Annual American Legion Department of Iowa

High School Oratorical Scholarship Program

"A Constitutional Speech Contest"

2026 – 2027



Open to students in grades 9 – 12

Scholarships are awarded to winners at Department and National levels:

Department Contest Prize*	Placement	National Contest Prize
$2,000	First	$25,000
$1,500	Second	$22,500
$1,000	Third	$20,000

The Department of Iowa Champion will also receive an additional $2,000 for participating in the first round of the national competition.

*****Half of each Department of Iowa scholarship is awarded by The American Legion of Iowa Foundation.

For more information, contact: **The American Legion of Iowa**, 720 Lyon St., Des Moines, Iowa 50309
1-800-365-8387 | programs@ialegion.org | www.ialegion.org/oratorical

Rules and Regulations

Eligibility

- All contestants must be citizens or lawful permanent residents of the United States.
- All orations must be in English.
- The contest adheres to National American Legion Contest rules, with exceptions for the Department of Iowa contest as outlined below.

Contest Structure

The contest progresses through a series of levels:

- **Post/County:** Top two contestants from each post and county advances. If multiple contestants are from one county, a preliminary county contest will determine the representative.
- **District:** Two contestants from each district advance.
- **Area:** One contestant from each of the three areas (each consisting of three districts) advances.
- **Department (State) Finals:** The winners from the three area contests compete in the finals.

Orations and Rules

- **Quotations:** Quotations must be indicated as such. If a quotation is more than 10 words, the author's name must be given orally and included in the manuscript.
- **Withdrawals:** If a contestant withdraws voluntarily or by disqualification, their place will be taken by the next highest-ranking contestant from the previous contest. If this substitution can be made without delaying the contest, it should be done immediately.

Judging and Presentation

- **Judging:** If a local contest is necessary, contestants will be judged according to the local American Legion Post's standards. In all communities, post, county, district, area, and department contests, the following rules apply:
- **Notes and Platform:**
    - **Post and County:** Notes on 3x5 cards are allowed, and judges should not downgrade contestants for using them.
    - **District, Area, and Department:** No prompting, notes, or lecterns are allowed. The contest will be held on a platform, if available, and the contestant's voice will not be amplified.
- **Assigned Topic:** For the Assigned Topic discourse at the district, area, and department levels, only a pad and pencil are permitted for preparation. No research materials are allowed.
- **Special Accommodations:** A blind contestant may have a chaperone in the room to read the Assigned Topic.

The American Legion, Department of Iowa
High School Oratorical Contest

Certification Form – Section I

To be completed by the contestant's Parent(s)/Guardian(s) and a High School Official

This is to certify that _____ is a student at _____ High School/Home School, located in _____ (city), and is not undergoing post-graduate work, is not deficient in any school work for the current year, and is enrolled for the current school year.

The participant is a citizen or lawful permanent resident of the United States. ☐ Yes ☐ No

Current Grade: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Anticipated High School Graduation Year: _____

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) Name: _____

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) Email: _____

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) Phone: _____

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) Address: _____

_____

School Official's Name: _____

School Official's Title: _____

School Official's Email: _____

School Official's Signature: _____

Certification Form – Section II – Post

To be completed by American Legion Post Officer and mailed to County/District Oratorical Chair

I, Commander of American Legion Post # _____, of The American Legion, Department of Iowa, located in _____ (city), do hereby certify that the student named in Section I is an official contestant of this post in The American Legion of Iowa High School Oratorical Contest and is eligible to advance to the next level.

The total number of contestants who participated at the post level is _____.

Post Commander Signature	**Post Oratorical Chair Signature**
Phone & Email	**Phone & Email**

Certification Form – Section III – County

To be completed ONLY if a county contest is held.
Completed by County Officer and mailed to District Oratorical Chair.

I, Commander of _____ County, of The American Legion, Department of Iowa, do hereby certify that the student named in Section I is an official contestant of this county in The American Legion of Iowa High School Oratorical Contest and is eligible to advance to the district contest.

The total number of contestants who participated at the county level is _____.

County Commander Signature	**County Oratorical Chair Signature**
Phone & Email	**Phone & Email**

Certification Form – Section IV – District

To be completed by the District Oratorical Chair and mailed to the Area Oratorical Chair

I, Commander of the _____ District, of The American Legion, Department of Iowa, do hereby certify that the student named in Section I is an official contestant of this district in The American Legion of Iowa High School Oratorical Contest and is eligible to advance to the Area Contest.

The total number of contestants who participated at the district level is _____.

District Commander Signature	**District Oratorical Chair Signature**
Phone & Email	**Phone & Email**

Certification Form – Section V – Area

To be completed by the Area Oratorical Chair and mailed to Department Headquarters

I, _____ Area Oratorical Contest Chair of Area _____do hereby certify that the student named in Section I is an official contestant of this area in The American Legion of Iowa High School Oratorical Contest and is eligible to advance to the department contest.

The total number of contestants who participated at the area level is _____.

Area Oratorical Chair Signature	**Area Oratorical Tabulator**
Phone & Email	**Phone & Email**

Dates For The Contest

For accurate dates, times, and locations for District and Area Contests, please check online at www.ialegion.org/calendar or www.ialegion.org/oratorical.

Local Contests:	Must be completed by December 7, 2026
County Contests:	Must be completed by December 21, 2026
District Contests:	Must be completed by January 11, 2027
Area Contests:	Must be completed by January 25, 2027
	*__Host district__ indicated by **underlining** and **bold**
	AREA I – Districts 1, **5** & 6
	AREA II – Districts **2**, 3 & 4
	AREA III – Districts **7**, 8 & 9

2027 Department Finals

The American Legion Department of Iowa High School Oratorical Contest will be held **Sunday, February 14, 2027, at the Airport Holiday Inn on Fleur Drive in Des Moines, at 8:00 a.m.** All contestants will be required to report to the hotel on Saturday, February 14, 2026, by 6:00 pm.

The Department winner will advance to the National Contest in Hillsdale, Michigan at Hillsdale College.

2027 National Contest

The 2027 National Finals will be in Hillsdale, Mich., at Hillsdale College. The date is yet to be determined. Visit https://www.legion.org/get-involved/youth-programs/oratorical-contest for updates.

Financial Information and Awards

Contest Funding

The contest is funded by The American Legion Department of Iowa, The American Legion of Iowa Foundation, and various American Legion post, county, and district organizations. Post, county, and district awards are the responsibility of the host organization for that level.

Awards and Expenses

Area Contest: Each participant in an area contest receives $50 from the Department of Iowa for expenses.

Participants Eliminated at the Area Contest:

- **$200** for 2nd and 3rd place finishes.
- **$100** for 4th, 5th, and 6th place finishes.

Department (State) Contest:

- Each participant receives $100 from the Department of Iowa for expenses.
- **1st Place:** $2,000
- **2nd Place:** $1,500
- **3rd Place:** $1,000

Any restrictions on the awards for the Department finals also apply to the area-level awards.

The American Legion Department of Iowa Oratorical Committee 2026 - 2027

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Assigned Topics for 2026-2027 Oratorical Contest

https://www.legion.org/get-involved/youth-programs/oratorical-contest/oratorical-contest-assigned-topics

The Preamble

We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

Article VI Paragraph 2

This Constitution, and the Laws of the United States which shall be made in Pursuance thereof; and all Treaties made, or which shall be made, under the Authority of the United States, shall be the supreme Law of the Land; and the Judges in every State shall be bound thereby, any Thing in the Constitution or Laws of any State to the Contrary notwithstanding.

Amendment XIV Section 3

No person shall be a Senator or Representative in Congress, or elector of President and Vice-President, or hold any office, civil or military, under the United States, or under any State, who, having previously taken an oath, as a member of Congress, or as an officer of the United States, or as a member of any State legislature, or as an executive or judicial officer of any State, to support the Constitution of the United States, shall have engaged in insurrection or rebellion against the same, or given aid or comfort to the enemies thereof. But Congress may, by a vote of two-thirds of each House, remove such disability.

Amendment XXII Section 1

No person shall be elected to the office of the President more than twice, and no person who has held the office of President, or acted as President, for more than two years of a term to which some other person was elected President shall be elected to the office of the President more than once. But this Article shall not apply to any person holding the office of President when this Article was proposed by the Congress and shall not prevent any person who may be holding the office of President, or acting as President, during the term within which this Article becomes operative from holding the office of President or acting as President during the remainder of such term.