

2025-2026 ALABAMA AMERICAN LEGION



NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

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Willie Rogers – Chairman – 334-467-5039

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 students 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 of said school is 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.

The three finalists of the National Contest will be ineligible for further participation at any level.

To receive the first-place award at any level within the Department of Alabama, the winner must represent the American Legion at the next level of the contest.

PREPARED ORATION

PREPARED ORATION: The subject to be used for the Prepared Oration must be 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. The Same subject and oration used in the Department Contest must be used in the National Contest.

In the Prepared Oration, as well as in the Assigned Topic Discourse, quotations must 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.

The Prepared Oration must be the original effort of each contestant and must not take up less than eight (8) minutes or more than ten (10) minutes for delivery. It must be delivered in the English language.

Contestants may have in their possession a copy of their Prepared Oration in the first Holding Room.

They may consult the copy of their Prepared Oration, until they exit the Holding Room to begin the contest, at which time the copy of the Prepared Oration will be given to the contest official that is monitoring the First Holding Room.

ORATORICAL CONTEST ASSIGNED TOPICS

The assigned topic discourse must not consume less than three (3) minutes or more than five (5) minutes for delivery. The purpose of the assigned topic discourse is to test the speaker's knowledge of the subject, the extent of his or her research, and the ability to discuss the topic as related to the basic principles of government under the Constitution.

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 or her prepared oration and will be made known to the audience and each contestant approximately five (5) minutes prior to the time of delivery. The topic will be on some phase of the U.S. Constitution, selected from Articles and Sections as listed under assigned topics for the current year's contest in this brochure.

All contestants at each contest level are required to speak in the English language on the same assigned topic.

ASSIGNED TOPICS FOR 2024 ORATORICAL CONTEST

Assigned Topics for 2026 Oratorical Contest

Amendment IV

The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated, and no Warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause, supported by Oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized.

Article III

Section 3. Treason against the United States, shall consist only in levying War against them, or in adhering to their Enemies, giving them Aid and Comfort. No Person shall be convicted of Treason unless on the Testimony of two Witnesses to the same overt Act, or on Confession in open Court.

The Congress shall have Power to declare the Punishment of Treason, but no Attainder of Treason shall work Corruption of Blood, or Forfeiture except during the Life of the Person attainted.

Article IV

Section 4. The United States shall guarantee to every State in this Union a Republican Form of Government, and shall protect each of them against Invasion; and on Application of the Legislature, or of the Executive (when the Legislature cannot be convened) against domestic Violence.

Article VI

Clause 3. The Senators and Representatives before mentioned, and the Members of the several State Legislatures, and all executive and judicial Officers, both of the United States and of the several States, shall be bound by Oath or Affirmation, to support this Constitution; but no religious Test shall ever be required as a Qualification to any Office or public Trust under the United States.

CONTEST REGULATIONS

A drawing shall be held by the contest official to determine the order in which the contestants will appear. The Contest Chairman shall announce the title of the contestant's prepared oration immediately after introducing the student as Contestant Number 1, Contestant Number 2, etc. The Chairman will request the audience to refrain from applause until the Judges have made their decision.

A raised platform is not compulsory; however, it is strongly recommended. The use of notes, amplification, lectern or speaker's stand by contestants or prompting in any manner is not permitted. Props are not permitted.

The time allotted for each contestant to deliver their Prepared Oration shall not be less than eight (8) minutes or more than ten (10) minutes and for the Assigned Topic, not less than three (3) minutes or more than five (5) minutes.

An official shall be named by the Contest Chairman whose duty it shall be to keep an accurate time record of each contestant and shall be located on the main floor in full view of the contestants.

The timekeeper shall begin timing each contestant at the start of the Prepared Oration. The timer should be equipped with a stopwatch and cards marked 8, 9, and 10 for the Prepared Oration and cards marked 3, 4 and 5 for the Assigned Topic Discourse. When eight minutes have been used during the Prepared Oration, the time warning card with the figure 8 thereon shall be placed in view of the speaker, following with 9 and 10 as the speaker progresses. The same procedure shall be used with cards bearing 3, 4, and 5 during the Assigned Topic Discourse. The Contest Chairman shall announce the time consumed by each Contestant for the Prepared Oration and the Assigned Topic immediately after each contestant speaks for the benefit of the Judges.

Contestants are required to remain in a private room where the discourse of the other speakers cannot be heard until it is their turn to speak (contestants will be under the supervision of an individual appointed by the Contest Chairman). As the contestants conclude their Prepared Oration,

they must return to the private waiting room. As each speaker concludes his/her Assigned Topic discourse, they shall not be allowed to associate with the contestants who have not fulfilled the Assigned Topic requirement.

Approximately five (5) minutes prior to the time of the delivery of the Assigned Topic Discourse, Contestant Number 1 will be informed of the topic drawn for the Assigned Topic and shall be permitted to retire to privacy under the direction of an individual appointed by the Contest Chairman, whose duty it shall be to see that no contestant is permitted to consult any text matter or notes having any connection with the subject matter upon which he/she is to speak, other than the actual words of the topic provided on the card drawn.

Each succeeding contestant will be called upon in the order in which he/she previously appeared. He/she shall also, in turn, be informed of the topic of the Assigned Topic Discourse and shall then be escorted to privacy in the manner as provided for Contestant Number 1.

National Regulations and Rules apply in all contests. Judges' scorecards for Department and the National contest will not be divulged to anyone at the site of the contest. The Judges' scorecards become the property of The American Legion National Headquarters. The decision of the judges is final.

I have also included the website at National Headquarters that have step-by-step instructions on conducting the oratorical contest:

<http://www.legion.org/oratorical/how-to-videos>

DEPARTMENT OF ALABAMA ORATORICAL CONTEST DATES

(Tentative Dates)

- School Contests: **Not later than January 31, 2026**
- County/Zone/Post Contest: **Not later than February 7, 2026**
- District Contest: **Not later than February 21, 2026**
- Division Contest: **Not later than March 7, 2026**
- Department Contest: **March 21, 2026**
- National Finals: **May 17th - 19th, 2026 – Hillsdale College, Hillsdale, Michigan**

THE AMERICAN LEGION

**DEPARTMENT OF ALABAMA AND NATIONAL
SCHOLARSHIPS**

STATE FINALS / NATIONAL FINALS

First Place	\$2,500.00	\$25,000.00
Second Place	\$1,500.00	\$22,500.00
Third Place	\$1,000.00	\$20,000.00
State Winner (Certified)		\$2,000.00

The American Legion will pay travel and lodging for Department winners and their chaperones to the **National Contest in Hillsdale College, Hillsdale Michigan, May 17th, 18th, and 19th, 2026**. Each Department winner who is certified into and participates in the first round of the National Contest will receive a \$2000 scholarship. Each first round winner who advances to and participates in the second round but does not advance to the final round will receive an additional \$ 2,000.00 scholarship to pursue education beyond high school.

SAMPLE LETTER TO PRINCIPLE/COUNSELOR



Principle/Counselor Last name,

First, I would like to introduce myself. I am xxxxxx, Commander, American Legion Post #xxx. I am the focal point for the Department of Alabama's 2025-2026 State High School Oratorical Contest in our county. We are pleased to announce the 2026 Alabama American Legion Oratorical Contest. The Oratorical Contest presents our nation's high school 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.

Not only do we provide them with the academic challenge, but young orators earn some of the most generous college scholarships available to high school students. Over \$138,000 in scholarships are awarded each year. 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.

I have attached a booklet (**do not forget to attach the booklet! if you do not think it's needed just remove that sentence**) explaining the scholarship program and how your outstanding students can compete for local as well as national scholarships offered by the American Legion. I have also included the American Legion National website which will provide more details of the program:

<http://www.legion.org/oratorical/about>

I would very much like to meet or speak with you or a representative of your school concerning this outstanding program and the participation of any of your outstanding students.

I can be reached at XXX-XXX-XXX and if you cannot reach me, please contact Mr. Willie Rogers, State Chairman for the Alabama Oratorical Program, at 334-467-5039.

Thanking you in advance.

Sincerely,

Your name here

Commander

American Legion Post # XXXX

2025-2026
Oratorical Contest Schedule

