

## **Pennsylvania American Legion 90th Annual Essay Contest**

For Grades 9-12

### **Topic: Is the American Dream still relevant today?**

Any student enrolled in grades 9 through 12 in a public, private, or parochial, cyber school or who is home schooled in Pennsylvania is eligible to participate.

Students **MUST** prepare essays without assistance and provide a statement to that effect on the last page. (See winning essay's sample)

All essays **MUST** have a cover page containing the following:

- The Essay Title (as stated above with no changes)
- Student's name, address, telephone, & email address (if applicable)
- School name and address if applicable
- Teacher's verification of student's grade level
- Sponsoring American Legion Post number & address
- Parent or guardian's name, address, and phone number
- Student's signature

All essays (typewritten preferred but not required) **MUST** be no less than 500 words and no more than 1,000 words.

The title **MUST** appear on all pages of the essay as well as the cover page.

Essays shall be judged on the following:

- Proper English structure
- Accuracy
- Extent of information
- Originality - any material not original must be cited in a bibliography for the information of the judges, stating publication, volume, page, date, publisher and author. Anything cited from the internet must include a verifiable internet address.
- No reference shall be made, for or against, any political candidate or political party affiliation

Deadline Dates:

1. **Before January 8, 2025 - Students must submit their essays to a local American Legion Post.** Each high school may select one winner for each American Legion Post in their school district.

2. Before January 22, 2025 - The American Legion Posts shall have selected and forwarded their winning essays to their county Essay Chairperson.
3. Before February 5, 2025 - counties shall have forwarded their winning essays to their appropriate district Essay Chairperson.
4. Before February 25, 2025 - districts shall have forwarded their winning essays to their sectional Essay Vice Chairperson.
5. Before March 12, 2025 - each section shall have selected and forwarded their winning essay to the Department Essay Chairperson.
6. The Department of Pennsylvania's Essay Program's top three winners will have been judged and selected by March 25, 2025.

The Department of Pennsylvania will award the following prizes to those top three winning Essays.

- First place winner will be awarded \$3,500, a plaque and a trip to the PA American Legion Convention in July to read the winning essay to the assembled delegates.
- The second place winner will receive \$3,000 and a plaque.
- The third place winner will receive \$2,500 and a plaque.

As American Legionnaires, we fully believe that education is the cornerstone upon which the future of America is built. Education becomes the first requisite of good citizenship and the relationship of The American Legion to Pennsylvania citizens is of prime importance as a means of keeping us a free civilization.

Our approach to supporting solid educational principles is direct and positive. We agree with the current PA Department of Education initiative of "writing across the curriculum" and reward the efforts of involved students through our annual essay scholarship program.

Through the annual Department of Pennsylvania American Legion Essay scholarship contest, students are provided an opportunity to showcase their talents and abilities in English by using originality, accuracy and research as evidence, while learning that the responsibilities and duties of good citizenship can be both rewarding and fun.

Since the inception of the Department of Pennsylvania state Essay Contest in 1935, The American Legion has awarded well over \$500,000 in scholarships, while local American Legion posts, counties, Districts and Sections have also offered suitable awards and prizes for their respective best essay winners as well.

For more information on participating in the Department of Pennsylvania's American Legion Essay Contest, visit <https://pa-legion.com/programs/student-and-youth/essay-program/>