



Dear Student,

The American Legion Oratorical Contest exists to develop deeper knowledge and appreciation for the U.S. Constitution among high school students. Since 1938, the program has presented participants with an academic speaking challenge that teaches important leadership qualities, the history of our nation's laws, the ability to think and speak clearly, and an understanding of the duties, responsibilities, rights and privileges of American citizenship. The program has featured numerous politicians and prominent contestants over the years, including former presidential candidate Alan Keyes, Former Vice President of The United States Mike Pence, and radio Talk show host Lou Dobbs. Young orators earn some of the most generous college scholarships available to high school students.

Are you ready for the challenge? The American Legion awards the scholarships, which can be used at any college or university in the United States. Are you willing to put in some hard work? You can also check out the contest on You Tube to see some previous winners in action. Our form of Government may not be perfect but it is still the best in the world. This is just one of the reasons why The worlds Largest Veterans Organization, The American Legion promotes the vital program. I render a "good luck " to you if you decide to step up to the plate and put your name down as one of our Champions!

For God and Country,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Michael P. Strauss".

Michael Strauss, Adjutant

South Carolina American Legion Department of South Carolina



2023-2024
The American Legion Department of South Carolina
H.W. Dare Maness
High School Oratorical Scholarship Program



Department Commander

Jim Kvam

Department Adjutant

Michael D. Strauss

Americanism Commission Chairman

Jim Rabon

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 on the part of high school students. Other objectives of the contest include the development of leadership, the ability to think and speak clearly and intelligently, and the preparation for acceptance of the duties and responsibilities, the rights and privileges of American citizenship.

All Department & Quadrant Scholarships must be used within five years from graduation from high school.

Quadrant Scholarships

1st Place Award—\$1,000.00

2nd Place Award—\$500.00

Department Scholarships

1st Place Award—\$2,500.00

2nd Place Award—\$1,500.00

3rd Place Award—\$750.00

4th Place Award—\$750.00

NATIONAL SCHOLARSHIPS:

The winner at the Department/state level who is certified into and participates in the first round of the national contest will receive a **\$2,000.00 National 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 **\$2,000.00 scholarship** to pursue education at any college or university in the United States.

National scholarship awards are presented to the three finalists in the final round of the national contest as follows:

1st place - \$25,000.00

2nd place - \$22,500.00

3rd place - \$20,000.00

A contestant must give both their prepared oration and the assigned topic discourse in order to receive the scholarship.

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 twenty (20) years on the date of the national contest (May 17-19, 2024) and who is presently enrolled in a high school or junior high school (public, parochial, military, private or home school). The curriculum of the school must be considered to be of high school level, commencing with grade nine (9) and terminating with grade twelve (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. Contestants must either be legally domiciled within or attend an educational institution within the department (state) that they enter competition. Contestants can enter competition through only one post, quadrant and department.

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.

For each contest in which a contestant participates, an entrance/certification blank supplied by the post commander of the local American Legion post and a second portion of such blank to be signed by the high school principal attesting to the fact that the student is a regularly enrolled member of the ninth, tenth, eleventh, or twelfth grades of that particular school will be submitted to the contest chairman. The three finalists of the national contest will be ineligible for further participation at any level.

Rule 2: The Prepared Oration

The prepared oration must be on some aspect of the Constitution of the United States with emphasis on the 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 (8) minutes or more than ten (10) minutes for delivery. It must be delivered in the English language.

Contestants may have in their possession a copy of their prepared oration in the first holding room. They may consult the copy of their prepared oration, until they exit the holding room in order to begin the contest, at which 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 top discourse, quotations must be indicated as such. Where quotations are more than ten words in length, the author's name must be given in the manuscript and cited orally. The singing of a song(s) 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.

Rule 3: Assigned Topic

The assigned topic discourse must not consume less than three (3) minutes or more than five (5) 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 (5) 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 as listed under assigned topics for the current year's contest in this brochure.

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. It is to be understood that the vast majority of the prepared oration and/or assigned topic must still be delivered in the English language.

Rule 4: Assigned Topics for 2024

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES Amendment II

A well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed.

Amendment XXIII

The District constituting the seat of Government of the United States shall appoint in such manner as the Congress may direct:

A number of electors of President and Vice President equal to the whole number of Senators and Representatives in Congress to which the District would be entitled if it were a State, but in no event more than the least populous State; they shall be in addition to those appointed by the State, but they shall be considered, for the purposes of the election of President and Vice President, to be electors appointed by a State; and they shall meet in the District and perform such duties as provided by the twelfth article of amendment.

Amendment XXV, Section 3

Whenever the President transmits to the President pro tempore of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives his written declaration that he is unable to discharge the powers and duties of his office, and until he transmits to them a written declaration to the contrary, such powers and duties shall be discharged by the Vice President as Acting President.

Amendment V

No person shall be held to answer for a capital, or otherwise infamous crime, unless on a presentment or indictment of a grand jury, except in cases arising in the land or naval forces, or in the militia, when in actual service in time of war or public danger; nor shall any person be subject for the same offense to be twice put in jeopardy of life or limb; nor shall be compelled in any criminal case to be a witness against himself, not be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor shall private property be taken for public use, without just compensation.

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.

Rule 5: Dress

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

Rule 6: Travel

Expenses of entrants must be borne by the sponsoring American Legion post in the quadrant and state contests. The national organization of The American Legion will pay travel costs of the department winner and their chaperone to the national competition. The department winner must be accompanied by a chaperone over 21 years of age.

Rule 7: TV and Radio

Live television and radio broadcasts are permitted in all contests as well as KINESCOPES, FILMING OR OTHER TYPES OF MEDIA FOR LATER SHOWING, provided:

- 1 The American Legion is in no way obligated financially.
2. Satisfactory arrangements are made in advance with the contest official.
3. The lighting and other site conditions are the same for all contestants.
4. The filming or broadcasts shall in no way distract the contestants or interfere with the pre-announced scheduled time of contest.
5. The normal speaking voice of the contestant is not interfered with or amplified within the auditorium.

Rule 8: Contest Regulations

As the program is of an educational nature, participating posts are urged to open the contest to the general public without admission charges and without the conducting of any sales offer or fund-raising program in connection with such contest. The name of the contestants may be released to the press for publicity purposes in advance of the contest, but the release of photographs or interviews in advance of the contest is not permitted.

All contestants must be prepared to deliver their written oration in duplicate to the chairman or judges upon call. These will be returned except in the case of winners. Substitutions for disqualified contestants or contestants unable to compete for any reason are not permissible.

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.

It is assumed that all contests will be conducted in auditoriums having a stage or platform from which contestants will speak; however, the use of notes, amplification, lectern, or speaker's stand is NOT permitted. Props are NOT permitted. **Prompting in any manner will disqualify the contestant in the state finals. Prompting can be permitted in contests below the state level.** 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.

Contestants shall speak in order of drawing. For the prepared oration, each contestant shall speak for at least eight (8) minutes, but not more than ten (10) minutes and for the assigned topic discourse, not less than three (3) minutes or more than five (5) minutes.

In post contests, judges shall render their decision after the delivery of prepared orations. In all other contests, after the delivery of prepared orations, the following shall govern:

Immediately prior to the delivery of the last contestant's prepared oration, a card upon which will be written the actual words of the topic upon which all contestants will base the assigned topic discourse, will be drawn by some individual designated by the chairman, but will not be made known at this time to the contestants or audience members.

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 chairman). As the contestants conclude their prepared orations, they must return to a soundproof waiting room. As each speaker concludes his/her assigned topic discourse, they shall not be allowed to associate with contestants who have not fulfilled the assigned topic requirement and must be escorted to a private holding area.

Approximately five minutes prior to the time of the delivery of the assigned topic discourse, contestant number one will be informed of the topic drawn for the assigned topic discourse and shall be permitted to retire to privacy, under the direction of an individual appointed by the 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 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 he/she previously appeared. He/she 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 number one.

The chairman will be expected to introduce each contestant by name after the judges have surrendered their score cards and before the winner is announced. Public announcement of the first place winner only shall be made in the post contest. The winner and first runner-up will be announced at the quadrant contests and at the state contest.

No deviation is allowed in rules and regulations without consent of the state chairman.

Rule 9: Judges

The judges are a very 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. Good judgment will be exercised to select a well-rounded group of judges and the chairman should provide such judges with a copy of the rules well in advance.

Arrangements for judges will be made by the chairman of each contest. Post contests shall require the services of not fewer than three (3) or more than five (5) judges. Quadrant and department contests shall require the services of five (5) judges. Judges' names should not be made public until the conclusion of the contest. During the contest, the judges shall be seated in different locations in the auditorium, and each judge shall 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 the assigned topic discourse on the attendant duties and obligations of a citizen must result in the judges downgrading the contestant involved. Judges are permitted to downgrade a contestant up to a maximum of ten (10) points for failure to speak on the Constitution.

Following the last assigned topic discourse the judges, timekeeper, tabulators and the contest chairman may proceed to a private room for final review and tabulation. **THE DECISION OF THE JUDGES IS FINAL.**

Rule 10: Tabulators

The contest chairman will appoint no less than two (2) tabulators at the post contest and three (3) tabulators for the quadrant and department contests. 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 tabulations.

Rule 11: Timing

An official timer shall be named by the chairman whose duty it shall be to keep an accurate time record of each contestant, and 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 stop watch and time cards carrying the figures 8, 9 and 10. These cards should be large enough so as to be easily seen by the contestants and when eight minutes have been used, the time warning card with the figure 8 thereon shall be held up followed by 9 and 10 as the speaker progresses. The same procedure shall be used with cards bearing the figures 3, 4, and 5 during the assigned topic discourse in the quadrant and state contests. The contest chairman shall announce the time consumed by each contestant for the prepared oration and the assigned topic discourse immediately after each contestant speaks for the benefit of the judges.

The contest chairman will announce any violation of time for each contestant. A penalty of one point will be deducted for each minute or fraction thereof – over or under the allotted time – shall be assessed against the contestant's total score.

Rule 13: Post and Quadrant Contests

POST CONTESTS must be concluded by JANUARY 29, 2024. Participants in post contests may be drawn from one or more high schools in the post area. This contest will be under the direction and supervision of the post commander or representative. Each contestant in post contests shall present a prepared oration of not less than 8 or more than 10 minutes and such oration must be without the aid of notes, and the original effort of each contestant. Immediately upon conclusion of the post contest, the post commander shall certify the winner to their district commander. District commanders will forward results to the respective vice commander.

All QUADRANT CONTESTS will be held Saturday, FEBRUARY 10, 2024. NO exceptions will be allowed (unless there is inclement weather).

All post winners will participate in their respective quadrants. In quadrant contests and the state finals, each contestant shall present the prepared oration and in addition will be required to speak on one of the assigned topics drawn, for not less than 3 or more than 5 minutes. This contest will be under the direction and supervision of the Vice commanders, who will coordinate and plan the quadrant contest with the assistance of the District Commanders and the Department Oratorical Contest Committee.

Rule 14: Department / State Contest

The contest for The American Legion Department of South Carolina will be held on Saturday, MARCH 9, 2024 @ 10:00 a.m. at St. Paul's Lutheran Church, 1715 Bull Street, Columbia, SC 29201. (The committee reserves the right to change the date and

Rule 15: National Contest

The 2024 National Finals will be May 17-19, 2024 in Hillsdale, Michigan, at Hillsdale College. Quarterfinal and semifinal contests are scheduled for Saturday, May 18, 2024 with the finals scheduled for Sunday, May 19, 2024.

All contestants and chaperones will arrive the Friday of the contest weekend. All contestants and chaperones will stay on campus at Hillsdale College.

A mandatory pre-contest orientation session for all contestants will take place the Friday evening of the contest weekend. A banquet honoring all contestants will be Sunday afternoon, following the national championship contest.

If further information is needed, please contact the following:

Chairman:

Robert (Bob) Scherer
rdscherer@ymail.com
cell phone: 828-292-6031

The American Legion Department of SC

deptsc@southcarolinalegion.org
803-612-1171

PREVIOUS NUMBERS

*National Winner

** National Runner-Up

1939 Fletcher	Padget, Jr.	Saluda *	1994 Warren	Basemore	Irmo
1940 Wade	Weatherford	Florence	1995 Whitney	Jackson	Seneca**
1941 Carolyn	Collier	Spartanburg	1996 Julia	Brackett	Fort Mill
1942 James L.	Walker	Johnston	1997 Katherine	Overcamp	Seneca
1943 Allen	Watson	Ware Shoals	1998 Amanda Jill	Bryant**	Anderson
1944 Freddie	Bolinkin	Greenville	1999 Julie	Moore	Anderson
1945 James L.	Gowen	Greenville	2000 Jamie D.	Frazier	Moncks Corner
1946 Tom	Kay	Anderson	2001 Jamie D.	Frazier	Moncks Corner
1947 John D.	Long, III	Union	2002 Jamie D.	Frazier	Moncks Corner
1948 Jane	Gerard	Charleston	2003 Irene	Smith	Summerville
1949 Richard	Garland	M. Pleasant	2004 Jared T.O.	Gorham	York
1950 Eugene	Brantley	Chester	2005 Andrew C.	Cooper	Beaufort
1951 Herma	Hill	Lancaster	2006 Sarah H>	Newman	Camden
1952 Charles	King	Easley	2007 Andrew	McCumber	Anderson
1953 Tedi	Hoke	Blacksburg	2008 Anna Lynn	Doster	Camden
1954 Norman F.	McLeod	Dalzell	2009 Lauren	Kumler	Greenville
1955 Nathan	Saint Armand	Gaffney	2010 Victoria Beth	Black	Iva *
1956 Broxie	Nelson	Chester	2011 Joshua	Arnold	Seneca
1957 Michael	Sheheen	Camden	2012 No Contest held		
1958 Mike	Stein	Greenville	2013 Elizabeth	Scannell	Goose Creek
1959 Mike	Stein	Greenville	2014 Sarah Jean	Foster	Goose Creek
1960 John P.	Callahan	Lexington	2015 Victoria	Nwankudu	Florence
1961 Jeanette N.	Wall	Moncks Corner	2016 Emily E.	Rose	Greenville
1962 Arthur B.	Hartzog	Blackville	2017 Jessica	Scannell	Goose Creek
1963 Frank G.	Dunn	Conway	2018 Jessica	Scannell	Goose Creek
1964 Richard Allen	Poole	Lexington	2019 Jessica	Scannell	Goose Creek
1965 Richard E.	Johnson	Nesmith	2020 Isaac	Jansen	Greenville
1966 Violet	Harrington	Florence	2021 William	Sander	Fort Mill
1967 Johnathan S.	Crowe	Rock Hill	2022 William	Sander	Fort Mill
1968 Leon Dale	Gilbert	Rock Hill	2023 Henry	Overbay	Cayce
1969 Edward H.	Smith	Lancaster			
1970 George M.	Hearn, Jr.	Rock Hill			
1971 Gerald	Caskey	Lancaster			
1972 Thomas W.	Joiner	Rock Hill *			
1973 Michael P.	Flanagan	York			
1974 William E.	Spears, III	Beaufort			
1975 William E.	Spears, III	Beaufort			
1976 Virginia	Inman	Greenville			
1977 Francis J.	Rivers	Rock Hill			
1978 Francis J.	Rivers	Rock Hill			
1979 John J.	Hearn	Rock Hill			
1980 John P.	Roddey	Rock Hill			
1981 Richard S.	Lackland	W. Columbia			
1982 Emmette J.	Saleeby	Dillon			
1983 Sally	Boatright	Columbia			
1984 Jeffrey S.	Singleton	Florence			
1985 Wanda	McGuirt	Columbia			
1986 David W.	Garrison	Orangeburg			
1987 David W.	Garrison	Orangeburg			
1988 Elizabeth	Overcamp	Seneca			
1989 Danielle P.	Williams	Summerville			
1990 Melanie	Page	Seneca			
1991 Melanie	Page	Seneca **			
1992 Melissa	Suarez	Seneca			
1993 Warren	Bazemore	Irmo			

2023 / 2024 Certification Form

THIS SECTION TO BE COMPLETED BY HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPAL:

This is to certify that Mr/Ms _____ is a citizen of _____ or lawful permanent resident of the United States and s a Bonafide student presently enrolled in _____ High School, and the curriculum of said school is considered to be of high school level, commencing with grade nine (9) and terminating with grade twelve (12). His/her age is _____ and is in grade _____.

His/Her mailing address is: _____

NOTE: ALL CONTESTANTS MUST BE BONAFIDE STUDENTS UNDER THE AGE OF TWENTY (20) ON THE DATE OF THE NATIONAL CONTEST (May 17-29-2024).

Signed: _____ PRINCIPAL

School Address: _____

City, State, Zip. _____

POST COMMANDER, PLEASE COMPLETE THIS SECTION & MAIL OR EMAIL ENTIRE FORM DIRECTLY TO YOUR VICE COMMANDER NLT January 30, 2024.

I, Commander of _____ Post No. _____, The American Legion, Department of South Carolina, do hereby certify that the above-named student is the official entrant of this Post in The American Legion Constitutional Speech Contest for 2023-2024.

Signed by Post Commander _____

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**DEPARTMENT VICE COMMANDERS, PLEASE EMAIL DIRECTLY TO
deptsc@southcarolinalegion.org, IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE QUADRANT CONTEST.**

I, _____, Vice Commander of The American Legion, Department of South Carolina, do hereby certify that the above named student was declared by the judges as the winner of this Quadrant Contest, and is eligible to represent the said Quadrant in the Department Finals of The American Legion Constitutional Speech Contest for 2024.

Signed by Vice Commander _____
