

PA American Legion 22nd District Judging Addendum to the PA American Legion Annual Essay Contest Brochure

The 22nd District essay chairperson ensures that essays meet minimum requirements before including them in judging packets. They are all between 500 & 1000 words. To ensure fairness, separate copies of each qualified essay are given to the judges with all identifying information removed. (Cover sheets are removed and essays get ID codes on each page.) Judges are encouraged to mark up and make notes on their copies as they wish. They must then rank each essay in numerical order, starting with number 1 in first place and so on. The ranked essays are then returned to the chairperson for tallying. Judges are not identified to the students and they should not know any of the competitors.

What should judges look for?

Proper English structure

Is the essay well designed and planned? Are the spelling and grammar correct? Does it have clear sentences and paragraphs? Does it lead us from a beginning subject and opinion, through supporting paragraphs, and finish with a strong conclusion?

Accuracy

Is the writer believable? Does the essay make sense? Did it stay on topic making clear points or did it meander around and confuse? Are there any gaps or contradictions? Does it contain misconceptions or unsupported assertions? Different points of view or approaches to a subject are welcomed but they must be supported by reasonable arguments and facts. (A good bibliography substantiates those facts.)

Extent of information

Does the essay contain enough information and facts to effectively tell us about the subject and support opinions? An essay should tell us something of value, not just meander around making repetitive general statements to get up to the minimum word count. Did the writer research the subject via multiple reliable sources or did they appear to get all their information from only one place?

Originality

Does the writer tell us something new? Do they present information in a new way or from a different perspective? Do we believe it is the writer's own words? Does it look like sections of text were copied from someone else? Does the writing style change from one section to another? Do they make assertions or cite facts that are unsupported or clearly inaccurate? (May be an accident but shows poor attention to detail)

Bibliography

Any material that is not original must be cited in a bibliography for the information of the judges, stating publication, volume, page, date, publisher, and author. The guidance from the pamphlet is outdated and does not address internet Citations. Anything cited from the internet must include a verifiable internet address such as: <http://pa-legion.com/about/our-history/>

Questions? Contact Lynn John at 717-860-9203 or
norlynnjohn@gmail.com Suggestions for improving this
guidance are appreciated!

Checklist for Essay Contestants

1. Is your essay between 500 and 1000 words? Essays have been disqualified for being too short. We count the words in the actual essay not the cover sheet, title or bibliography.

Doing the minimum rarely wins contests,

2. Did anyone proofread the essay? Double check spelling, grammar, run-on sentences etc. (There are programs that catch many common errors.)

3. Is the essay easy to read? It is easier for judges to read larger fonts like 12p Ariel or 10p Verdana. Double spaced lines are appreciated and leave room for comments (on copied pages).

4. Don't put your name on essay pages (we just have to cover it up for judging). Signatures can be on the cover sheet (which judges don't see) but are not currently required.

5. Use the exact title from the pamphlet. It should be on the first page of the essay as well as on the cover sheet. Do not change the title.

6. Does the coversheet include the following?

Essay topic/title from the pamphlet.

name, telephone, and e-mail address.

(We also appreciate grade level and word count)

Sponsoring American Legion Post number name
& location. (contact chairperson Lynn John if unsure)

Parent or guardian name.

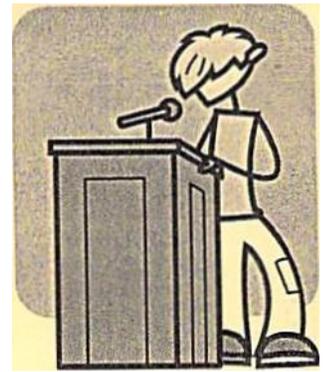
7. Is there a bibliography? It is hard to be competitive at higher levels without one. The PA Legion essay pamphlet does not specify a bibliography format nor is a sample provided. Students typically use the format required by their school. We must be able to verify each source listed unless the information provided in the bibliography. Links to Internet sites must work. We must have the ability to tell where a specific fact or quote comes from. One way is to number each source in the bibliography and to put that number in parenthesis after referenced fact or quote. Some put the bibliography in order by author and cite the author name in parenthesis.

8. Are there copies of the essay? It's unlikely but an essay can be damaged or lost. It is wise to send a copy directly to norlynniohn@gmail.com for tracking as well as to your local Leaiion.
9. Submit your essay by the required date on the pamphlet. If there is not a contest at your school, you can submit directly to your local American Legion Post. Contact the coordinator listed below if you have any questions.
10. Double Check to see that your essay was received. There have been rare cases where an essay has been misplaced or lost. Don't just leave an essay at an American Legion bar without following up. Don't mail it to the PA American Legion Headquarters in Harrisburg.

** If the contestant lives in York Adams Franklin or Fulton counties they can contact the 22nd District Coordinator, Lynn John, at 717-860-9203 or norlynniohn@gmail.com to ask questions or check on an essay submission.

COME OUT AND SUPPORT
THE PENNSYLVANIA AMERICAN
LEGION

ORATORICAL CONTEST



DEPARTMENT FINALS

Will be held

Saturday, March 9, 2019 - 10:00 a.m.

At

The Forum Building in downtown Harrisburg



See what a GREAT JOB these students do as they compete in one of the oldest programs of our Pennsylvania American Legion and show your support of the future leaders of our Commonwealth.

A dinner will be held for the contestants on Friday, March 8th at 6:00 p.m. at the Radisson Penn Harris Hotel, Camp Hill. Anyone is welcome to attend at their own expense. If you plan on attending the dinner, please contact Debbie Watson (717) 730-9100 no later than March 1, 2019.

The winner of this event will represent us at the National Oratorical Finals in Indianapolis, IN