

Oratorical Contest

The American Legion High School Oratorical Scholarship Program

"A Constitutional Speech Contest"

Explanation and Purpose: The American Legion High School Oratorical Scholarship Program

Program is a series of competitive oratorical events that culminate with the award of scholarships applied to a student's attendance at any college or university in the United States.

The Program's purpose is to enable high school students to develop a deeper knowledge and appreciation of the Constitution of the United States; to nurture and further develop their leadership qualities and foster their ability to think and speak clearly and intelligently; to help them prepare for acceptance of the duties, responsibilities, rights, and privileges of American citizenship; and to give students an opportunity to earn through the competitive process - contributing scholarship awards.

The Program occurs once each year. It enables students to display their oratory skills in competition for scholarship awards through five levels - Post, District, Regional, Department (State), and National. At each level of competition. The student will deliver two components: **a-10-minute oration** on some aspect of the Constitution with emphasis to the attendant duties and obligations of a citizen to our government (student's choice) and **a 3-5-minute oration** on one of four (4) predetermined topics specific to Constitutional Amendments. Though the topics for the 3-5-minute oration are listed at Enclosure 1, the actual topic to which the student must speak during the second oration will not be revealed until during the actual contest. The student must come prepared to discuss any of the Enclosure 1 topics.

Additional Requirements: All contestants at each contest level are required to speak in the English language on both the prepared and the assigned topic. 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. but most 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. The speech must be given without the use of notes, amplification, lectern, or prompting. Props are not permitted.

The student must be a citizen or lawful permanent resident of the United States, enrolled in junior high school or high school, remain under 20 years of age throughout the contest, and be legally domiciled or attend an educational institution within the state they enter the competition. Students who have graduated from high school early but are not yet enrolled in a college, university, trade school or other institution of higher learning at the time of the department finals contest are eligible.

Note: Public, parochial, military, private or state accredited home school commencing with grade 9 and terminating with grade 12 are also eligible

Awards for Winners:

- National Level: 1st place: \$25,000; 2nd place: \$22,500; 3rd place: \$20,000 (all scholarships)
- Department (State) Level winners who advance to and participate in the first round at the National level: \$2,000 (scholarship)
- Regional Level: 1st place: \$1000 (scholarship)
- District (County) Level: 1st place: \$300; 2nd place \$200; 3rd place: \$100 (all cash awards)
- American Legion Post 176 Level: 1st place: \$300; 2nd place \$200; 3rd place: \$100 (all cash awards)

Additional Award Notes: 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.

Current 2022-2023 Locations and Schedule:

Contest Location and Lodging: Wyndham Indianapolis West Hotel, Indianapolis, IN Quarterfinal and Semi-Final Rounds: 22 April 2023
Championship: 23 April 2023

Department (State) Schedule: 3 March 2023, 7pm, location TBP

Region schedule and location will be set sometime in February 2023

District (County) Schedule: 22 January 2023, 1300, Post 177, 3939 Oak St, Fairfax, VA 22030

American Legion Post 176 Schedule: TBD 3-10 January 2023, American Legion Post 176, 6520 Amherst Ave Springfield VA 22150. Date is flexible depending on Post 176 availability and amount of received emails from participants. Firm Date will be announced by 19 December 2022

- The Post 176 deadline for accepting students is 19 December 2022.

Competition Attire: Uniforms are not permitted. Appropriate business attire is required by all contestants and contestants are not permitted to wear awards and medals from previous competitions.

Scoring criteria is provided at Enclosure 2.

The American Legion Post 176 Process and Contacts:

Based on its location, the American Legion Post 176, located at 6520 Amherst Ave, Springfield, VA 22150 is responsible helping with arrangements and representing this program to John Lewis R. Lewis High School, Lake Braddock Secondary School, Thomas Edison High School, Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology, and West Springfield High School. Once the school has helped to inform of the program to students and parents, it will be up to the student to send an email expressing their interest in competing along with their mailing address, phone number, and email address to Mr. Randy Wheeler, Second Vice Commander Post 176, at secondvice@post176.org (with copy to randy.w.wheeler@gmail.com) who will quickly respond to answer any questions.

Enclosure 1

Assigned Topics for 2023 (for 3-5-minute oration)

- Amendment VI - In all criminal prosecutions, the accused shall enjoy the right to a speedy and public trial, by an impartial jury of the State and district wherein the crime shall have been committed, which district shall have been previously ascertained by law, and to be informed of the nature and cause of the accusation; to be confronted with the witnesses against him; to have compulsory process for obtaining witnesses in his favor, and to have the Assistance of Counsel for his defense.
- Amendment X - The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people.
- Amendment XIV, Section 1 - All persons born or naturalized in the United States and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside. No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.
- Amendment XVI - The Congress shall have power to lay and collect taxes on incomes, from whatever source derived, without apportionment among the several States, and without regard to any census or enumeration.

Enclosure 2

Score Assessment Criteria:

The judges at each level will be assessing the following for both the oration and the assigned topic:

Content:

Was the speech original, fresh, and direct, applying the contestant's knowledge?

Did the contestant skillfully select examples, descriptions, analogies, and specific data?

Was the speech logical, well organized, and developed?

Did the contestant show a comprehensive knowledge of the subject matter?

Speaking Skills:

Did the contestant use volume, rate, pitch, and diction effectively?

Rate the contestant's style: language use, word arrangement and selection, and transitions.
Were body actions - poise, eye contact, posture, gestures, facial expressions -- appropriate?

Penalties:

1 point for each minute or fraction thereof over or under allotted time

1-10 points for failure to speak on the Constitution