



YOUTH PROGRAMS

YOUTH PROGRAMS

Voice of Democracy

Youth Activities

Patriot's Pen

Scouting

JROTC/SROTC

Civil Air Patrol

Navy Sea Cadets

Other Youth Projects

VOICE OF DEMOCRACY

The 2022-2023 Theme is
"Why is the Veteran Important?"

Program Overview

The Voice of Democracy Scholarship Competition is especially designed for high school students from grades 9 through 12 including home school students. It is a valuable educational experience for students and a wonderful opportunity for positive publicity for students, teachers, schools, and for the VFW in your community. The program dates back to 1946 and continues to be one of the VFW's most exciting programs. The VFW annually commits \$3 million in scholarships and incentives at the Post, District, State and National levels. Participants write and then record a three to five minute audio-essay on a patriotic theme selected annually. The Voice of Democracy Program is endorsed by the National Association of Secondary School Principals and is designed to foster patriotism in the participants and to enhance their written and oral communication skills. In addition, this program demonstrates the VFW's willingness to partner with local schools and the community.

Key Information for Posts

You may make this a joint effort with your Post Auxiliary. Prior planning insures a high level performance. Start early! In August, send press releases to local newspapers announcing the 2022-2023 topic. Shortly after school starts, bring or send Voice of Democracy materials to local principals or a previously developed contact within the school. Remember that there are many home schooled students that can not be reached through the local schools, this makes media presence even more critical to the success of this program. Furthermore, please remember that entries need not come from schools (even if the student entering is NOT homeschooled). No Post "owns" any school for the purpose of Voice of Democracy entries, however, District Chairpersons should work with their Posts to ensure efforts are not duplicated, resources are not wasted and "turf wars" don't start.

Make sure you have a core group of judges identified, selected and groomed well in advance of the Post judging. Always check your equipment before the judging begins to insure it functions properly.

Once the Post judging is completed, Chairpersons and Commanders should ensure that the winner's materials are properly submitted to the District Voice of Democracy 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 1-5, 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.



David Darte
Chairman

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Post 3912-12

Posts may advance their "winner(s)" based on the following schedule. Please follow any additional guidance that the District Chairperson may provide.

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

Key Information for Districts

District Chairpersons are urged to aggressively promote the Voice of Democracy 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 Voice of Democracy 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 Voice of Democracy Chairman to ask for time to train Post Voice of Democracy 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 VOD Director, with cc to State Headquarters to arrive no later than December 20, 2022. The winner's package must include the following:

1. Recorded Speech (on Flash Drive or Emailed)
2. Typed copy of the speech
3. Entry form with all necessary signatures
4. Two glossy head and shoulder color photographs of your winner are acceptable but a good quality digital photo is much preferred. Photos taken by a smart phone are acceptable and can be easily emailed.
5. Introductory questionnaire

(Comrades, 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. Please know that I will take them the old fashion way if absolutely necessary.

The following link will allow you to access the documents required for submission of your entry or entries. The documents are fillable for your ease and for legibility concerns. Those documents that require signatures are capable of your electronic signature for your convenience. All documents can be downloaded and emailed including your student's audio script, typewritten essay, and digital photo which can also be emailed. Email entries are fast, eliminates expensive postage and the risk of lost mail. Documents can also be copied as needed. Documents can be found on the state website at www.vfwil.org (click on resources and scroll down to Voice of Democracy) Depending on your email provider, the file with all information may be too large to send in one email. If that is the case, I suggest that you send the audio essay and written essay in one and the rest of the information in a second consecutive email.

Please understand that all that information is critical both to comply with National requirements and to allow the printing of the program book distributed at the State Awards Banquet. If critical information is not received timely, I may need to contact your student directly even if you have not yet announced your district winner. Please send in a complete entry - including quality photographs - so this action is not required. The

District Report Form and District Participation report form are due December 30 and are included in the link above.

Key Dates (Please Note New Deadlines)

- October 31 - Student entries to post
November 15 - Post judging complete Check on your District's due date
December 15 - District judging complete
December 20 - District winners due to the State Headquarters
January 10 - State Judging will be completed
January 15 - District Participation Report due to the State Headquarters
January 15 - Department winners due to National
January 31 - Department reports due to National
February 11, 2023 State Voice of Democracy Awards Banquet, Springfield

Prize Structure at the National and State Level

The winner from each state competition earns a trip to Washington DC and competes for national awards which range from a minimum \$1,000 up to \$30,000 for first place.

The State Awards are:

Table listing 13 state awards with their respective cash prizes, ranging from \$2,500 for 1st place to \$300 for all other district winners.

Districts and Posts wishing to become an Award sponsor should forward their donation of \$300 to Department Headquarters by December 1, 2022 earmarked V.O.D. Award Sponsorship. Thank you for this valuable support of the state program. Sponsorships will be awarded in the order received. Districts wishing to sponsor the Annual VOD Pizza Party or the Annual VOD Ice Cream Social for 2022-2023 Champions can donate \$300 but their donation needs to be earmarked "VOD Pizza party Sponsor" or VOD Ice Cream Social Sponsor" and the first District to respond will receive the sponsorship. Districts wanting to sponsor other Voice of Democracy weekend events, such as the Student luncheon during Saturday's Springfield tour or the tour of The Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum, should forward a donation of \$300 to Department Headquarters. The Donation should be earmarked Springfield Tour.

Each of the District Champions will be provided two nights free lodging in Springfield and one ticket to the Voice of Democracy Awards Banquet.

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

The school where the State winner attends will receive a \$500 award. In the event the student is home-schooled, the Department of Illinois VFW will donate \$500 to the charity of the parents' choosing.

Additional Resources

All the information that is needed to conduct the PP/VOD programs 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 to Voice of Democracy.

You can download and print the student entry forms for Voice of Democracy at the National website also by visiting the below links and clicking on:

Voice of Democracy: <https://bit.ly/30UN71g>

National's supply catalog has printed entry forms, posters and a wide variety of awards and gifts designed for use in the Voice of Democracy program. (800) 821-2606 or www.vfwstore.org.

The State Voice of Democracy Director and Assistant Directors are anxious to help your Post and District have its most successful Voice of Democracy program yet. If you have any questions about the Voice of Democracy, let us know. Our contact information is at the front of this section.

X Sheet Reporting

The Participation "X" for the Voice of Democracy will be posted in February based upon the report submitted by each District Voice of Democracy Chairman to the State Director. Department Commander Edwards and I encourage all Posts to actively participate in the Voice of Democracy Program. However, recognizing that some posts are just not able to generate a student entry, an "X" for Voice of Democracy can also be earned by making a donation (\$200 for Posts with 100 members or more or \$100 for Posts with fewer than 100 members). Send your check to the State Headquarters office by April 30, 2023 with a notation that it is for the Voice of Democracy program.

Promote patriotism in our youth through the Voice of Democracy program as we celebrate "Working Together Supporting Veterans"

VOICE OF DEMOCRACY



2022-2023 Theme

“Why Is The Veteran Important?”

Student Entry Deadline: October 31, 2022

Patriotic Audio Essay Competition Grand Prize: \$30,000 Award

What is the Voice of Democracy Program?

Since 1947, the Voice of Democracy has been the Veterans of Foreign Wars' (VFW's) premier scholarship program. Each year, nearly 80,000 high school students compete for more than \$2 million in scholarships and incentives. Students compete by writing and recording an audio essay on an annual patriotic theme. This year's theme is, “**Why Is The Veteran Important?**”

Why Should I Enter?

Prizes and scholarships can be awarded at the Post, District, state and national level. Department (State) winners receive an all-expense-paid trip to Washington DC, to tour the city, be honored by the VFW and its Auxiliary and receive their portion of \$156,000 in national awards, the top scholarship being \$30,000.

The Rules

Who can enter?

The Voice of Democracy is open to students in grades 9-12 by the Oct. 31 deadline who are enrolled in a public private or parochial high school or home study program in the United States, its territories and possessions; or dependents of U.S. military or civilian personnel in overseas schools. 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. Foreign exchange students, students age 20 or over, previous Voice of Democracy first place state winners, GED or Adult Education Students are ineligible.

What do I need to enter?

Record your original 3-5 minute (+ or - 5 second max.) audio essay on a flash drive, or other electronic device. You will submit the recording, typed essay and this completed entry form. Provide these items to your school/group competition or VFW Post for judging. In addition you can submit your emailed entry form, essay, and audio file to the VFW Post upon approval. You must be the sole author of your essay. The recording must be in your own voice and in English. Hearing/speech impaired students should email the Voice of Democracy National Office at youthscholarships@vfw.org for special instructions. No music, singing, poetry or sound effects are allowed. The body of the essay must not identify you in any way, (including, but not limited to your name, school, city, state, race, or national origin) although the recording & typed essay should be labeled with your name, to show ownership.

Where Do I Submit My Entry?

All entries begin at the VFW 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 VFW Post. Individual students may submit their entry directly to the Post. Entries sent to VFW National will be returned. One winner for every 15 entries from each Post advances to District and one District winner advances to the state (Department) competition. If you need help finding a participating VFW Post, follow these instructions: First, visit this website vfw.org/FindaPost to “Find A VFW Post.” If you do not have success in finding a Post, or if you have trouble getting in touch with them, you can contact your VFW Department (state) office to see if they can offer any information or assistance. You can visit this link <https://www.vfw.org/ContactUs/> and look for “Find a State Contact” to get your VFW state office's phone number and email. If you still need assistance, please email us at VFW National Headquarters at youthscholarships@vfw.org

What Is the Deadline for My Entry?

All entries competing at the Post level must be in the hands of that VFW Post by midnight, **Oct. 31, 2022**. It is the responsibility of the student to meet this deadline by submitting their entry to the proper location by ensuring it is a participating Post.

What Are the Judging Criteria?

Originality is worth 30 points:

Treatment of the theme should show imagination and human interest.

Content is worth 35 points:

Clearly express your ideas in an organized manner. Fully develop your theme and use transitions to move smoothly from one idea to another.

Delivery is worth 35 points:

Speak in a clear and credible manner.

**2022-2023 Official Entry Form
Voice of Democracy Competition**

Must Be Completed by All Contestants

Name: First, M.I., Last _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

() _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Date of Birth (mm/dd/yy) _____ Grade in School _____ Age _____ Jacket Size _____

School Name, City, State _____

Teacher's name and Email (if applicable) _____

To Be Completed by Student's Parent/Guardian
(required even if student is 18 or over)

Parent/Guardian Name (Printed) _____

Parent/Guardian Signature _____ Date _____

() _____

Parent/Guardian's Daytime Phone _____

Parent/Guardian's Email _____

**Participant Agreement for Students
Advancing to National Level**

If selected as a first-place state winner, I have the consent of my parent/guardian and school to attend the Voice of Democracy National Finals in Washington, D.C. as a guest of the VFW National Organization. In consideration for permission to participate in the National Voice of Democracy Competition ("Competition") I do hereby, for myself, for my heirs, executors, administrators and assignees, waive, release and discharge all rights and claims which I have or which may hereafter accrue against the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States (VFW) and/or the Departments (state organizations) of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and their respective officers, agents, successors and assigns from any damages which may be sustained by me in connection with my participation in or association with the Competition and/or arising out of any travel related to the Competition. In the event of sickness, accident or injury in connection with the Competition, I consent to and accept the services of a duly licensed medical, surgical or dental specialist selected on my behalf and for such treatments, as they may deem necessary. I understand that VFW will not be liable for such treatment. I further understand that the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States retains non-exclusive rights to use my audio file, essay, name and likeness in the promotion and execution of the organization's programs and activities.

**I Have Read and Understand the Rules and
Participant Agreement**

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 Post

I certify that this student has an authorized entry in our VFW Post Level Voice of Democracy 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.) \$ _____

To Be Completed by the VFW District

I certify that the student named in the previous section is the duly selected winner of the Voice of Democracy 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 Voice of Democracy Department Competition, 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 _____.

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

Local VFW Post Information:

Contact: _____

Phone: _____ Best Time To Call: _____

Alternate Contact: _____

Phone: _____ Best Time To Call: _____





Voice of Democracy Introduction Questionnaire

Representing VFW Post _____ and its Auxiliary,

a _____ at _____
GRADE (FRESHMAN, SOPHOMORE, JUNIOR, SENIOR) SCHOOL NAME

in _____
CITY

STUDENT'S NAME

PRONUNCIATION OF STUDENT'S NAME

The student is the Son/Daughter of

Mother: _____

and

Father: _____

SUMMARY

**DISTRICT VOICE OF DEMOCRACY
PARTICIPATION REPORT**

DISTRICT NO. _____

DEPARTMENT OF _____, VFW

The VFW Posts and Auxiliaries identified in this report in this District participated in the VFW annual Voice of Democracy Program.

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

| Posts | Auxs | Students | Post Winners Advanced |
|-----------------------|------|----------|--------------------------|
| \$ _____ | | | \$ _____ |
| Scholarships & Awards | | | Addl. Money Expended |

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

District Scholarships & Awards \$ _____

District Additional Expenses \$ _____

Signed by: _____ Date _____

District Chairman

***PLEASE ATTACH COMPLETED REPORT FORM(S) AND GIVE
THIS COMPLETED SUMMARY TO YOUR DEPARTMENT
VOICE OF DEMOCRACY CHAIRMAN***

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.



John Davin
Chairman

516 Lee Lane
Bolingbrook, IL 60440
Phone: 630-632-9878
Email:

bigjohndavin@hotmail.com

Post 5917-18

PATRIOT'S PEN
2022-2023 Theme: "My Pledge to Our Veterans"

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:

- October 31, 2022 – Student entries essays must be in the hands of the Post Chairman
- November 15, 2022 – Post judging completed
- November 22, 2022 – Post winning entries to District Chairman
- December 15, 2022 – District judging completed
- December 20, 2022 – District winning entry to Department PP Chairman
- January 1, 2023 – 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 Chairman with cc to Department Headquarters to arrive no later than December 20, 2022. The winner's package must include the following:

1. Typed copy of the speech
2. Entry form with all necessary signatures
3. Two 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 4 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. Students will also tour Springfield sites.

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 - William Glenn Britt Memorial Third Place Award.....\$400 Cash
- 4th Place Award - Raymond L. Moreland Memorial Fourth Place Award.....\$300 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 Scouts 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.

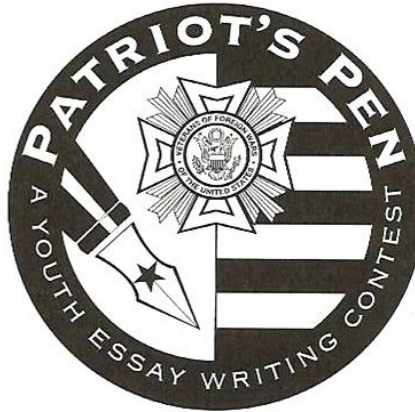
On the Post level you can establish a Post Award of maybe a plaque or cash. Then advance your Scout of the Year entry or entries to your District or directly to the Department if no District program is offered. Districts are encouraged to honor entrants as well, but are not required.

Deadline dates for the Scout of the Year Award:

Student Entry to Post – March 1, 2023
Post Entry to State Headquarters – April 1, 2023
State Winner to National – May 1, 2023

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 STUDEN'TS NAME

The student is the Son/Daughter of

Mother: _____

and

Father: _____

PATRIOT'S PEN



2022-2023 Theme

“My Pledge to Our Veterans.”

Student Entry Deadline: October 31, 2022

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

What is the Patriot's Pen Program?

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 84,000 students who participated last year in this contest.

Why Should I Enter?

Prizes and scholarships can be awarded at the Post, District, State and national level. Department (State) winners receive a portion of \$55,000 in national awards. National Winners will receive at least \$500. **The first-place national award is currently \$5,000.**

The Internal Revenue Service requires a recipient awarded more than \$599 be given Form 1099 identifying the proceeds as taxable income. This may require the winner to provide their social security number.

How Does the Contest Work?

All entries begin at the VFW 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 VFW Post. Individual students may submit their entry directly to the Post.

The contest consists of four levels. The first level (entry) is sponsored by 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 first-place winner at the Department level is then advanced into the VFW national competition.

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 which has not been denied) and intends to become a U.S. citizen at the earliest opportunity allowed by law. (Foreign exchange students or former winners that placed in the National contest are ineligible.)

How Do I Get Started?

- Ask a teacher or youth group/club adult leader to supervise the Patriot's Pen writing contest.
- Contact a participating VFW Post and indicate your interest in participating.
- Establish a contact person who is a member of that VFW Post or its VFW Auxiliary.

- Make sure that your essay is submitted to the VFW Post before the contest deadline of Oct. 31, 2022. You can submit your essay and entry form by email upon the Post's approval. Entries sent to the VFW National Headquarters directly will be returned.

How Am I Judged?

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.

What Is the Theme?

VFW's Commander-in-Chief annually chooses the year's theme. The 2022-2023 theme is:

“My Pledge To Our Veterans.”

Deadline Information.

To qualify, all entries must be submitted to a sponsoring VFW Post by midnight October 31, 2022.

Note:

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

First, visit vfw.org/FindaPost to “Find a VFW Post.”

If you don't have success in finding a Post, or if you have trouble contacting them, you can contact your VFW Department (state) headquarters office to see if they can offer any information or assistance. You can visit vfw.org/contactus to look for “Find a State Contact” to get your VFW state office's phone number and Email.

**For assistance contact
the VFW National Headquarters
at 816.756.3390 ext. 6155
Email: youthscholarships@vfw.org**

**2022-2023 Official Entry Form
Patriot's Pen Competition**

Must Be Completed by All Contestants

Name: First, M.I., Last _____
 Address _____
 City, State, Zip _____
 (____) _____
 Phone Email _____
 Date of Birth (mm/dd/yy) _____ Grade in School _____ Essay Word Count _____
 School Name, City, State _____

Teacher's name and Email (if applicable) _____

To Be Completed by Student's Parent/Guardian
(Required even if student is 18 or over)

Parent/Guardian Name (Printed) _____
 Parent/Guardian Signature _____ Date _____
 (____) _____
 Parent/Guardian's Daytime Phone _____
 Parent/Guardian's Email _____

What Are the Rules?

- You must write your own essay.
- All essays should be typed in English with no color or graphics. 300 - 400 words in length (+ or - 5 word max). Every word is counted regardless of length. The essay title (theme) or added footnotes do not contribute to the word count.
- 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 the essay. The entry form is your essays 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).
- The essay must be 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 Veteran's of Foreign Wars. The VFW retains non-exclusive rights to the use of your essay and likeness in the promotion and execution of the organization's programs and activities.
- At any time during the contest additional participant personal information (i.e. SSN, photo, etc.) could be requested by the VFW.

I Have Read and Understand the Contest Rules

Signature of Student Participant _____ Date _____

To Be Completed by the VFW Post

I certify that this student has an authorized entry in our VFW Post level Voice of 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 participants _____ No. of winners _____

Amt. of Post/Aux. scholarships awards \$ _____

Amt. of Post/Aux. additional expenses (Banquet, Pins, etc.) \$ _____

To Be Completed by the VFW District

I certify that the student named in the previous section is the duly selected winner of the Voice of Democracy 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 Voice of Democracy Department Competition, 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 _____.

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

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)



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



YOUTH CADETS AWARDS

VFW awards for special recognition of outstanding achievement and exceptional leadership are available for Junior and Senior ROTC programs, Naval Sea Cadets and Civil Air Patrol Cadets. If any of these programs exist in your community, these awards provide your Post an outstanding opportunity to honor these patriotic young people.

JROTC

(Junior Reserve Officer Training Course)

Why should a Post become involved?

Few youth programs provide a greater benefit to a Post than involvement with a Scouting or JROTC unit. Both programs annually produce individuals with an appreciation for patriotism, civic responsibility and the likelihood of future military service. As Boy and Girl Scouts, Sea Scouts, Venture Scouts and JROTC cadets, these individuals are often a tremendous asset to a Post by helping with Post projects such as placing flags on graves on Veterans Day and Memorial Day, helping with Post maintenance and fix-up efforts, helping distribute "Buddy"® Poppies, providing color guards and assisting with VFW public events.

As young adults, participants in these programs are much more likely than others of their age group to enter the military and, ultimately, become eligible for membership in the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

Awards Administration

Cadet awards may be initiated by the local VFW Post or directly by the cadet's unit. In either case, documentation should come from the unit as follows:

- Naval Sea Cadets: from the unit commanding officer in a letter with copy to NSCCHQ.
- Civil Air Patrol Cadets: from the candidate's squadron by submitting a CAPF-120.
- JROTC/SROTC Cadets: from the unit by submitting a letter documenting the criteria.

Criteria for Civil Air Patrol and Naval Sea Cadets

- Good academic standing
- Satisfactory progress in the cadet program
- Outstanding achievement in community service and/or the cadet program
- Outstanding leadership in the cadet program
- High moral character
- Exceptional professionalism in appearance and actions (Officer Award)
- Outstanding military bearing and conduct in and out of uniform (NCO Award)
- Involvement in patriotic programs, drill team, color guard, etc.
- Demonstrated potential and willingness to assume higher levels of responsibility

Additional criteria for JROTC & SROTC awards:

- Positive attitude toward the ROTC program
- For JROTC, must be enrolled as a 10th - 12th grade JROTC student
- For SROTC, must be an undergraduate student enrolled in Military Science I through IV
- Must maintain a "B" average in ROTC curriculum and a "C" average in all remaining subjects with no failing grades in the previous semester
- Active in at least one other student extracurricular activity (music, athletics, government, etc.)

Upon receipt of the letter and documentation, VFW Programs Department personnel will review the submitted materials, approve and contact the VFW Department. The Department or Post may then purchase the award(s) through the VFW Store for presentation.

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