

PATRIOT PEN

2019-2020 "PATRIOT PEN" ESSAY Program

"What Makes America Great"

All information pertaining to the theme, judging, eligibility, awards and other aspects of this program are contained in the Veterans of Foreign Wars program booklet for the Patriot's Pen Essay Program. District Chairmen are responsible to ensure that their District programs are conducted within these rules and deadlines. District Chairmen are solely responsible for the conduct of the program within their Districts. Make sure that you distribute copies of your program to all Posts in your District in enough time to ensure a successful competition.

The Patriot's Pen Essay Program is a joint program with the VFW Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of Michigan. The Auxiliary does not need the permission of a Post to participate in the Patriot's Pen Essay Program. Post and District Chairmen are expected to include their VFW Auxiliary counterparts in all activities concerning the conduct of local and District programs. Coordination of the District program is the sole responsibility of each District Chairman. Post Chairmen must refer to their District program for their District program requirements and deadline dates.

- Eligibility -

Sixth (6th), Seventh (7th) and Eighth (8th) grade students in public, private, parochial and home schools in the State of Michigan. Former first place winners at the State and National level competition or any foreign exchange student are not eligible. Students do not have to be a relative of a member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars or its VFW Auxiliary to participate.

- Essay -

Essays must be typed, or computer printed in English, between 300-400 words, on a single sheet of paper, with no added color or art.

- Posts -

To receive credit for participation in the Patriot's Pen Essay Program, a Post **MUST SPONSOR THE PROGRAM IN THEIR COMMUNITY**. While it is important to offer the Patriot's Pen Essay Program in our schools, it is not solely a program for the schools. You may offer the competition to any sixth, seventh or eighth grade student. Foreign exchange students are not eligible. All entries **MUST** be submitted directly to the Post. They may be sponsored through local schools, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Church youth groups, Junior ROTC programs, etc. The Post is encouraged to solicit participants from as many sources as possible.

The Post will hold their own judging and may submit to District the number of students permitted by the following breakdown.

- 1-15 student participants = 1 top Post entry is allowed to advance to District
- 16-30 student participants = 2 top Post entries are allowed to advance to District
- 31-45 student participants = 3 top Post entries are allowed to advance to District
- 46-60 student participants = 4 top Post entries are allowed to advance to District
- 61-75 student participants = 5 top Post entries are allowed to advance to District
- Etc.

Posts may advance as many winners as they select based on the total number of students participating. Post judging is the responsibility of the Post Chairman and must be conducted in accordance with the National Judging Criteria.

The Post may forward each 1st place winning entry to District. Each student entry submitted by a Post to District must be an equal 1st place winner. This means each Post student entry sent to District must receive the same award. For example, a Post has 55 student entries and is eligible to send four entries to District for judging. These four entries must each receive an equal first place award from the Post. If the Post lists them as 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th place, then they can only send in one entry as the 1st place winner.

OR

Single Winner School Option. A teacher working in cooperation with a Post can elect to hold a competition in the school, judge the participants and advance one student entry selected as the school first place winner. The one declared school winner will advance to District as the "school winner" from each participating school sponsored by the Post.

- Districts -

Each District shall be responsible for the conduct of the program and judging of entries within their District. District Chairmen are expected to promote the expansion of the program by encouraging the participation of additional Posts. It is not always possible to restrict sponsorship strictly along VFW District boundaries. Posts may solicit student participation from any geographical area within the State of Michigan as long as they do not interfere with the sponsorship of other Posts. District Chairmen are expected to assist Posts in the coordination of sponsorship of all schools in their District. It is unacceptable that a school is not contacted.

Each District may submit only one entry to the Department for judging. This entry must be certified on the proper National Entry Form by the District Chairman to be the District First Place Winner of the District Program judging.

The following items **MUST** accompany the District entry to Department for judging.

- One student essay in accordance with the above rules.
- **One completed student entry form from the National Program booklet**
- One good quality picture, preferably wallet sized.
- One signed student release form provided by Department.
- One State Biographical Questionnaire for the District Winner.

It is the responsibility of the District Chairman to ensure that all materials are included. Any entry that does not include all materials may not be judged.

- Reporting -

To obtain program credit the Post Chairman portion of the Student Entry Form must be completed and submitted to District with each Post entry. The form must include the number of students participating from the school and the approximate cost for the program and awards for that school. Proper credit cannot be given without this

information. District Chairmen are required to prepare and submit a consolidated report of Post participation within their District using the District Report Form and the District Summary Form. These reports should accompany the District entry to Department.

- Deadlines -

Deadline for Post sponsored program entries is **October 31, 2019**. Post judging may not be held before November 1, 2018 and must be completed in time to ensure that winning entries are delivered to the District Chairmen by **November 15, 2019**.

District judging may not be held before November 16, 2018 and must be completed in time to ensure that the winning entry with all required materials are delivered to the Department Chairman by **December 7, 2019**. District judging is the responsibility of the District Chairman to be conducted in accordance with the National Judging Criteria.

The Department deadline for District entries is **December 7, 2019**. This deadline is **ABSOLUTE** and it includes all paper work. Department judging will be closed and will be the responsibility of the Department Committee. Be advised that the state judging will be attended only by the VFW Department Committee Members, VFW State Auxiliary Committee Members and the State Judges. The Committee has the sole authority to disqualify from the Department judging any entry which is in violation of the rules as stated in the Department Program and the National Program booklet.

- Awards -

All Post and District awards are the responsibility of those organizations.

Department awards will be presented at the 2020 Department of Michigan Mid-Winter Conference. District winners receiving Department awards will be invited to MidWinter Conference and are expected to be present. The sponsoring District must assume the cost of their winner's transportation, meals and lodging. Department will provide each District winner one banquet ticket. Banquet tickets for family members and other guests are the sole responsibility of the District in cooperation with the sponsoring Post.

- Forms -

- [Patriot Pen Student Entry Form](#)
- [Student Biographical Questionnaire](#)
- [School Release Form](#)

- [Patriot Pen District Reporting Packet](#)
- [Patriot Pen Score Sheet](#)

ALL-STATE Program:

Ten (10) Points if a Post sponsors or co-sponsors a student entry to District for judging. (10 Points Maximum)

- Contacts -

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