship awards are made at the discretion of each district, respectively.

District Contest Date, Time and Location: Contact your local American Legion Post.

## Department Oratorical Contest

The District contest winners – a maximum of 10 – will compete in the Department contest to determine the department oratorical champion. In addition to the winning scholarship award, the winner of the Department contest will represent the Department of Oregon at the National Oratorical Contest Finals held in Indianapolis, Indiana. Expenses for the trip will be covered as detailed further below and within the official rules.

### 2021 Department Oratorical Contest Scholarships – awards for the Department Contest:

|                        |            |
|------------------------|------------|
| 1 <sup>st</sup> Place: | \$5,000.00 |
| 2 <sup>nd</sup> Place: | \$4,000.00 |
| 3 <sup>rd</sup> Place: | \$3,000.00 |
| 4 <sup>th</sup> Place: | \$2,500.00 |
| 5 <sup>th</sup> Place: | \$1,500.00 |

Department Contest Date, Time and Location: **March 5 & 6** – time and location is Post 51, in Lebanon, Oregon. Contact your local American Legion Post for more information.

## National Oratorical Contest Finals

Also known as National Finals, contestants representing 55 American Legion Departments from across the country and globe compete in the national level contest held in Indianapolis, Indiana. The national level contest consists of three rounds culminating in a national contest winner. Scholarship awards are achieved by competing as well as in winning and placing in the contest.

### Travel expenses to the National Contest

The national organization of The American Legion will pay the travel and lodging expenses of department winners and one chaperone to the national contest. All contestants must be accompanied by a chaperone over 21 years of age, preferably a parent of the contestant.

The national organization of The American Legion shall not assume liability for personal injury, property damage or loss sustained by any contestant or chaperone en route to or from the contest; however, The American Legion does carry a nominal group accident insurance policy on contestants certified into the national competition.

Contestants will travel by an air carrier selected by the national organization of The American Legion or personal automobile if previously approved by the national organization of The American Legion. Reference the official rules for more details.

### 2022 National Oratorical Contest Finals – awards for National Finals Contest:

|                        |   |
|------------------------|---|
| Quarterfinal:          | \$2,000 for the Department contestant participating in the National Finals contest. |
| Semifinal:             | \$2,000 for each Contestant eliminated – winners advance to Finals.                 |
| 1 <sup>st</sup> Place: | \$25,000.00   |
| 2 <sup>nd</sup> Place: | \$22,500.00   |
| 3 <sup>rd</sup> Place: | \$20,000.00   |

### 2022 National Finals Date, Time and Location: April 22-24, 2022

Wyndham Indianapolis West Hotel  
2544 Executive Drive  
Indianapolis, IN, 46241

***Contact your local American Legion post for the official contest rules and for dates, times and locations of the Post and District level contests.***

**A selected history of Department of Oregon oratorical contest participation:**

**In 2020**, Anwasha Mukherjee, West Union High School, Portland, Oregon became a two-time Department Contest champion amassing approximately \$11,000 in scholarships through two years of competition.

**In 2003**, William Glaser, a home-schooled high school junior from Scio, Oregon won the Department Contest, then placed second in the National Finals and won \$16,000.

**In 1997**, Kathy LaVeine, Tigard High School, Tigard, Oregon won the Department Contest and advanced to the first round of the National Contest; Kathy's scholarship earnings totaled more than \$2,000.

**In 1996**, Heather Cloutier, Crescent Valley High School, Corvallis, Oregon won the Department Contest and participated in the (then) Regional Contest. Heather's scholarship earnings totaled approximately \$3,000.

**In 1988**, T. J. Chandler, Canby Union High School, Canby, Oregon placed third in the National Finals and won a \$10,000 scholarship.

**In 1985**, Anne Marie Dietering, Canby Union High School, Canby, Oregon placed second in the National Finals and won a \$12,000 scholarship.

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For more information contact your local American Legion Post or contact:

The American Legion Department of Oregon  
PO Box 1730 Wilsonville, OR 97070-1730 Ph: 503-685-5006



# The American Legion High School Oratorical Scholarship Program “A Constitutional Speech Contest”



## Official Rules

>2022

### General information

The purpose of The American Legion High School Oratorical Scholarship Program “A Constitutional Speech Contest” is to develop a deeper knowledge and appreciation of the Constitution of the United States among high school students. Other objectives of the contest include the development of leadership qualities, the ability to think and speak clearly and intelligently, and the preparation for acceptance of the duties and responsibilities, rights, and privileges of American citizenship.

### Scholarships

Scholarship awards are presented to the three finalists in the final round of the national contest as follows: **1st place: \$25,000; 2nd place: \$22,500; 3rd place: \$20,000.** Each department (state) winner who is certified into and participates in the first round of the national contest will receive a **\$2,000 scholarship.** Each first round winner who advances to and participates in the second round, but does not advance to the final round, will receive an additional **\$2,000 scholarship** to pursue education beyond high school.

The national organization of The American Legion will award scholarships to the three finalists, department winners, and first round winners who are eliminated during the second round of competition. These scholarships may be used to attend any college or university in the United States.

A contestant must give both his or her prepared oration and the assigned topic discourse to receive the scholarship.

In addition to the scholarships awarded by the national organization, there are several hundred scholarships awarded at the discretion of intermediate organizations, to participants at post, district or county, and department levels of competition.

### Department contests

Arrangements for contests leading to the department finals shall be the responsibility of each department (state) organization of The American Legion. For those levels of competition prior to the department finals, the rules and regulations set forth in this brochure are not mandatory — they are offered as a guideline. However, all department finals contests shall conform with national contest procedures, rules and regulations, if the department wishes its finalist to compete in the national finals.

A winner certified to the National Americanism Division of The American Legion by a department which did not conduct its final competition in conformity with the rules and regulations as set forth herein may, in the judgment of the director of the Americanism Division or the director’s representative, be disqualified from competition in the national contest.

Each department may certify one contestant into the national contest. If for any reason the department winner is unable to compete in the national contest, the department first runner-up may be substituted following approval by The American Legion’s National Americanism Commission. A department first runner-up accepted into national competition will be entitled to all national awards, entitlements and compensation that the department winner would have received had she/he participated at that level.

Department contest winners **MUST BE** certified to the National Americanism Division, **NO LATER THAN MARCH 15, 2022, by 5 p.m. EDT.**

Failure to meet this deadline **WILL** result in disqualification of the contestant.

For information about the Oratorical Contest in your state, contact your American Legion post or state headquarters.

## Eligibility

Eligible participants in the contest shall be citizens of or lawful permanent residents of the United States.

All contestants must be bona fide students herein described as any student under the age of 20 years on the date of the national contest who is presently enrolled in a high school or junior high school (public, parochial, military, private or state accredited home school) in which the curriculum of said high school is considered to be of high school level, commencing with grade nine and terminating with grade 12. Students must be enrolled in high school or junior high school during the time of participation at any level of The American Legion National High School Oratorical Contest.

High school students that graduate early during the school year are eligible to compete if they are not enrolled in a college, university, trade school or other institution of higher learning at the time of the department finals contest.

Contestants must be either legally domiciled within or attend an educational institution within the department (state) where they enter competition. Contestants can enter competition in only one department.

The three finalists of the national contest will be ineligible for further participation at any level.

## Prepared oration

The subject to be used for the prepared oration in the Oratorical Contest must be on some aspect of the Constitution of the United States with emphasis to the attendant duties and obligations of a citizen to our government. The same subject and oration used in the department contest must be used in the national contest.

**The prepared oration must be the original effort of each contestant and must not take up less than eight minutes or more than 10 minutes for delivery.**

Contestants may have in their possession a copy of their prepared oration in the first holding room. The copy may be electronic or paper form. They may consult the copy of their prepared oration until they exit the holding room in order to begin the contest. At that time the copy of the prepared oration will be surrendered to the contest official who is monitoring the first holding room.

In the prepared oration, as well as in the assigned topic discourse, quotations must be indicated as such. Where quotations are more than 10 words in length, the author's name must be given in the manuscript and cited orally.

## Assigned topic

The assigned topic discourse must not consume less than three minutes or more than five minutes for delivery. The purpose of the assigned topic discourse is to test the speaker's knowledge of the subject, the extent of his or her research, and the ability to discuss the topic as related to the basic principles of government under the Constitution.

The assigned topic shall be drawn by the contest official in full view of the audience immediately before the last speaker begins delivery of his/her prepared oration and will be made known to the audience and each contestant approximately five minutes prior to the time of delivery. The topic will be on some phase of the Constitution of the United States selected from Articles and Sections. Below are the assigned topics for 2021.

## Assigned topics for 2022

**Amendment 111 No Soldier shall, in time of peace be quartered in any house, without the consent of the Owner, nor in time of war, but in a manner to be prescribed by law.**

**Amendment V111 Excessive bail shall not be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and unusual punishments inflicted.**

**Amendment XIV, Section 3 No person shall be a Senator or Representative in Congress, or elector of President and Vice President, or hold any office, civil or military, under the United States, or under any State, who, having previously taken an oath, as a member of Congress, or as an officer of the United States, or as a member of any State Legislature, or as an executive or judicial officer of any State, to support the Constitution of the United States, shall have engaged in insurrection or rebellion against the same, or given aid or comfort to the enemies thereof. But Congress may by a vote of two-thirds of each House, remove such disability.**

**Amendment XXV, Section 4 Whenever the Vice President and a majority of either the principal officers of the executive departments or of such other body as Congress may by law provide, transmit to the President pro tempore of the Senate and Speaker of the House of Representatives their written declaration that the President is unable to discharge the powers and duties of his office, the Vice President shall immediately assume the powers and duties of the office as Acting President.**

Thereafter, when the President transmits to the President pro tempore of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives his written declaration that no inability exists, he shall resume the powers and duties of his office unless the Vice President and a majority of either the principal officers of the executive department or of such other body as Congress may by law provide, transmit within four days to the President Pro tempore of the Senate and Speaker of the House of Representatives their written declaration that the President is unable to discharge the powers and duties of his office. Thereupon Congress shall decide the issue, assembling within forty-eight hours for that purpose if not in session. If the Congress, within twenty-one days after the receipt of the latter written declaration, or if Congress is not in session, within twenty-one days after Congress is required to assemble, determines by two-thirds vote of both Houses that the President is unable to discharge the powers and duties of his office, the Vice President shall continue to discharge the same as Acting President; otherwise, the President shall resume the powers and duties of his office.



## No foreign languages or songs

**All contestants at each contest level are required to speak in the English language on the same assigned topic.**

It is acceptable to utilize or incorporate short phrases of a foreign language into the prepared oration and/or assigned topic in order to develop the argument, establish a point, etc. The vast majority of the prepared oration and/or assigned topic must be delivered in the English language.

**Also, the singing of a song in any language is not permitted and will result in the immediate disqualification of the contestant. The contestant may, however, quote a verse(s) of a song provided proper attribution is made.**

### What to wear

Uniforms are not permitted. Appropriate business attire is required by all contestants. Contestants are not permitted to wear awards and medals from previous competition.

## Contest regulations

A drawing shall be held by the official in charge of the contest to determine the order in which the contestants will appear. The contest chairman shall announce the title of the contestant's prepared oration immediately after introducing him/her as contestant No. 1, contestant No. 2, etc. The chairman will request the audience to refrain from applause until the judges have made their decision.

A raised platform is not compulsory, however, it is strongly recommended. **The use of notes, amplification, lectern or speaker's stand by contestants or prompting in any manner is not permitted. Props are not permitted.**

The use of any type of electronic/digital data gathering, receiving and/or transmitting equipment in any form by contestants or members of the audience is prohibited.

The time allotted for each contestant to deliver their prepared oration shall not be less than eight or more than 10 minutes, and for the assigned topic, not less than three or

more than five minutes.

An official timer shall be named by the contest chairman whose duty it shall be to keep an accurate time record of each contestant, and she/he shall be located on the main floor in full view of the contestants. The timekeeper shall begin timing each contestant at the start of the prepared oration. The timer should be equipped with a stopwatch and time cards for the prepared oration carrying the figures 8, 9 and 10. When eight minutes have been used, the time warning card with the figure 8 thereon shall be placed in full view of the speaker, following with 9 and 10 as the speaker progresses. The same procedure shall be used with cards bearing 3, 4 and 5 during the assigned topic discourse. The contest chairman shall announce the time consumed by each contestant for the prepared oration and the assigned topic immediately after each contestant speaks for the benefit of the judges.

Contestants are required to remain in a private room, where the discourse of the other speakers cannot be heard, until it is their turn to speak (contestants will be under the supervision of an individual appointed by the contest chairman). As the contestants conclude their prepared orations, they must return to a sound-proof holding room. As each speaker concludes his or her assigned topic discourse, they shall not be allowed to associate with contestants who have not fulfilled the assigned topic requirement.

Approximately five minutes prior to the time of the delivery of the assigned topic discourse, contestant No. 1 will be informed of the topic drawn for the assigned topic and shall be permitted to retire to privacy under the direction of an individual appointed by the contest chairman, whose duty it shall be to see that no contestant is permitted to consult any text matter or notes having any connection with the subject matter upon which he/she is to speak, other than the actual words of the topic provided on the card drawn.

Each succeeding contestant will be called upon in the order in which she/he previously appeared. She/he shall also, in turn, be informed of the topic of the assigned topic discourse and shall then be escorted to privacy in the manner as provided for contestant No. 1.

## Judges

The judges are an integral part of the Oratorical Contest. Their qualifications are considered carefully as the decision of the judges is final and must be reached without bias. Impartial judging in all contests is the key to fairness and success of the program which results in the selection of a national champion.

All department finals and the national contest must use five judges. No publicity shall be given to the names of the judges in advance of the contest. **During the contest, the judges will be seated in different locations in the auditorium and each judge shall render his or her final decision without consultation with other judges or any other person.**

Judges will be advised that a lack of emphasis in the prepared oration and the assigned topic discourse on the duties and obligations of a citizen must result in their downgrading the contestant. Judges are permitted to downgrade a contestant up to a maximum of 10 points for failure to speak about the Constitution. The contest chairman will announce any violation of time for each contestant. A penalty of one point for each minute, or fraction

thereof, shall be assessed against the contestant's total score.

The judges, timekeepers, tabulators and the contest chairman, following the last assigned topic discourse, may proceed to a private room for final review and tabulation. **The decision of the judges is final.**

## Tabulators

The contest chairman will appoint no less than three tabulators for the department finals contest. It will be their responsibility to review the judges' scorecards to be certain they are fully tabulated and signed before they are submitted for final tabulation.

**Judges' scorecards for department finals and the national contest will not be divulged to anyone at the site of the contest.** All national contest judges' scorecards become the property of The American Legion National Headquarters.

## National finals contest

- The national finals contest will be held at the Wyndham Indianapolis West hotel April 9-11, 2021, in Indianapolis. Quarterfinal and semifinal rounds are scheduled to be held on Saturday, April 10. The championship is scheduled for Sunday, April 11.
- All contestants and chaperones will arrive on Friday, April 9. All contestants will be lodged at a hotel to be determined in Indianapolis.
- A mandatory pre-contest orientation session for all contestants will be held the evening of Friday, April 9.
- A banquet honoring all contestants will be held the afternoon of Sunday, April 11.

- All contestants and chaperones will depart for home after the banquet on Sunday.

## Travel expenses

The national organization of The American Legion will pay the travel and lodging expenses of department winners and one chaperone to the national contest. **All contestants must be accompanied by a chaperone over 21 years of age, preferably a parent of the contestant.**

The national organization of The American Legion shall not assume liability for personal injury, property damage or loss sustained by any contestant or chaperone en route to or from the contest; however, The American Legion does carry a nominal group accident insurance policy on contestants certified into the national competition.

Contestants will travel by an air carrier selected by the national organization of The American Legion or personal automobile if previously approved by the national organization of The American Legion.

## TV and radio

Live television and radio broadcasts are permitted in all contests as well as filming or other types of media for later showing, provided: 1) the lighting and other site conditions are the same for all contestants; 2) the filming or broadcasts shall in no way distract the contestants or interfere with the announced scheduled time of the contest; 3) the normal speaking voice of the contestant is not interfered with or amplified within the auditorium; and 4) The American Legion is in no way financially obligated for anything without its prior approval.

## For more information

Individuals interested in learning more about The American Legion National High School Oratorical Contest should contact:

- For dates, sites and deadline information concerning **local, district and state level competition, contact your local American Legion post or their state headquarters office of The American Legion.**
- For information concerning the **national contest**, Americanism Division, The American Legion, P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206-1055; telephone (317) 630-1204; or email [americanism@legion.org](mailto:americanism@legion.org).



# THE AMERICAN LEGION

HIGH SCHOOL ORATORICAL SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM - "A CONSTITUTIONAL SPEECH CONTEST"

## JUDGE'S SCORECARD



NAME OF JUDGE: \_\_\_\_\_

| A. CONTENT  |                            | Contestants |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|----------------------------|-------------|---|---|---|---|---|
|   |                            | 1           | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 1. Was the speech original, fresh, and direct, applying the contestant's knowledge?                         | Prepared Oration 12 points |             |   |   |   |   |   |
|   | Assigned Topic 4 points    |             |   |   |   |   |   |
| 2. Did the contestant skillfully select examples, descriptions, analogies, and specific data?               | Prepared Oration 12 points |             |   |   |   |   |   |
|   | Assigned Topic 4 points    |             |   |   |   |   |   |
| 3. Was the speech logical, well organized, and developed?   | Prepared Oration 12 points |             |   |   |   |   |   |
|   | Assigned Topic 4 points    |             |   |   |   |   |   |
| 4. Did the contestant show a comprehensiveness of knowledge of the subject matter?                          | Prepared Oration 16 points |             |   |   |   |   |   |
|   | Assigned Topic 6 points    |             |   |   |   |   |   |
| B. SPEAKING SKILLS  |                            | 1           | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 1. Did the contestant use volume, rate, pitch, and diction effectively?                                     | Prepared Oration 6 points  |             |   |   |   |   |   |
|   | Assigned Topic 4 points    |             |   |   |   |   |   |
| 2. Rate the contestant's style: language use, word arrangement and selection, and transitions.              | Prepared Oration 6 points  |             |   |   |   |   |   |
|   | Assigned Topic 4 points    |             |   |   |   |   |   |
| 3. Were body actions -- poise, eye contact, posture, gestures, facial expressions -- appropriate?           | Prepared Oration 6 points  |             |   |   |   |   |   |
|   | Assigned Topic 4 points    |             |   |   |   |   |   |
| SUB-TOTAL   |                            |             |   |   |   |   |   |
| PENALTIES: 1 point for each minute or fraction thereof over or under allotted time                          | Prepared Oration           |             |   |   |   |   |   |
|   | Assigned Topic             |             |   |   |   |   |   |
| 1-10 points for failure to speak on the Constitution  |                            |             |   |   |   |   |   |
| Final Total Points  |                            |             |   |   |   |   |   |
| Position Number - 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6<br>(Highest Points = 1st place, second highest points = 2nd place, etc.) |                            |             |   |   |   |   |   |

Score all contestants - NO TIES PERMITTED

Judge's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

American Legion department (state) contact information is online:

 [legion.org/departments](http://legion.org/departments)

More information is available online:

 [legion.org/oratorical](http://legion.org/oratorical)



## The American Legion

P.O. Box 1055  
Indianapolis, IN 46206  
(317) 630-1204  
[americanism@legion.org](mailto:americanism@legion.org)

 [www.legion.org](http://www.legion.org)

Follow The American Legion online:

 [www.legion.org/facebook](http://www.legion.org/facebook)

 [twitter.com/AmericanLegion](https://twitter.com/AmericanLegion)

# A scholarship OPPORTUNITY

For students seeking an academic challenge and an opportunity to earn college scholarship money, the American Legion High School Oratorical Scholarship Program is a natural fit. For more than 80 years, this constitutional speech contest has educated youth on our nation's founding document, with an emphasis on citizenship.



*"Who we vote for matters. The leaders we elect should reflect the spirit of our society. Their main goal should be the preservation of our rights as written in our founding document. Failure to vote, then, is the equivalent of rejecting the freedoms bestowed on each individual by our Constitution. These freedoms, like a family heirloom, should be treasured and held dear."*

Geeta Minocha, Ocala, Fla.  
2015 American Legion National  
Oratorical Contest champion

The main purpose of the American Legion High School Oratorical Scholarship Program is to develop a deeper knowledge and appreciation of the U.S. Constitution among students. Participants also grow in leadership ability, their capacity to think and speak clearly and intelligently, and understanding of the rights, responsibilities, obligations and privileges of U.S. citizens.



## The American Legion

P.O. Box 1055  
Indianapolis, IN 46206  
(317) 630-1204

[legion.org](http://legion.org)

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## The American Legion

### HIGH SCHOOL ORATORICAL SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

*A Constitutional Speech Contest*



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# THE AMERICAN LEGION | HIGH SCHOOL ORATORICAL SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

## Winners receive thousands in scholarships

The three finalists of the national contest earn some of the most generous scholarships college scholarships available to students: **\$25,000** for first place, **\$22,500** for second place and **\$20,000** for third place. Each department (state) winner who is certified and participates in the first round of the national contest receives a **\$2,000** scholarship. Each first-round winner who advances to and participates in the second round, but does not advance to the final round, will receive an additional **\$2,000** scholarship to pursue education beyond high school.

Scholarships awarded by the national organization of The American Legion may be used to attend any U.S. college or university.

## Each department (state) is represented

Each department of The American Legion may certify one contestant for the national contest. If for any reason the department winner is unable to compete in the national contest, the department first runner-up may be substituted following approval by The American Legion's Americanism Commission.

For information about the oratorical contest in your state, contact your local American Legion post or state headquarters. A listing of state headquarters' addresses and phone numbers is online at [legion.org](http://legion.org).

## Who is eligible to participate?

Eligible participants shall be citizens of or lawful permanent residents of the United States.

All contestants must be younger than 20 years on the date of the national contest and enrolled in a high school or junior high school (public, parochial, military, private or state accredited homeschool) in which the curriculum is considered to be high-school level, commencing with grade 9 and terminating with grade 12. Students must be enrolled in high school or junior high school during the time of participation at



any level of the American Legion National High School Oratorical Contest.

High-school students who graduate early are eligible to compete if they are not enrolled in a college, university, trade school or other institution of higher learning at the time of the department finals contest.

Contestants must be legally domiciled within or attend an educational institution within the department (state) where they enter competition. Contestants can enter competition in only one department. The three finalists of the national contest will be ineligible for further participation at any level.

## The orations

**The prepared oration**—The subject used for the prepared oration must be on some aspect of the U.S. Constitution, with an emphasis on a citizen's duties and obligations. The same subject and oration used in the department contest must be used in the national contest.

The prepared oration must be the original effort of each contestant and be delivered in no fewer than eight minutes

and no more than 10 minutes. It must be delivered in the English language.

**Assigned topic**—The purpose of the assigned topic oration is to test the speaker's knowledge of the subject, the extent of his or her research, and the ability to discuss the topic as it relates to the basic principles of government under the Constitution. Generally, the topic is a constitutional amendment; it could be the entire amendment or specific articles.

The assigned topic oration must be between three and five minutes. Each year, the list of assigned topics is made available prior to the contest and posted online at [legion.org/oratorical/topics](http://legion.org/oratorical/topics).

## Contest judges

Fair and unbiased judging is integral for maintaining quality and integrity throughout all stages of the contest. The qualifications of all contest judges are carefully considered, and all judges have a thorough understanding of their roles.

# THE PREPARED ORATION

## Prepared oration

The subject to be used for the prepared oration in the Oratorical Contest must be on some aspect of the Constitution of the United States with emphasis to the attendant duties and obligations of a citizen to our government.

The same subject and oration used in the department contest must be used in the national contest.

**The prepared oration must be the original effort of each contestant and must not take up less than eight minutes or more than 10 minutes for delivery.**

Contestants may have in their possession a copy of their prepared oration in the first holding room. The copy may be electronic or paper form. They may consult the copy of their prepared oration until they exit the holding room in order to begin the contest. At that time the copy of the prepared oration will be surrendered to the contest official who is monitoring the first holding room.

In the prepared oration, as well as in the assigned topic discourse, quotations must be indicated as such. Where quotations are more than 10 words in length, the author's name must be given in the manuscript and cited orally.

## No foreign languages or songs

All contestants at each contest level are **required to speak in the English language on the same assigned topic.**

It is acceptable to utilize or incorporate short phrases of a foreign language into the prepared oration and/or assigned topic in order to develop the argument, establish a point, etc. The vast majority of the prepared oration and/or assigned topic must be delivered in the English language.

Also, the **singing of a song in any language is not permitted and will result in the immediate disqualification of the contestant.** The contestant may, however, quote a verse(s) of a song provided proper attribution is made.

## What to wear

Uniforms are not permitted. Appropriate business attire is required by all contestants. Contestants are not permitted to wear awards and medals from previous competition.



## ASSIGNED TOPICS 2022

### Assigned topic

The assigned topic discourse must not consume less than three minutes or more than five minutes for delivery. The purpose of the assigned topic discourse is to test the speaker's knowledge of the subject, the extent of his or her research, and the ability to discuss the topic as related to the basic principles of government under the Constitution.

The assigned topic shall be drawn by the contest official in full view of the audience immediately before the last speaker begins delivery of his/her prepared oration and will be made known to the audience and each contestant approximately five minutes prior to the time of delivery. The topic will be on some phase of the Constitution of the United States selected from Articles and Sections. Further below are the assigned topics for 2021.

### No foreign languages or songs

All contestants at each contest level are **required to speak in the English language on the same assigned topic.**

It is acceptable to utilize or incorporate short phrases of a foreign language into the prepared oration and/or assigned topic in order to develop the argument, establish a point, etc. The vast majority of the prepared oration and/or assigned topic must be delivered in the English language.

Also, the **singing of a song in any language is not permitted and will result in the immediate disqualification of the contestant.** The contestant may, however, quote a verse(s) of a song provided proper attribution is made.

### What to wear

Uniforms are not permitted. Appropriate business attire is required by all contestants. Contestants are not permitted to wear awards and medals from previous competition.



# OREGON ORATORICAL CONTEST ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM

I have read the Official Contest Rules and this form carefully and fully understand each one of the items listed. I acknowledge the following responsibilities:

- We understand that there will two (2) orations (speeches). One oration will be a prepared oration, 8 to 10 minutes in duration, on any topic from the U.S. Constitution. The second oration, 3 to 5 minutes, will be an assigned oration coming from a selection of four topics, usually from the amendments to the constitution. Only one will be drawn the day of the competition.
- Penalty points are given if the speeches are too short or too long. A penalty of one (1) point per minute or a fraction thereof if the speech is too short or the same if it is too long. This will be clearly established in the instruction packet that **MUST** be given to contestants (students). The Post Oratorical Chairman should double check to see that each contestant has a high school packet.
- It is understood that notes may be used only at the Post level competition. There are to be **NO NOTES** of any kind beginning at the District level of competition.
- The Post should provide a time for the contestants to present both orations and, if possible, in front of a Post meeting or a group of people using the format of the Oratorical Contest set by National Oratorical Contest. Even with only one contestant this should be done to acquaint contestants with the procedures of the Oratorical Contest.
- The date, time, and location should be clearly marked on this form for both the Post and District contests.
- This form must be signed by the high school student, a parent, and Post Oratorical Chairman. A copy will be kept by the Chairman as well as attached to the Certification Form.

**Post Contest** Date to give oration: \_\_\_\_\_

Place and address to be held: \_\_\_\_\_

**District Contest** Date to give oration: \_\_\_\_\_

Place and address to be held: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed by:

Student \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Parent \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Post Chairman \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_



# CERTIFICATION FORM

## AMERICAN LEGION HIGH SCHOOL ORATORICAL CONTEST DEPARTMENT OF OREGON

**CONTESTANTS:** Must complete and return this original form to The American Legion Post Oratorical Chairman by December 1, 2021.

### TO BE COMPLETED BY STUDENT/ PARENT/SCHOOL:

Print or Type:

Contestant's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Area and Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_ Social Security No \_\_\_\_\_

Name of High School \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ Phone No \_\_\_\_\_

Grade \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_ Are You A Citizen of The United States, Or a Lawful Permanent Resident? \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian's Name (Print) \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Title of Prepared Oration (Print) \_\_\_\_\_

Principal or

Representative's Name (Print) \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

### TO BE COMPLETED BY POST ORATORICAL CHAIRMAN:

Print or Type:

Post Chairman Name \_\_\_\_\_ Post Name and No. \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Post/Chairman's Area and Phone No. \_\_\_\_\_ Sponsoring Post \_\_\_\_\_

### CONTEST DATES:

(1) Post Contest \_\_\_\_\_ (2) District Contest \_\_\_\_\_

(3) Area Contest \_\_\_\_\_ (4) Department Contest \_\_\_\_\_

**Post Oratorical Chairman:** The Certification Form, Acknowledgment Form and Post Chairman's Contest Survey Sheet is to be completed and provided to your District Oratorical Chairman or District Commander immediately following the Post Contest.

**District Oratorical Chairman:** The 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Place District winner's Certification Form, Acknowledgment Form and a rough copy of the winner's Prepared Oration are to be mailed immediately to the Contest Chairperson of the Department Oratorical Committee: Maria Tye

82446 Fish Hatchery Ln, Enterprise, OR 97828

Ph: 281-786-5402 Email: corey0071@gmail.com

NOTE: The Certification Form, Acknowledgement Form, and Contest Rules, may be duplicated as needed for the student.



# ORATORICAL CONTEST SUMMARY FORM

(PLEASE TYPE OR PRINT)

CONTEST LEVEL (Circle one and provide number):

POST | DISTRICT

Post No. \_\_\_\_\_ / District No. \_\_\_\_\_

1. Contest Date: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Contest Results:

1<sup>st</sup> Place \_\_\_\_\_

2<sup>nd</sup> Place \_\_\_\_\_

3<sup>rd</sup> Place \_\_\_\_\_

4<sup>th</sup> Place \_\_\_\_\_

**ACTION:** Immediately upon conclusion of the Post Contest, complete and forward the Contest Summary Form, Post Chairman's Contest Survey Form, and the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> place finishers' Certification Form and Acknowledgement Form to the District Oratorical Chairman.

If the 1<sup>st</sup> place winner cannot compete in the District Contest, the 2<sup>nd</sup> place finisher can compete in his/her place as the post contest winner.

**IMPORTANT:** This completed form must reach the District Oratorical Chairman no later than one week prior to the District Contest date.

District No. \_\_\_\_\_ Chairman \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_, Oregon Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Submitted by Post Oratorical Chairman:

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_



# POST ORATORICAL CHAIRMAN'S CONTEST SURVEY FORM

(PLEASE TYPE OR PRINT)

POST NO. \_\_\_\_\_

1. Post Oratorical Chairman's Name \_\_\_\_\_

2. Contest Date \_\_\_\_\_ Number of contestants? \_\_\_\_\_

3. Number of Legionnaires and guests attending contest \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

4. How many high schools and/or home-schooled participated in the contest? \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

List high school and school address, if home-schooled, list address; continue on reverse if needed.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. Were awards, tokens and/or prizes given to contestants? (Circle one) Yes | No

If 'yes' complete the following questions below; **no cash or check monetary awards** should be given.

A) By place-finishing (i.e., 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, etc.) List the specific awards, tokens and/or prizes provided (i.e., certificates, plaques, scholarships, pins, medals, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

B) When, where and how were awards made (i.e., at the conclusion of the contest; at the sponsoring post; at a general meeting; etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

6. Do you feel the Post Oratorical Chairman's packet helped you conduct your local contest?

(Circle one) Yes | No What would have benefited further? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**ACTION:** Immediately upon conclusion of the Post Contest, complete and forward the Contest Summary Form, Post Chairman's Contest Survey Form, and the 1st and 2nd place finishers' Certification Form and Acknowledgement Form to the District Oratorical Chairman.

If the 1st place winner cannot compete in the District Contest, the 2nd place finisher can compete in his/her place as the post contest winner.

**IMPORTANT:** This completed form must reach the District Oratorical Chairman no later than one week prior to the District Contest date.

District No. \_\_\_\_\_ Chairman \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_, Oregon Zip \_\_\_\_\_



## **American Legion invites high school students to compete in speech contest**

*Winners will earn scholarship money, chance to compete in national finals*

High school students of **(community)** have been invited by **(name of post)** Post No. \_\_\_\_\_ of The American Legion to compete in the **84th** American Legion High School Oratorical Scholarship Program. The invitation to enter the competition was extended today by Post Commander **(or Post Oratorical Chairman)** **(full name)**.

The contest for **(community)** students has been arranged with the full cooperation of local school officials and **(full name and title)** of the **(school name)** faculty who will assist with the contest arrangements.

The subject in the prepared oration portion of the contest must be about some phase of the Constitution of the United States, emphasizing the duties and obligations of a citizen to the United States government. The prepared oration must be the original effort of each contestant and must be 8-10 minutes in length.

***(Insert here a paragraph detailing the awards offered in the local competition.)***

In addition to the awards by winners of the various elimination rounds of competition, college scholarships of \$20,000, \$17,000, and \$15,000 will be awarded to the first through third places in the national finals. Each state winner who competes in the first round of the national contest will receive a \$2,000 scholarship. Participants in the second round who do not advance to the national final round will receive an additional \$2,000 scholarship. The top three youth orators who have won all previous elimination rounds of the contest will vie for top honors in the national contest in April in Indianapolis.

The American Legion will pay the expenses of state winners at the national contest.

High school students in **(community)** who are interested in entering the competition will find complete rules and contest information at \_\_\_\_\_

For more information, please visit [www.legion.org/oratorical](http://www.legion.org/oratorical)

**Contact (list name of contacts, email addresses and phone numbers)**



# American Legion Oratorical Contest

## Public Service Announcements

### 30 Seconds

Education ... protecting the foundation of freedom that we as Americans cherish. American Legion Post **(number)** can help students compete in a contest that awards more than \$188,000 in scholarships. The American Legion High School Oratorical Scholarship Program can provide a stepping stone to further education. For more information contact **(your local high school)** or American Legion Post **(number) at (phone number)**.

\*\*\*

College. Money. Two words that go hand-in-hand. It takes a lot of money to pay for a college education. For high school students, there is a way to actually talk your way to college. Each year The American Legion High School Oratorical Scholarship Program awards over \$188,000 in college scholarships. Contact American Legion Post **(number) at (phone number)** for details. Find out today how you can get involved and talk your way to college.

### 20 Seconds

Are you in high school? Planning on college? Need some college money? Then consider talking your way to college. You can if you're a winner in The American Legion High School Oratorical Scholarship Program. Contact American Legion Post **(number) at (phone number)** for details. Talking can pay big dividends.

\*\*\*

Do you know someone at your high school who is an excellent speaker? Could this individual use a college scholarship? Your local American Legion post has information on how to qualify for over \$188,000 in scholarships. Contact American Legion Post **(number) at (phone number)** for details.

### 10 Seconds

Talk your way to college? You can if you're a winner in The American Legion High School Oratorical Scholarship Program. Want to find out more? Contact American Legion Post **(number) at (phone number)** for details.

\*\*\*

The American Legion High School Oratorical Scholarship Program offers students over \$188,000 in scholarships. Contact American Legion Post **(number) at (phone number)** for details.

For more information, please visit [www.legion.org/oratorical](http://www.legion.org/oratorical)

*Contact (list name of contacts, email addresses and phone numbers)*

