



Department of Tennessee
American Legion
High School Oratorical
Scholarship Program

2025

~ A Constitutional Speech Contest ~

Potentially earn
\$28,000 in
scholarships

Introduction

The purpose of the American Legion Oratorical Contest is to encourage a deeper knowledge and appreciation of the Constitution of the United States among high school students and to encourage their oral expression in a public manner. Other objectives of the contest gauge a student's ability to speak clearly and with expression as students present their ideas about the freedoms and responsibilities of American citizenship in a convincing manner.

Scholarships are awarded by the American Legion of Tennessee and in cooperation with the National American Legion organization. Winners may use their scholarship to attend any accredited college or university, junior college or vocational trade school within the United States following graduation from high school, unless the winner enters service in the Armed Forces, which would extend the eligibility period. There are four different competitions a student could advance through, District, Division, Department (State), and the National Contest. Cash awards and scholarships are offered at all four levels of the competition. The National winner advancing through the state and national contests could receive up to \$28,000 in cash and scholarships.

The contest begins at the local level, as sponsored by members of an American Legion post in your community. Students interested in competing must coordinate with their local American Legion post for a sponsor and complete the official application. We recommend students and parents first meet with a leader from their local Legion post to discuss the competition and offer a practice presentation of their speech. The meeting can be held at a student's school. Applications must reach the American Legion of Tennessee, Department Headquarters by **February 4, 2025**.

American Legion High School Oratorical Contest for 2025

Program Facts

The American Legion National High School Oratorical Program was first conducted in 1938. Since its beginnings, over 30,000 contestants have participated at the National contest, representing each of the 50 states and territories where the American Legion has members.

The Department of Tennessee awards over \$ 6,000 to contestants who compete within the state-level competition each year. The winner of the State competition advances to the National competition held in April of each year in Indianapolis to compete against the winners from other states and U.S. territories. Those representing their state at the National contest will receive no less than \$2,000.

Rules and Regulations for Contestants

Students are expected to present two timed oral speeches totally from memory to an audience of Legion members, parents, and oratorical speech judges and other competing students.

The first speech is called the Prepared oration. Each student is allowed to present their speech on any aspect of the U.S. Constitution as their creativity takes them. Hopefully, each student will relate their views on aspects of a citizen's duties and obligations to our democracy as provided in the precepts of our Constitution, but they can pursue any aspect of what the Constitution says and how it relates to them. Complete freedom is given to students to offer thoughts on their knowledge and opinions, as inspired oral expression. Their timed speech must last at least eight (8) minutes and not exceed ten (10) minutes. The same subject and oration used in the three levels of the Department contest must be used in the National contest. The oration must bear a title.

The Assigned oration will be randomly drawn from a listing of four potential topics as described in this bulletin. The intent of the assigned topic is to test the speaker's subject knowledge and extent of research and creativity in making a convincing argument to support their convictions. The assigned speech must last for a minimum of three (3) minutes and not exceed five (5) minutes.

American Legion High School Oratorical Contest for 2025

In the prepared and /or assigned oration, quotations must always 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. Plagiarism of any kind will not be tolerated. It is acceptable to utilize or incorporate short phrases in a foreign language to establish a point. The greater majority of the prepared oration and assigned oration must be delivered in English. Singing is not permitted and will result in immediate disqualification. The contestant may, however, quote a verse(s) of a song(s) provided proper attribution is made. A raised platform is not mandatory; however, it is strongly recommended. The use of notes, amplification, lectern or speaker's stand, or any manner of prompting is not permitted. Props are not permitted. *For a full review of Oratorical Contest Rules and Regulations go to: <http://www.legion.org/oratorical/rules>*

Eligibility

All contestants must be lawful permanent residents of the United States of America and bona fide students in secondary schools (public, parochial, military, private and home school programs), under the age of 20 years on the date of the National Finals Program, and whose academic curriculum is of public high school level, and enrolled in classes equivalent to regular 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th grades on January 1 of the year when the National programs are conducted. A 2025 Oratorical Contest application (enclosed, page 6) must be completed by each student and submitted to Department Headquarters no later than February 4, 2025 and endorsed by a school official as being accurate. Students should coordinate with their local American Legion Post to be sponsored.

Local to State Competitions

Districts

There are 10 American Legion Districts in Tennessee. District Chairmen are to conduct a District Oratorical Contest within their Districts between February 8, and March 1, 2025. Upon completion, each District Chairman certifies the winners and runners-up to Department Headquarters. The winner of the District competition advances to Division.

Division

Each of the three Grand Divisions of Tennessee, West, Central, East. Division competitions must be completed within the dates of March 8-15, 2025. Upon completion, each Division Chairman certifies the winners and runners-up to Department Headquarters. The winner of each Division competition advances to the Department competition.

American Legion High School Oratorical Contest for 2025

Department

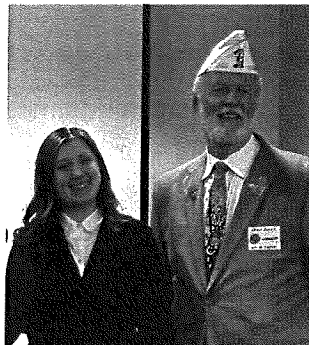
The Department competition is scheduled for March 22, 2025, starting at 10:00 am at the American Legion State Headquarters, 318 Donelson Pike, Nashville, Tennessee. The winner of the Department competition advances to the National competition as a guest of the Department, along with one chaperone, and competes for the National contest held at Hillsdale College, Hillsdale, Michigan, over the weekend of May 16 -18, 2025, along with Department winners from all 50 states and four territories.

Awards and National Competition

Students competing at the District level receive a \$25 travel expense reimbursement. Students competing at the Division level receive \$100 for finishing as the runner up or in the third position. The winner advances to Department and competes. Students competing at the Department are awarded a \$1,000 scholarship for third position, the runner up receives a \$2,000 scholarship, and the Department winner receives a \$3000 scholarship along with advancement to National competition in Hillsdale, Michigan. For 2025, National's scholarships are \$25,000 for the winner, \$22,500 for the runner-up, and \$20,000 for placing third. All other Department winners competing at the National competition receive no less than a \$2,000 scholarship competing in the quarter and semifinals.

2025 Department Winner and Semi Finalist at the National Competition, Abigail Whicker

Abigail Whicker from Mt. Juliet, Tennessee, and Department Commander, Lanny Culver. Ashley's sponsoring post was Post 281 of Mt. Juliet.



Abigail received \$7,000 in scholarships between the State and National Competition.

American Legion High School Oratorical Contest for 2025

You can watch last year's competition and listen to all three of the top winners give their presentations at the 2024 National event. If you had other question about the contest, there are several links for you to explore as well at : <https://www.legion.org/oratorical/255578/watch-2024-national-oratorical-finals-live-streamed>.

Assigned Topics for 2025 Oratorical Contest

Amendment 1

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

Amendment VII

In Suits at common law, where the value in controversy shall exceed twenty dollars, the right of trial by jury shall be preserved, and no fact tried by a jury, shall be otherwise re-examined in any Court of the United States, than according to the rules of the common law.

Amendment XVIII

Section 1. After one year from the ratification of this article the manufacture, sale, or transportation of intoxicating liquors within, the importation thereof into, or the exportation thereof from the United States and all territory subject to the jurisdiction thereof for beverage purposes is hereby prohibited.

Section 2. The Congress and the several States shall have concurrent power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

Section 3. This article shall be inoperative unless it shall have been ratified as an amendment to the Constitution by the legislatures of the several States, as provided in the Constitution, within seven years from the date of the submission hereof to the States by the Congress.

Amendment XXVI

Section 1. The right of citizens of the United States, who are eighteen years of age or older, to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of age.

Section 2. The Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

A Department of Tennessee and National Americanism Activity of The American Legion.

Your local American Legion Contact:

Name _____ Phone _____ Email _____

APPROVED BY:

The National Association of Secondary School Principals

Tennessee Department of Education

The Tennessee High School Association

THE AMERICAN LEGION 
DEPARTMENT OF TENNESSEE

2025 ORATORICAL CONTEST APPLICATION AND CERTIFICATION BY SCHOOL OFFICIAL

PLEASE SEND APPLICATION/CERTIFICATION TO
THE AMERICAN LEGION, DEPARTMENT OF TENNESSEE
ATTN: ORATORICAL PROGRAM
318 DONELSON PIKE BY FEBRUARY 4th, 2025 (SORRY, WE CANNOT ACCPT LATE
SUBMISSIONS) NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE 37214

High School Information

| | | |
|---------------------------|--|------------------|
| School's Name and Address | | School's Phone # |
|---------------------------|--|------------------|

Student's Information

| | | | | | | | | |
|--|-----|--------|------|-----------|------|--|------|--|
| Student's Name: | | | | | | | | |
| Current Grade: | 9th | | 10th | | 11th | | 12th | |
| Student is a Citizen of the United States: | Yes | | No | | | | | |
| Home Address: | | | | | | | | |
| City: | | State: | | Zip Code: | | | | |
| Student's Phone # | | | | | | | | |
| Student's Email | | | | | | | | |

Name of Parent or Parents

| | | | |
|------------------|--|------------------|--|
| Father | | Mother | |
| Address | | Address | |
| Father's Phone # | | Mother's Phone # | |
| Father's Email | | Mother's Email | |

Name of Teacher and/or Coach

| | | |
|------------------|--|--|
| Teacher or Coach | | |
| Address | | |
| Phone # | | |

American Legion Post Information

| | | |
|--|--|----------------------|
| American Legion Post # | | Post Officer's Name: |
| Parent Signature(s) | | |
| Parent's Printed Name | | |
| School Official's Signature | | |
| School Official's Printed Name & Title | | |