

# American Legion Department of Florida



## Oratorical Contest **Student Manual** 2017-2018

# 2017-2018 Oratorical Chairmen

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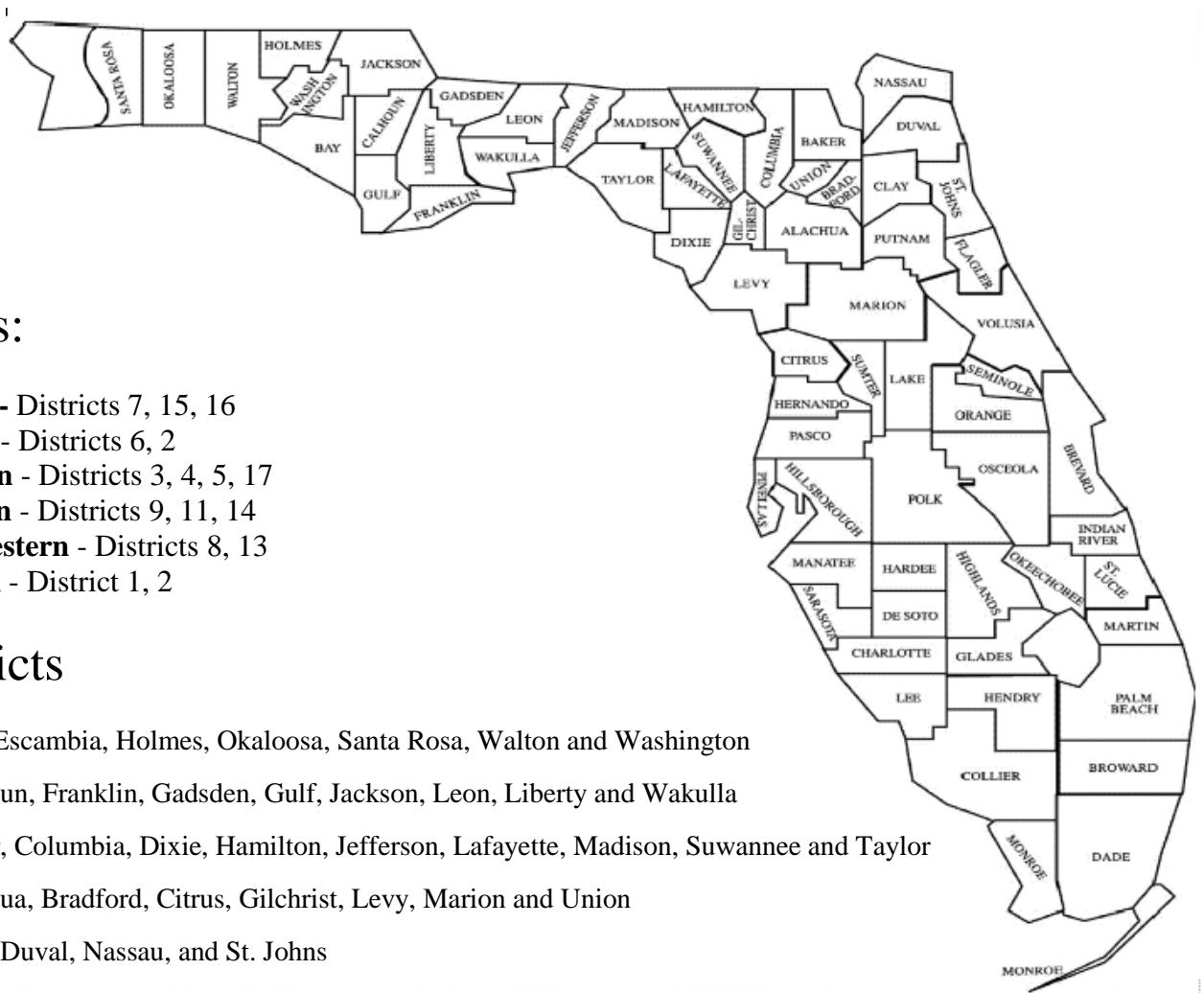
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### Note:

- If you have any questions about the Oratorical Contest in your area you can contact the appropriate District, Area, and Department Chairman. They are here to assist you!
- The next page has a map of how the Districts and Areas are broken up so you can determine who the contact is for your local area.
- If you need any assistance with getting in touch with a chairman or have any questions you can also contact American Legion, Department of Florida at 800-393-3378.



## Areas:

**Central** - Districts 7, 15, 16

**Eastern** - Districts 6, 2

**Northern** - Districts 3, 4, 5, 17

**Southern** - Districts 9, 11, 14

**Southwestern** - Districts 8, 13

**Western** - District 1, 2

## Districts

**1** – Bay, Escambia, Holmes, Okaloosa, Santa Rosa, Walton and Washington

**2** – Calhoun, Franklin, Gadsden, Gulf, Jackson, Leon, Liberty and Wakulla

**3** – Baker, Columbia, Dixie, Hamilton, Jefferson, Lafayette, Madison, Suwannee and Taylor

**4** – Alachua, Bradford, Citrus, Gilchrist, Levy, Marion and Union

**5** – Clay, Duval, Nassau, and St. Johns

**6** – Lake, Orange, Osceola, Seminole and Sumter

**7** – Polk County and that portion of Pasco County East of Interstate Hwy 75 (The American Legion Highway)

**8** – Sarasota, Manatee, Highlands, DeSoto and Hardee, and to include Post 113 Rotonda West

**9** – Broward County

**11** – Palm Beach, Okeechobee and Clewiston from Hendry County, Indiantown from Martin County and that part of Martin County south of the St. Lucie River

**12** – Brevard, Indian River, Martin (except Indiantown and that part of Martin County south of the St. Lucie River) and St. Lucie

**13** – Charlotte, Collier, Glades, Hendry (except Clewiston) and Lee, except Post 113 Rotonda West

**14** – Dade and Monroe

**15** – Hillsborough County, that portion of Pasco County, except New Port Richey, Hudson, Holiday and Seven Springs West of Interstate 75, (The American Legion Highway), and all of Hernando County

**16** – Pinellas County and New Port Richey, Hudson, Holiday and Seven Springs from West Pasco County

**17** – Flagler, Putnam, and Volusia



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## **Introduction:** **“A Constitutional Speech Contest”**

The American Legion Oratorical Contest exists to develop deeper knowledge and appreciation for the U.S. Constitution among high school students. Since 1938, the program has presented participants with an academic speaking challenge that teaches important leadership qualities, the history of our nation’s laws, the ability to think and speak clearly, and an understanding of the duties, responsibilities, rights and privileges of American citizenship.

Young orators earn some of the most generous college scholarships available to high school students. Over \$138,000 in scholarships can be awarded each year. The overall national contest winner gets an \$18,000 scholarship. Second place takes home \$16,000, and third gets \$14,000. Each department (state) winner who is certified into and participates in the national contest’s first round receives a \$1,500 scholarship. Those who advance past the first round receive an additional \$1,500 scholarship. The American Legion’s National Organization awards the scholarships, which can be used at any college or university in the United States.

High school students under age 20 are eligible. **Competition begins at the post level and advances to a state competition.** Legion department representatives certify one winner per state to the national contest, where department winners compete against each other in two speaking rounds. The contest caps off with a final round that decides the three top finishers.

**Speaking subjects must be on some aspect of the U.S. Constitution, with some emphasis on the duties and obligations of citizens to our government.**

# ORATORICAL CONTEST DATES AND AWARDS

## *DEPARTMENT DATES*

**All contests must be completed by these dates**	
Post Level	January 21, 2018
District Level	February 11, 2018
Area Level	February 25, 2018
Department Finals	March 10, 2018

## *DEPARTMENT AWARDS*

The awards listed below will be made at the Department level and awarded to the winners respectively. Travel and hotel accommodations will be paid by the Department of Florida for the contestants and chaperons in the Department Finals.

First Place	\$2,500.00
Second Place	\$1,500.00
Third Place	\$1,000.00
Fourth Place	\$500
Fifth Place	\$500
Sixth Place	\$500

NOTE: Each **AREA** contestant who participates in first round, *but does not advance to the Department Finals*, will receive a \$100.00 scholarship from the American Legion, Department of Florida.

## *NATIONAL DATES*

The following dates are for the National Oratorical Contests. Travel and hotel accommodations will be paid by the National Organization for each contestant and one chaperon to National Contests. More detailed information can be found at [www.legion.org/oratorical](http://www.legion.org/oratorical).

Quarter-Final Round	April 13, 2018
Semi-Final Round	April 14, 2018
National Finals	April 15, 2018

## *NATIONAL AWARDS*

First Place	\$18,000.00
Second Place	\$16,000.00
Third Place	\$14,000.00

\*\*Contestants who participate in the National Quarter-Final round competition receive \$1,500.00.

\*\*\*Contestants who participate in the National Semi-Final round competition receive an additional \$1,500.00, except the winner, who advances to the National Finals.

# WHAT TO PREPARE

## Part One: THE PREPARED ORATION

Contestants must prepare an original oration from memory on a phrase of the Constitution of the United States which will give *emphasis to the attendant duties and obligations of a citizen* to our government.

*The prepared oration must be the original effort of each contestant and cannot be less than eight minutes or more than ten minutes for delivery.*

In the Prepared Oration, as well as in the Assigned Topics, quotations must be indicated as such. Where quotations are more than ten (10) words in length, the author's name must be given in the manuscript and cited orally.

Contestants may have in their procession a copy of their prepared oration in the first holding room. The copy may be in electronic or paper form. They may consult the copy of their prepared oration until they exit the holding room in order to begin the contest, at which time the copy of the prepared oration will be surrendered to the contestant official who is monitoring the first holding room.

Note: The same subject and oration used at the state contest must be used at the national level

## Part Two: ASSIGNED TOPICS

The purpose of the Assigned Topics is to test the speaker's knowledge of the subject, the extent of his research, and the ability to discuss the assigned topic as related to the basic principles of government under the Constitution. The Assigned Topic Oration cannot be less than three minutes or more than five minutes for delivery.

The Assigned Topic shall be drawn by the contest official in full view of the audience, immediately before the last speaker begins delivery of his Prepared Oration and will be made known to the audience and each contestant approximately five (5) minutes prior to the time of delivery. The current year Assigned Topics can be found on the next page.

The topic will be selected from Articles and Sections as listed under Assigned Topics for the current year's contest in the National Contest Rules.

All contestants, at each contest level, are required to speak on the same Assigned Topic.

**\*\*Each Assigned Topic goes in a blank, sealed envelope and is selected at random on the day of the contest. Participants should be knowledgeable about each topic in order to be prepared\*\***

## **2018 Assigned Topics**

### **Amendment 2**

A well-regulated militia, being necessary to the security of a free state, the right of the people to keep and bear arms, shall not be infringed.

### **Amendment 3**

No soldier shall, in time of peace be quartered in any house, without the consent of the owner, nor in time of war, but in a manner to be prescribed by law.

### **Amendment 15**

Section 1.

The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude.

Section 2.

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

### **Article 2 Section 4**

The President, Vice President and all civil Officers of the United States, shall be removed from Office on Impeachment for, and Conviction of, Treason, Bribery, or other high Crimes and Misdemeanors.



## **ELIGIBILITY**

Eligible participants in The American Legion National High School Oratorical Contest shall be *citizens of or lawful permanent residents* of the United States.

All contestants must be bona fide students herein described as any student under the age of twenty (20) years on the date of the National Contest who is presently enrolled in a high school or junior high school (public, parochial, military, private or state accredited home school), in which the curriculum is considered to be of high school level, commencing with grade nine (9) and terminating with grade twelve (12). Students must be enrolled in high school or junior high school during the time of participation at any level of The American Legion National High School Oratorical Contest. Further, to participate in the Florida Contest, students must be residents of the State of Florida. Students whose parents are legal residents of another state must participate in that state.

*The top three finalists of the National Contest will not be eligible for further participation in any contest at any level.*

## **ATTIRE**

- Uniforms are **not** permitted
- Appropriate business attire is required for all contestants
- Contestants may not wear awards and medals from previous competitions.

**(SAMPLE COVER SHEET FOR ORATION)**

THE AMERICAN LEGION  
2018 NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL  
ORATORICAL CONTEST

**"TITLE OF ORATION"**

(YOUR NAME)

(YOUR ADDRESS)

(YOUR CITY AND STATE)

(YOUR ZIP CODE)

*Note: You will need to bring a hard copy of your Prepared Oration to each contest that you participate in.*

## **ORATORICAL FORMS**

### **Application:**

**There is no application that needs to be filled out to participate** in the National Oratorical Contest. If you are interested in participating in this contest you will have to get in touch with your local American Legion Post and tell them that you would like to sign-up for their Post Level Contest.

You can contact the American Legion, Department of Florida for assistance with finding out who your local American Legion Post Chairman is. Please contact:

Elizabeth Douglas, Programs Director  
Phone #: 800-393-3378 ext.235  
E-mail: edouglas@floridalegion.org

### **2017-2018 Certification Form:**

Once you have signed up to participate in a Post Level Oratorical Contest you will need to have your school principal complete the top portion of the 2017-2018 Certification Form which can be found on pages 8-9.

*If you are home schooled, then your instructor and/or parent can fill out the top portion of the Certification Form.*

This form must be complete and brought with you to the Post Level Contest so that the Post Oratorical Chairman can complete the bottom half of the page. If you are the winner of the Post Level Contest, this form will be forwarded to your District Oratorical Chairman, so that they are aware of you participating in the District Level Oratorical Contest. This procedure is carried out for the Area and State Contests.

DEPARTMENT OF FLORIDA  
***HIGH SCHOOL ORATORICAL CONTEST***  
**2017-2018 CERTIFICATION FORM**

***ALL OTHER FORMS ARE OBSOLETE AND WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED***

***THIS SECTION TO BE COMPLETED BY HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPAL***

This is to certify that Miss/Mr. \_\_\_\_\_ is  
a student at \_\_\_\_\_ High  
School, located in(city) \_\_\_\_\_ and is not  
undergoing post-graduate work, is not deficient in any school work for the current year,  
and was enrolled in this school as of December 31, 2017.

**Contestant's home address is:**

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_, Florida, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Student's Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Student's E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's First/ Last Name \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

**Principal's Signature** \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

*THIS SECTION TO BE COMPLETED BY*  
*POST CHAIRMAN*  
*AND MAILED TO DISTRICT CHAIRMAN*

I, \_\_\_\_\_, Oratorical Chairman of  
(name) \_\_\_\_\_ Post # \_\_\_\_\_, of The American  
Legion Department of Florida, do hereby certify that the above-named student is the  
official contestant of this Post in the 2017-2018 American Legion Oratorical Contest.

ATTEST:

SIGNED:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Post Commander

\_\_\_\_\_  
Post Chairman

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*THIS SECTION TO BE COMPLETED BY*  
*DISTRICT CHAIRMAN*  
*AND MAILED TO AREA CHAIRMAN*

I, \_\_\_\_\_, Oratorical Chairman of District # \_\_\_\_\_ of  
The American Legion Department of Florida, do hereby certify that the named contestant  
was declared by the Judges to be the winner of this 2017-2018 District Contest, and is  
eligible to represent this District in the Area Contest.

ATTEST:

SIGNED:

\_\_\_\_\_  
District Commander

\_\_\_\_\_  
District Chairman

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*THIS SECTION TO BE COMPLETED BY*  
*AREA CHAIRMAN*  
*AND MAILED TO DEPARTMENT CHAIRMAN*

I, \_\_\_\_\_, Oratorical Chairman of the  
\_\_\_\_\_ Area of The American Legion Department of Florida, do hereby  
certify that the above-named contestant was declared by the Judges to be the winner of this  
2017-2018 Area Contest, and is eligible to represent this Area in the Department Contest.

ATTEST:

SIGNED:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Area Commander

\_\_\_\_\_  
Area Chairman

# CONTEST OFFICIALS

## JUDGES

One of the most important tasks in staging a successful Oratorical Contest is the appointment of qualified contest officials.

The judges are an integral part of the Oratorical Contest. Their qualifications should be considered carefully, as the decision of the judges is final and must be reached without bias. Impartial judging in all contests is the key to fairness and the success of the program.

**Post, District, and Area Contests are required to have three (3) judges at the contest.** The Department Finals requires five (5) judges.

No publicity shall be given to the names of the judges in advance of the contest. During the contest, the judges will be seated in different locations in the auditorium, and each judge will render his final decision without consultation with other judges or any other person. Official score cards, which the Chairman shall provide, are available for use by the judges.

The contest chairman should meet with the judges prior to the contest to ensure that the judges have a thorough understanding of their responsibility and have the necessary materials for the contest.

## TABULATORS

Each contest should have **at least two (2) tabulators**; whose job it will be to make certain that the judges have fully tabulated and signed their scorecards before submitting them for final tabulation. Individuals appointed as tabulators should be well versed and experienced in working with numbers. They should be acquainted with the method of deciding a winner when two or more contestants receive the same placement point score total.

## TIMERS

Each contest should **have two (2) timers**, whose job is to time each oration. They should have knowledge of reading a stopwatch. Equipment needed is stopwatches and time cards.

## **POLICY STATEMENTS**

The following policies are set forth by the Oratorical Committee. These policies are in effect and shall be adhered to for all contests held in the state of Florida.

1. The National High School Oratorical Contest rules prevail unless stated differently in the Department of Florida policy statement.
2. Any qualified student who is a permanent resident of the state of Florida may enter the Oratorical Contest provided that he or she is **sponsored by a Legion Post**.
3. ***Certification of winners*** must be processed and forwarded to the next higher level immediately following the respective Contest.
4. *Once a contestant enters the contest at the Post level, he/she may **not** participate in any other Post contest. For Example: If Suzie is sponsored by Post 1 and does not win the Post Contest, she is ineligible to participate in another Post contest.*
5. A **representative of the Post** sponsoring a contestant **will accompany the contestant** at each level of competition.
6. At all levels, the contest time shall be given consideration in relationship to the distance the contestants must travel.
7. There shall be **three judges** for any level contest below the state finals.
8. Discretion shall be used when selecting Judges. People in education, forensics or debate, lawyers, judges, Toastmasters, and others familiar with speaking and the Constitution are excellent choices. For further clarification, contact Department Chairman.
9. It is recommended that Legionnaires **not** be used as judges. However, if it is necessary to use a Legionnaire as a judge, he or she shall not be in uniform.
10. Prompting will be considered disqualification of a contestant.
11. Props of any kind will not be allowed.
12. No contest below the State level will be held in a hotel/motel. All contests should be held in local Posts, high schools, or other appropriate facilities.
13. **The script shall be followed exactly as written so that each contestant will have experienced the contest, as it will be conducted at both the State Finals and National levels. DO NOT DEVIATE.**
14. Contests with only one contestant shall be conducted under regular contest conditions and rules. Judging is not required, but may be performed at the chairman's discretion.
15. ***No District Contest shall be held before 1:00 pm and no Area Contest shall be held before 2:00 pm.***