

THE AMERICAN LEGION HIGH SCHOOL ORATORICAL SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

“A CONSTITUTIONAL SPEECH CONTEST”

Contact your local American Legion Post through www.legion.org/posts

2026 ORATORICAL CONTEST:

The Oratorical Scholarship Program in Texas will begin in November 1, 2025, when high school students will enter competition to qualify for the National Oratorical Program, with an ultimate award of \$203,500 in scholarships. Posts and schools may hold local contests during the fall of 2025 if they so desire. Whenever possible, it is recommended that the Oratorical Program be presented before the student body of a high school. It is strongly recommended that the National Rules be strictly followed in all contests.

SELECTION OF CONTESTANTS AND DATES:

1. Each public high school, private school, charter school, and home schooled, with grades 9 thru 12 that is sponsored by their local The American Legion Post, can advance 1 contestant to the district level. Local contests must begin after **November 1, 2025**, and must be completed by **December 14, 2025**. Contests should be conducted using National rules. **Winners are to be certified by the local American Legion Oratorical Chair/Commander, who will then notify the District Oratorical Chair, and Department of the local winner.**
2. District Contests shall be held on or after **December 15, 2025**, but not later than **January 11, 2026**, at such place as may be directed by the District Chair **and the winner certified to the Division Oratorical Chair and department by the District Oratorical chair/Commander.** Contests should be conducted using National rules.
3. Division Contests shall be held on or after **January 12, 2026**, but not later than **February 8, 2026**, at such place as may be directed by the Division Chair, **and the winner certified by each Division Oratorical Chair/Commander to Department Headquarters, P.O. Box 140527, Austin TX 78714. michaels@txlegion.org.** The contest should be held in accordance with national rules. Should the winner decline to participate in the Department Finals for any reason, the first runner-up should then be certified as the participant by the Division Chairperson/commander. Contests should be conducted using National rules.
4. The American Legion, Department of Texas, Oratorical Program Finals, will be held Monday, **February 16, 2026 (February 23 ALTERNATE)** at the MCM Elegante Hotel, 801 Ave Q, Lubbock, TX. Contest **WILL** be conducted using National rules.

SUPERVISION OF CONTEST:

The Oratorical Chairperson in charge of each Contest shall have full control and supervision of each Contest and his/her decisions shall be final. The Department Oratorical Chair will direct the Department Contest. Official judging cards, tabulation forms, and timekeeper forms can be found in the Post Oratorical Chair's Guide. Extra forms can be furnished upon request.

AWARDS:

1. The American Legion Post may present a scholarship or such awards to the winner of the High School Contest as it chooses so long as such awards has **NO** cash value. The scholarship must be paid to the college or university of the student's choice in the student's name to be credited in the student's name once proof of enrollment has been received. A deadline for the payment should be established by the awarding organization.
2. The American Legion, Department of Texas, will award: Each Division winner will receive a certificate for participation in the Department Finals and a medal for their standing in the contest.
3. The Department will award a \$2,000 scholarship to the college of his/her choice; 2nd place – \$1,500 scholarship; 3rd place \$1,000 scholarship; and 4th place \$500 scholarship (provided the winner enters college within 1 year after graduation from high school).
4. The Department Champion will receive an additional \$2,000 scholarship from National provided he/she participates in the Quarter Finals Contest and an additional \$2,000 scholarship from National if the participant advances to the Semi Finals Contest and does not advance to the National Finals. Competitors in the National Finals are awarded scholarships as follows; 1st – \$25,000; 2nd – \$22,500; 3rd – \$20,000.

FINANCES:

1. The Department assumes no liability for the expenses of any individual contestant in connection with any High School, District or Division Contest.
2. Expenses of .14¢ per mile round trip for contestant and one adult in car for Division winners will be paid by the Department traveling to the State Contest. (**No air travel is authorized.**) Such expenses will be paid to the adult chaperon or to the Post. No monies are to be paid directly to the contestant to protect his/her future eligibility to participate in the University Interscholastic League. Contestant's actual expenses will not be reimbursed.
3. The winner of the Department Contest will represent the State of Texas in the National Contests and expenses for such contestants will be provided in accordance with the National Rules.

COPIES OF MANUSCRIPT:

All Division Winners **MUST** submit one copy of their prepared oration to the Department Chair or their designated representative before competing in the State Final Contest. (This copy is to be forwarded by the Department Chairperson to Department Headquarters for record purposes along with the Chair's written report.)

Assigned Topics for 2026 Oratorical Contest

Amendment IV

The right of the people to be secure in their persons, house, 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.

Amendment 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.

Amendment 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.

Amendment 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 State 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.

Complete Oratorical Program Information

<https://www.legion.org/get-involved/youth-programs/oratorical-contest>

Oratorical Resources

<https://www.legion.org/get-involved/youth-programs/oratorical-contest/oratorical-contest-resources>

Oratorical Registration Form

National Speech & Debate Association Information Request

<https://www.speechanddebate.org/nsda-local-contact-request/>