

YOUTH ACTIVITIES PROGRAM

Youth Activities programs can be a big asset for your Post and District when they are promoted in your communities. Issue press releases and introduce these programs in the community. People like to hear of organizations doing things for veterans as well as local youth.

All the information that is needed to conduct the Youth Activities Program is online at www.vfw.org. After you log in (or create an account and log in), click on My VFW and then on the VFW Training and Support heading. There you will find a wealth of information about VFW programs! Scroll down and click on Community Service & Youth Activities for more information specific information, including the Youth Activities Manual.

When approaching the various types of youth activities, develop a plan of implementation. Allow plenty of time for press releases, advertising as well as contact with community leaders. Local papers like to hear of different youth programs, so it is usually easy to get coverage. Our youth is our future, and can strengthen our Posts within their communities. We are promoting good citizenship and showing young people the joys of service.

Informed Post, District and Auxiliary Chairpersons are vital within our organizations. They provide a vital link between the community and today's youth. Contact your local schools, scouting organizations, as well as the many church groups of your areas. Check out the various kind of activities which they already have and try to build on them. Be excited about our programs. Be creative and work in new programs with local teachers and scout leaders. Be sure to honor these young people with certificates, trophies, plaques and cash awards to help keep them excited and motivated.

Encourage your Posts and Districts to report their programs on the X sheets. Reporting on a monthly basis makes it easier and more accurate.

Post Awards

There will be a \$50.00 cash award and certificate for first place presented to the Posts who have the most hours, dollars, and member participation reported in the following membership categories:

- Membership Category 1 - Up to 150 Members
- Membership Category 2 - 151-300 Members
- Membership Category 3 - 300 Members and up

District Awards

There will be one District Plaque Award presented to the District who has the most hours, dollars, and member participation reported.

PATRIOT'S PEN
2021-2022 Theme: "How Can I Be A Good American?"

Program Overview

The Patriot's Pen Program. It is a 300-400 word essay contest sponsored by the VFW and Auxiliary nationwide for students in grades 6 through 8, including those home schooled. The VFW appreciates the difficult task that teachers and Administrators have to develop curriculum to prepare students for their future. We realize that it is particularly challenging because of the myriad of career choices that lie ahead for students. Regardless of the path they choose, however, one thing that students have in common is that they will hopefully all become active U.S. citizens and the next generation of decision makers and leaders of our great country. For that reason, the VFW believes that students are never too young to ponder the rich heritage of freedoms that they are inheriting from those patriots who have gone before and to begin to formulate their role in preserving and advancing those freedoms. The Patriot's Pen Contest incorporates both academic and good citizenship instruction. In addition, we believe that most would agree, that learning to effectively organize and communicate their beliefs and ideas is a skill that will serve students well in all walks of life.

Key information for Posts

Get started in your schools as soon as possible. Be sure to have all the information (entry forms, theme, rules and eligibility requirements, post award information as well as District and state information) when you approach your teachers to help you. Maybe even a copy of last year's winning essay. Posts and Auxiliaries are encouraged to work together in promoting and conducting the program.

Rules:

The contest is open to all 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students enrolled in a public, private, or parochial school or a home schooled study program within the United States, its' territories and possessions; or enrolled in an overseas school as a dependent of the US Military or US Civilian personnel. (Foreign Exchange students are excluded)

The essay must be the contestant's original work and the participants cannot refer to their race, disabilities, national origin, or identify themselves, their school, city or state, in any way within the essay. All essays must be typewritten and have to be no less than 300 or more than 400 words. A one letter word such as (a), will be counted as one word. Essays either under or above requirements will be disqualified.

After post judging is complete Post Chairman may advance their "winner(s)" based on the following schedule:

1-15 essays – One (1) entry to District

16-30 essays – Two (2) entries

31-45 essays – Three (3) entries (NOTE: Each additional 15 essays entitles one additional entry.

The number of schools participating does not affect the number of entries allowed.

Once the Post judging is completed, Chairpersons and Commanders should ensure that the winner's materials are properly submitted to the District Patriot's Pen Chairperson. Please follow the District Chairperson's instructions regarding where, when and how entries are to be submitted. Unless otherwise directed, you will need to submit items 1-4, that are listed below under Key information for Districts. Note that there is a link provided there to access those documents. Do not forget to heap loads of recognition and praise on your Post Winner(s). Completing a press release for the local paper with a picture, as well as some prize for the winner(s) would be most appropriate.

Deadlines:

- November 1, 2021 – Student entries essays must be in the hands of the Post Chairman
- November 15, 2021 – Post judging completed
- November 22, 2021 – Post winning entries to District Chairman
- December 15, 2021 – District judging completed
- December 20, 2021 – District winning entry to Department PP Chairman
- January 1, 2022 – Department judging completed

Key Information for Districts

District Chairpersons are urged to aggressively promote the Patriot's Pen Program. After coordination with your Auxiliary counterpart please reach out to every Post and Auxiliary in your District. Establish a quick, easy and effective line of communication between you and the Post Patriot's Pen Chairman/Commander. Consider using e-mail or social media for this purpose. As the District meeting is to be a School of Instruction, it would not be at all out of line for the Patriot's Pen Chairman to ask for time to train Post Patriot's Pen Chairmen and Commanders on the program requirements.

Districts may advance one winner to the State Competition. Be sure to forward your District Winner's entry material to the State Youth Activities Director, with cc to Department Headquarters to arrive no later than December 20, 2021. The winner's package must include the following:

1. Typed copy of the speech
2. Entry form with all necessary signatures
3. A glossy 3x5 head and shoulder color photographs of your winner is acceptable but a digital photo is much preferred. Photos taken by a smart phone are acceptable and can easily be emailed.
4. Patriot's Pen Introductory questionnaire

(Email is the preferred method of submitting entries. A flash drive with all information is also perfectly acceptable. If that is foreign to you please recruit someone to help you - entries submitted the old fashioned way will be accepted as well)

The following link will allow you to access the documents required for submission of your entry. All documents can be downloaded and emailed including your student's digital picture which can also be emailed. Email entries are fast, eliminate expensive postage and the risk of lost mail. Documents can also be copied as needed. Documents are available on the state website at www.vfwil.org - and are located under resources. Click on Patriot's Pen

Top 3 entries will receive two nights lodging at the Department of Illinois Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen Awards Banquet and meeting weekend in Springfield.

The State Awards are:

- 1st Place - John H. Emery Youth, Pageantry and Patriotism Fund First Place Award in memory of Ronald Hubert \$1,000 Cash
- 2nd Place - Gaye Hines Memorial Second Place Award\$500 Cash
- 3rd Place Award - Raymond L. Moreland Memorial Third Place Award.....\$250 Cash

****The winner will be announced at the Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen Awards Banquet and the winner will read his or her winning essay****

The Post sponsoring the State Winner will receive a beautifully engraved plaque at the State Convention.

NOTE: Posts can receive credit for Patriots Pen participation by making a cash donation to the Department of Illinois, VFW earmarked "Patriots Pen".

Posts with 100 members or more must donate \$100.00

Posts with less than 100 members must donate \$50.00

Scout of the Year Program

Annually, the VFW honors Scouts who have been the recipient of one of the following awards: Eagle Scout Award, Girl Scout Gold Award, Venture Summit Silver Award, or Sea Scout Quartermasters Award. Also, in order to be eligible for the honor, the Scout must be a Registered, active member of a Scout BSA Troop, Girl Scout Troop, Venturing Crew, or Sea Scout Ship who has risen above their peers in exemplifying the exceptional qualities of their rank. The National Scholarship award are as follows:

\$5000.00 1st Place Scholarship

\$3000.00 2nd Place Scholarship

\$1000.00 3rd Place Scholarship

The Department of Illinois will be making an Award to the First Place nominee from the Boy Scout of America programs and the First Place Girl Scout of America nominee in the following amount however, only one Scout will be advanced to the National Competition:

\$300.00 Cash Award -Boy Scouts of America Scout of the Year

\$300.00 Cash Award -Girl Scouts of America Scout of the Year

This is a natural fit for the VFW, and will afford your Posts and Districts an opportunity to create activities that promote good Citizenship and Americanism. Each Post and District is urged to assign a liaison person to work closely with scout groups in your area.

On the Post level you can establish a Post Award of maybe a plaque or cash. Then advance your Scout of the Year entry or entries to your District or directly to the Department if no District program is offered. Districts are encouraged to honor entrants as well, but are not required.

Deadline dates for the Scout of the Year Award:

Student Entry to Post – March 1, 2022

Post Entry to State Headquarters – April 1, 2022

State Winner to National – May 1, 2022

Click following link to access necessary forms for Scout of the Year: www.vfwil.org - click on the resources tab and scroll down to Scout of the Year. Make an extra effort to involve scouts in your Post and District programs and activities. The rewards are great for you as well as the Scouts. By working with your local scouting groups, you may also be able to assist and promote the scouts to work toward achieving all of their scouting goals, not just those that qualify them to enter the Scout or The Year contest.

Let's plan to make Youth Activities a priority in our Posts and Districts. These programs will give your post more visibility in your community, will allow you more opportunity for new member recruitment, as well as encouraging current members to get involved because they have children and grandchildren. Remember too, the Patriot's Pen and Scouting programs can be a precursor for the Voice of Democracy Contest.

Ron and I sincerely hope that your involvement with youth activities this year will be a pleasant and rewarding experience for all involved. Always remember that you are invited to call if you have any questions or need any help.



Patriot's Pen Introduction Questionnaire

Representing VFW Post _____ and its Auxiliary,

a _____ at _____
GRADE (6th, 7th or 8th) SCHOOL NAME

in _____
CITY

STUDENT'S NAME

PRONUNCIATION OF STUDENT'S NAME

The student is the Son/Daughter of

Mother: _____

and

Father: _____

PATRIOT'S PEN



2021-2022 Theme "How Can I Be A Good American?"

Student Entry Deadline: October 31, 2021

Patriotic Essay Writing Competition Grand Prize: \$5,000 Award

What Is Patriot's Pen?

Conducted nationwide, this VFW-sponsored youth essay competition gives students an opportunity to write essays expressing their views on an annual patriotic theme. We invite you to join the more than 138,000 students who participated last year in this contest. The national winners will receive at least \$500. The first place national award is currently \$5,000.

The National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) has again approved this contest for its National Advisory List of Contests and Activities.

Big National Prizes

National awards total: \$55,000

Prizes include the various amounts listed below:

1st: \$5,000	7th: \$1,750
2nd: \$4,000	8-10th: \$1,500
3rd: \$3,500	11-12th: \$1,250
4th: \$2,750	13-23rd: \$1,000
5th: \$2,500	24-25th: \$750
6th: \$2,000	26-53rd: \$500

The Internal Revenue Service requires that any recipient that receives more than \$599 award should receive a Form 1099, identifying the proceeds as taxable. This may require the winner to provide their social security number.

How Does the Contest Work?

All entries begin at the Post level. The only exception is where schools/classes/youth groups have large numbers of students and wish to conduct their own competition, submitting one winner for each 15 students to the local VFW Post competition. Individual students may submit their entry directly to the Post. This participating Post should be within your local area and within your U.S. state of residence.

The contest consists of four levels. The first level (entry) is sponsored by local VFW Posts. Post winners advance, one for every 15 entries, to the VFW District (regional) level where the one first-place winner is advanced to the VFW Department (state) level. The one first-place winner at the Department level is then advanced into the VFW national competition. The winner from each Department (state) then competes for the national prizes.

Who Can Enter?

Patriot's Pen is open to 6th-, 7th- and 8th-grade students enrolled by the Oct. 31 deadline in public, private or parochial schools in the U.S., its territories or its possessions. Home-schooled students also are eligible. Although U.S. citizenship is not required, students must be lawful U.S. permanent residents or have applied for permanent residence (the application for which has not been denied) and intends to become a U.S. citizen at the earliest opportunity allowed by law. Dependents of U.S. military or civilian personnel in overseas schools can participate, too. (Foreign exchange students and former winners that placed in the National contest are excluded from the contest.)

2021-2022 Official Entry Form Patriot's Pen Competition

Must Be Completed by All Contestants

Name: First, M.I., Last

Address

City, State, Zip

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Phone

Email

Date of Birth (mm/dd/yy)

Grade in School

Age

School Name, City, State

Teacher's name and Email (if applicable)

To Be Completed by Student's Parent/Guardian

Parent/Guardian Name (Printed)

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

()

Parent/Guardian's Daytime Phone

Parent/Guardian's Email

To Be Completed by the VFW Post

I certify that this student has an authorized entry in our VFW Post Level Patriot's Pen Competition.

Post Commander's/Chairman's Signature

Post #

VFW Auxiliary President's/Chairman's Signature (if applicable)

Post Address

City, State, Zip

VFW Post Email

No. of students participating

No. of winners advanced to District

Amt. of Post/Aux. scholarship awards \$

Amt. of Post/Aux. additional expenses (banquet, pins, etc.) \$

PATRIOT'S PEN

2021-2022 Theme

"How Can I Be A Good American?"

Student Entry Deadline: October 31, 2021

I Have Read and Understand the Contest Rules

I certify that I am the sole author of the enclosed audio/essay entry and that I have only entered the competition once yearly if otherwise eligible. I understand that if it is found that I have entered any other Post's competition or used this essay for another VFW competition, I face elimination from the competition and will return any and all prizes or incentives awarded.

Signature of Student Participant Date

To Be Completed by the VFW District

I certify that the student named in the previous section is the duly selected winner of the Patriot's Pen Contest District Competition and is our sole entry into the Departments.

District Chairman's Signature Dist. #

Address

City, State, Zip

() _____
Phone Email

To Be Completed by the VFW Department Chairman

I certify that the student named in the previous section is the duly selected first-place winner of the Patriot's Pen Department Competition and is our sole entry into the National Judging.

Department Chairman's Signature

() _____
Daytime Phone Email

The winner has been will be (check one) notified that they are the first-place Department winner on _____.

How Am I Judged?

You will be judged on how well you understand, develop and present the theme. A positive approach is recommended to express your viewpoint.

Knowledge of the theme is worth 30 points:

You must show a thorough knowledge of the theme in your work. Demonstrate you have researched the issue extensively.

Theme development is worth 35 points:

Answer all relevant facts about the theme such as the who, what, where, when and why. Relate the theme to your own experiences.

Clarity of ideas is worth 35 points:

Write your essay in an easy-to-understand format. Leave your reader with a clear understanding of your explanation of the theme.

How Do I Get Started?

- Ask a teacher or youth group/club adult leader to supervise the Patriot's Pen writing competition.
- Contact a local VFW Post within your local area within your state and indicate your interest in participating.
- Establish a contact person who is a member of that VFW Post or its Auxiliary.
- Make sure that your essay is submitted to the VFW Post before the contest deadline of Oct. 31, 2021. You can submit your essay and entry form electronically (by email) upon the Post's approval. Entries sent to VFW National directly will be returned.

What Are the Rules?

- Essay length: 300-400 typewritten words (+ or - 5 words max).
- You must write your own essay.
- All essays should be typed in English with no color or graphics and cannot be less than 300 words or greater than 400 words in length. (Essays under or over these word amounts will be eliminated. Every word is counted regardless of length. The essay title (theme) or added footnotes do not contribute to the word count. At any time during the contest additional participant personal information (i.e. SSN, photo, etc.) could be requested by the VFW.

In no way may contestants identify themselves within their essay (including, but not limited to, your name, school, city, state, race or national origin.) Do not put your name on your essay. The entry form is your essay's cover sheet. Secure the Official Student Entry Form with a staple or other fastener on top of your essay. Contestants are allowed to enter only once each year if otherwise eligible (one Post competition). Contestants found in violation of this rule will face elimination from the competition and will be required to return any and all prize money awarded or received.

The essay must be a contestant's original work and a product of the contestant's own thinking. The approach to the Patriot's Pen theme should be positive and clearly focused. Poetry is not acceptable. Quotations may be used sparingly if plainly identified wherever used. A contestant's teacher, counselor or parent may check the essay for punctuation, grammar and/or spelling, but the content must remain the contestant's. Contestants will be judged on the basis of their essay alone and are not required to present the essay orally. All essays become the property of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. The VFW retain non-exclusive rights to use your essay and likeness in the promotion and execution of the organization's programs and activities.

Deadline Information

To qualify, all entries must be submitted to a sponsoring local VFW Post by midnight October 31, 2021.

Note:

If you need help finding a participating VFW Post in your area, follow these instructions:

First, visit vfw.org/FindaPost to "Find A VFW Post." Be sure this post is within the state you reside in.

If you need assistance, please email us at the VFW National Headquarters at youthscholarships@vfw.org.



For assistance contact:
816.756.3390 ext. 6155
Email: youthscholarships@vfw.org

Revised 4/2021

LOCAL VFW POST INFORMATION:

CONTACT: _____

PHONE: _____ **BEST TIME TO CALL:** _____

ALTERNATE CONTACT: _____

PHONE: _____ **BEST TIME TO CALL:** _____

SUMMARY

DISTRICT PATRIOT'S PEN PARTICIPATION REPORT

DISTRICT NO. _____

DEPARTMENT OF _____, VFW

The VFW Posts and Auxiliaries identified in this report in this District participated in the VFW annual Patriot's Pen Program.

GRAND TOTALS FOR POST COMPETITION: list totals taken from District report form(s)

_____	_____	_____	_____
Posts	Auxs	Students	Post Winners Advanced
\$ _____		\$ _____	
Monetary Awards		Addl. Money Expended	

MONETARY VALUE OF DISTRICT COMPETITION (add County Councils if applicable):

District Monetary Awards \$ _____

District Additional Expenses \$ _____

Signed by: _____ Date _____
District Chairman

PLEASE ATTACH COMPLETED REPORT FORM(S) AND GIVE THIS COMPLETED SUMMARY TO YOUR DEPARTMENT PATRIOT'S PEN CHAIRMAN

DISTRICT PATRIOT'S PEN REPORT FORM

POST #	AUXILIARY	NUMBER OF PARTICIPATING STUDENTS (need minimum of one)	NUMBER OF POST WINNERS ADVANCED (need min. of one)	MONETARY AWARDS	ADDL. MONEY EXPENDED

SCOUT OF THE YEAR Program



WHAT IS THE SCOUT OF THE YEAR PROGRAM?

Annually, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States awards three individuals who are: Eagle Scouts, Girl Scout Gold Award recipients, Venture Summit Award recipients and/or Sea Scout Quartermasters who have risen above their peers in exemplifying the qualities of that rank. Awards are as follows:

- \$5,000 1st place National scholarship
- \$3,000 2nd place National scholarship
- \$1,000 3rd place National scholarship

AM I ELIGIBLE?

To be eligible for the award, the candidate must:

- Be the recipient of the Eagle Scout Award, Girl Scout Gold Award, Venture Summit Award or Sea Scout Quartermaster Award.
- Be a registered, active member of a Boy or Girl Scout Troop, Venturing Crew or Sea Scout Ship at the time the above reward was received.
- Have demonstrated exemplary citizenship in school, Scouting and community.

Prior National Scout of the Year winners are ineligible. There is no minimum age requirement for applicants as long as all other eligibility criteria has been met. The maximum age requirement for applicants is 18 years old. If an applicant reaches their 18th birthday during the nomination year, they remain eligible as long as they are still in high school at the time of the submission deadline. A Scout may enter through only one VFW Post. A local Post can be identified by zip code at vfw.org/FindaPost.

WHAT ARE THE DEADLINES?

- Deadline for entry to VFW Post is **March 1**.
- One candidate with full entry criteria must be submitted by a VFW Post to the next level of judging by **April 1**. The VFW Department Scouting chairman can provide this information.
- The Department winner must be selected and submitted by their Department Scouting chairman to the VFW National Headquarters by **May 1**.

Questions should be directed to 816.756.3390, ext 6155. during normal business hours Monday through Friday or emailed to scouting@vfw.org.

Official Entry Form

SCOUT OF THE YEAR Program

MUST BE COMPLETED BY EACH CONTESTANT
and submitted directly to a VFW post in your community.

Name: First, M.I., Last

Address

City, State, Zip

()

Home Phone

Email

Date of Birth (dd/mm/yyyy)

Scout Troop Number

SCOUT/VENTURE CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that the foregoing information is accurate and if I am the winner, I will make myself available to receive the award at a presentation ceremony as designated by the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

Scout/Venture Signature

Date (mm/dd/yyyy)

UNIT LEADER'S CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that the above-named Scout/Venture is an active member of our unit or was when the award was received and the information supplied by the candidate is accurate to the best of my knowledge.

Unit Leader's Signature

Date (mm/dd/yyyy)

PARENT'S CONSENT

I hereby certify that all information on this application is correct. I willingly submit this name for consideration as the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States' Scout of the Year. If this individual is selected as the winner, I will ensure that he/she is allowed to attend a presentation ceremony as designed by the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

Father, Mother or Guardian Signature

Date (mm/dd/yyyy)



VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS.

SCOUT OF THE YEAR Program

**VFW DEPARTMENT
SCOUTING CHAIRMAN**

PHONE: _____

SPONSORING VFW POST

POST NUMBER: _____

ADDRESS: _____

POST COMMANDER'S SIGNATURE: _____

DISTRICT CERTIFICATION
IF APPLICABLE, CHECK WITH THE VFW
DEPARTMENT SCOUTING CHAIRMAN

DISTRICT #: _____

DISTRICT CDR.: _____

DEPARTMENT CERTIFICATION
MUST BE COMPLETED BY DEPARTMENT VFW
SCOUTING CHAIRMAN OR DEPT. COMMANDER

DEPARTMENT: _____

SUBMITTED BY: _____

SIGNATURE: _____

WHAT DOCUMENTATION IS REQUIRED?

The following documentation should be submitted:

- **Photograph of the Scout** — must be attached to this form. The Scout must appear in correct, complete uniform for their current rank. Recommended size 3" x 5".
- **School Participation Record** — a single page, one-sided resume of the candidate's school activities indicating academic achievements, offices held, honors received and significant participation in other activities.
- **Scouting Record** — maximum of three pages, one side only, listing of all Scouting participation beginning with Cub Scouts or Brownies - years of participation, unit numbers and sponsors. Also include when Eagle, Gold, Summit or Quartermaster Award was received and Palms. Identify leadership positions held at all levels, participation in Scouting activities (jamborees, Order of the Arrow conferences, etc.) and the candidate's Eagle Scout, Girl Scout Gold Award, Venture Summit or Sea Scout Quartermaster Project.
- **Community Service Record** — a single page, one-sided resume listing participation in community and religious service organizations (excluding Scouting and school), noting leadership positions held and any recognition received.
- **Letters of Recommendation** — Submit three letters, no more than two pages in length from:
 - A scout leader.
 - A community member.
 - A teacher/faculty member (if homeschooled, a parent letter is allowed).
 - In addition, you may include one or two additional letters, no more than two pages in length from local community members who have special knowledge of the candidate's abilities/accomplishments.
- **Completed Entry Form** – submitted to a local VFW Post. Local Posts can be identified by zip code at vfw.org/FindaPost.

WHO MAKES UP THE VFW SCOUTING TEAM?

The backbone of Scouting in the VFW is the VFW Scouting Team. These VFW members are deeply involved in Scouting, most with decades of experience.

Appointed by their Department Commander, they are responsible for promoting scouting in their state. They are available to encourage Posts to sponsor units, support units and individual Scout projects. They should be the Department's "expert" on all phases of scouting. Many Departments have multiple members of the VFW Scouting Team, but every Department should have at least one individual to promote the values of scouting to youth and to the VFW itself. For more information on the VFW Scouting Team call 816.756.3390, ext 6155, or email scouting@vfw.org



Revised 10/2019