

HIGH SCHOOL ORATORICAL CONTEST
THE AMERICAN LEGION DEPARTMENT OF MISSOURI, INC.

FOREWORD AT CONTESTS

1. History - The American Legion High School Oratorical Contests were founded in the State of Missouri in 1934. This year marks the 85th Anniversary of this program in Missouri. The success of the program here made it a national program of The American legion in 1937. Several thousand boys and girls throughout the country now annually participate in these contests.
2. Purpose - The American Legion is proud of this record of service to our citizens of tomorrow; the purpose of which is to create interest in and a better understanding of our form of government. Other objectives are to develop leadership, the ability to think and speak clearly and intelligently, and the preparation of our future citizens for the acceptance of the duties, responsibilities, rights and privileges of American citizenship. It is our sincere hope that the discussions you are about to hear will help you to better understand and appreciate our freedoms, so that while you now enjoy these privileges, you will also more faithfully help preserve them for posterity through proper discharge of your responsibilities as a citizen.
3. Eligibility - All bona fide high school students are eligible to participate in these contests, as detailed in the Missouri and National rules.
4. Elimination Contests - High Schools may conduct a contest to select a student, or may select a student in any other manner desirable to represent their local high school. From that point on, the contestants progress through a process of contests. The various contests and awards are as follows:

<u>Contests</u>	<u>Awards</u>
High Schools	Bronze Medal
County or (Group)	Brooch
District – (16 in Missouri)	Silver and Bronze
Zone – (4 in Missouri)	Gold and Silver Medals Bronze to others
State	Gold and Silver Medals and Scholarships Totaling \$6,800
First-round National	\$1,500 per participant
Second-round National	\$1,500 per participant
National	3 University Scholarships totaling \$48,000

5. Tonight's Contest - The Contest here (today)(tonight) is to select a contestant for _____ to represent this _____ in the _____ Contest.
6. Prepared Oration - Each Contestant must deliver a prepared oration of between 5 and 6 minutes. Each contestant may select a subject, but must base it on some phase of the Constitution of the United States which will give emphasis to the attendant duties and obligations of a citizen to our government. Each contest chairman shall announce the title of the contestant's oration before the contestant speaks. If the oration is not on the United States Constitution, judges may downgrade a contestant up to ten (10) points.

7. Assigned Topic - (Does not apply to County and Group Contest). Following the Prepared Oration, each contestant must speak for 3 to 5 minutes on some one Article or Amendment to the Constitution, as selected by a drawing conducted by the Chairman during contest. The purpose of the assigned feature is to test the speaker's knowledge of the subject, the extent of research, and the ability to discuss the subject as related to the basic principles of government under the Constitution. Judges will downgrade contestants if they suspect part of the Assigned Discourse has been memorized.
8. Preparation for Assigned Topic. - (Does not apply to County & Group Contest) Contestants will be escorted to a private room, where they will be allowed 5 minutes each for the preparation of their assigned speech. They may not consult any person, book, or notes while in there, nor may they use any notes while delivering their assigned speech. Each speaker speaks on the assigned speech in the same order in which they previously appeared.
9. Judges - _____ judges have been selected to judge this contest, and have been supplied with complete instruction and score sheets specially prepared for these contests. The judges are seated separately in the audience, and do not confer with one another unless the Chairman should request them to break a tie. The decision of the judges is final.
10. Tabulators - At the conclusion of the contest, tabulators appointed by the Chairman will collect the judges' ballots, and will tabulate the results to determine the winner. Under the Rules, the Chairman is permitted to announce only the first place winner, or contestants receiving actual awards. The Timers are also checked by Tabulators to validate penalty points.
11. Timekeepers - Timekeepers are seated in the front row, and will keep an accurate record of the time consumed by each contestant. The timekeepers will display card signals or warnings to contestants at the conclusion of 3, 4, 5, and 6 minutes respectively. Timing is to start at the first word of the oration after the title is announced. A penalty of one point is to be assessed for each minute or fraction thereof, less or more than the time allowed.

(Have timekeepers stand and display the cards so that contestants will know where they are seated and will be familiar with the time cards.)
12. Order of Appearance - Each contestant has drawn a number that determine the order of speaking. During the contest they will be introduced by number only, and not by name, until after the decision of the judges. Just before the start of the contest, all speakers will leave the auditorium and will remain out of hearing range of the stage while the speeches are delivered. Speaker number one will then return to the platform to give his/her speech. The other speakers will appear in order and leave the auditorium in like manner. When all contestants have spoken, they will all be returned to the platform.
13. Applause - The contestants have spent a lot of time and effort in preparation for these contests. Each is entitled to be judged fairly and impartially on his/her own merit. You are, therefore, requested not to applaud a speaker at the conclusion of a speech. Please withhold all applause until all speakers have spoken.
14. Proceed with Contest.



Judge Duane Benton, Chairman
Oratorical Commission