

**2023-2024 Official Entry Form**  
**Patriot's Pen Competition**  
**Must Be Completed by All Contestants**

Name: First, M.I., Last \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

( ) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone Email

Date of Birth (mm/dd/yy) \_\_\_\_\_ Grade in School \_\_\_\_\_ Essay Word Count \_\_\_\_\_

School Name, City, State \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher's Name and Email (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_

**To Be Completed by Student's Parent/Guardian**  
 (Required even if student is 18 or over)

Parent/Guardian Name (Printed) \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

( ) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Parent/Guardian Daytime Phone

Parent/Guardian Email \_\_\_\_\_

**To Be Completed by the VFW Post**

I certify that this student has an authorized entry in our VFW Post level Patriot's Pen Competition.

Post Commander/Chairperson Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Post# \_\_\_\_\_

VFW Auxiliary President/Chairperson Signature (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_

Post Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

VFW Post Email \_\_\_\_\_

No. of participants \_\_\_\_\_ No. of winners \_\_\_\_\_

Amt. of Post/Aux. scholarships awards \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Amt. of Post/Aux. additional expenses (Banquet, Pins, etc.) \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Proudly Sponsored By**



**To Be Completed by the VFW District**

I certify that this student named in the previous section is the duly selected winner of the Patriot's Pen Contest District Competition and is our sole entry into the Department finals.

District Chairperson Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Dist. # \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

( ) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone Email

**To Be Completed by the VFW Department**

I certify that this student named in the previous section is the duly selected first place winner of the Patriot's Pen Contest Department Competition and is our sole entry into the National Judging.

Department Chairperson Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Dist. # \_\_\_\_\_

( ) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone Email

The winner  has been  will be (check one) notified that they are the first-place Department winner on \_\_\_\_\_

**Local VFW Post Information**

Contact \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Best Time To Call \_\_\_\_\_

Alternate Contact \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Best Time To Call \_\_\_\_\_

**For assistance contact:**

816.968.1155

Email: [youthscholarships@vfw.org](mailto:youthscholarships@vfw.org)

**VFW STORE ORDER NO. 4440**

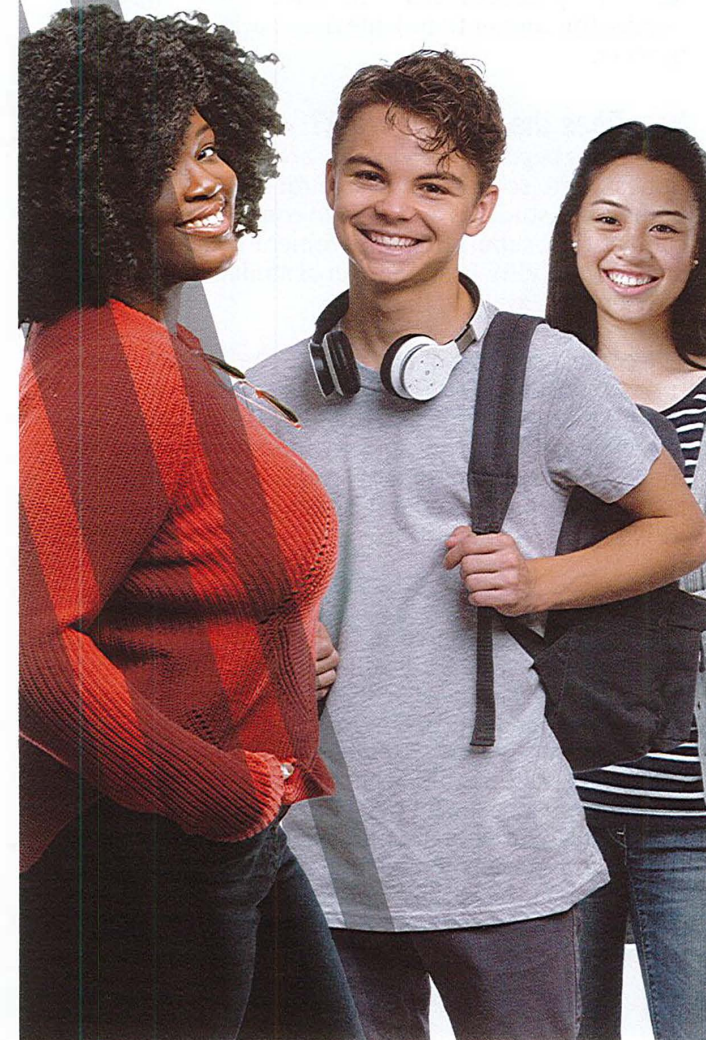
**Student Entry Deadline: October 31, 2023**  
**Patriotic Written Essay Competition**  
**Grand Prize: \$5,000 Scholarship**



**VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS.**

**PATRIOT'S PEN**

2023-2024 Theme:  
 "How are you inspired by America?"



## What is the Voice of Democracy Program?

Since 1947, the Voice of Democracy has been the Veterans of Foreign Wars' (VFW's) premier scholarship program. Each year, nearly 27,000 high school students compete for more than \$2 million in scholarships and incentives. Students compete by writing and recording an audio essay on an annual patriotic theme. This year's theme is, "What are the greatest attributes of our Democracy?"

## Why Should I Enter?

Prizes and scholarships can be awarded at the Post, District, state and national level. Department (State) winners receive all-expense-paid trip to Washington D.C., to tour the city, be honored by the VFW and its Auxiliary and receive their portion of \$171,000 in national awards, the top scholarship being \$35,000.

## The Rules

### Who can enter?

The Voice of Democracy is open to students in grades 9-12 by the Oct. 31 deadline, who are enrolled in a public, private or parochial high school or home study program in the United States, its territories and possessions. Although U.S. citizenship is not required, students must be lawful U.S. permanent residents or have applied for permanent residence (the application for which has not been denied) and intends to become a U.S. citizen at the earliest opportunity allowed by law. Foreign exchange students, students age 20 or over, previous Voice of Democracy first place state winners, GED or Adult Education Students are not eligible for entry.

### What do I need to enter?

Record your original 3-5 minute (+ or - 5 second max.) audio essay on a flash drive, or other electronic device. You will submit the recording, typed essay and this completed entry form. Provide these items to your school/group competition or VFW Post for judging. In addition you can submit your emailed entry form, essay, and audio file to the VFW Post upon approval. You must be the sole author of your essay. The recording must be in your own voice and in English. Hearing/speech impaired students should email the Voice of Democracy National Office at [youthscholarships@vfw.org](mailto:youthscholarships@vfw.org) for special instructions. No music, singing, poetry or sound effects are allowed. The body of the essay must not identify you in any way, (including, but not limited to your name, school, city, state, race, or national origin) although the recording & typed essay should be labeled with your name, to show ownership.

You may enter only one competition at one Post (if otherwise eligible) per year. At any time during the contest, additional participant personal information could be requested by the VFW, including but not limited to a photograph, SSN, or biographical information.

## Where Do I Submit My Entry?

All entries begin at the VFW Post level. The only exception is where schools/classes/youth groups have large numbers of students and wish to conduct their own competition, submitting one winner for each 15 students to the VFW Post. Individual students may submit their entry directly to the Post. Entries sent to VFW National will be returned. One winner for every 15 entries from each Post advances to District and one District winner advances to the state (Department) competition. If you need help finding a participating VFW Post, follow these instructions: First, visit this website [vfw.org/FindaPost](http://vfw.org/FindaPost) to "Find A VFW Post." If you do not have success in finding a Post, or if you have trouble getting in touch with them, you can contact your VFW Department (state) to see if they can offer any information or assistance. You can visit this link [vfw.org/ContactUs](http://vfw.org/ContactUs) and look for "Find a State Contact" to get your VFW state office's phone number and email.

*If you still need assistance, please Email us at VFW National Headquarters: [youthscholarships@vfw.org](mailto:youthscholarships@vfw.org)*

## What is the Deadline for My Entry?

All entries competing at the Post level must be in the hands of that VFW Post by midnight, Oct. 31. It is the responsibility of the student to meet this deadline by submitting their entry to the proper location by ensuring it is a participating Post.

## What Are the Judging Criteria?

### Originality is worth 30 points:

Treatment of the theme should show imagination and human interest.

### Content is worth 35 points:

Clearly express your ideas in an organized manner. Fully develop your theme and use transitions to move smoothly from one idea to another.

### Delivery is worth 35 points:

Speak in a clear and credible manner.

## 2023-2024 Official Voice of Democracy Competition Entry Form

*Must be completed by ALL contestants*

Name: First, M.I., Last

Address

City, State, Zip

( ) \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone

\_\_\_\_\_ Email

Date of Birth (mm/dd/yy)

Grade in School

Age

Jacket Size

School Name, City, State

Teacher Name and Email (If applicable)

***To be completed by Student's Parent/Guardian***  
*(Required even if student is 18 or over)*

Parent/Guardian Name (Printed)

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

( ) \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Daytime Phone

Parent/Guardian Email

***I Have Read and Understand the Rules and Participant Agreement***  
*(On opposite side)*

*I certify that I am the sole author of the enclosed audio/essay entry and that I have only entered the competition once yearly if otherwise eligible. I understand that if it is found that I have entered any other Post's competition or used this essay for another VFW competition, I face elimination from the competition and will return any and all prizes or incentives awarded.*

Signature of Student Participant

Date

