

National Oratorical Contest

For High School Students

A CONSTITUTIONAL SPEECH CONTEST

"Essentials" for Naperville Contest on January 7, 2026

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General Information

The purpose of The American Legion High School Oratorical Scholarship Program "A Constitutional Speech Contest" is to develop a deeper knowledge and appreciation of the Constitution of the United States among high school students. Other objectives of the contest include the development of leadership qualities, the ability to think and speak clearly and intelligently, and the preparation for acceptance of the duties and responsibilities, rights and privileges of American citizenship.

Eligibility

Eligible participants in the contest shall be a legal United States citizen or possess legal residency or visitor status to be in the United States.

All contestants must be under the age of 20 years as of May 18, 2026, presently enrolled in a high school (public, parochial, military, private or state accredited home school) in which the curriculum of said high school is considered to be of high school level, commencing with grade nine and terminating with grade 12.

Students must be enrolled in high school during the time of participation in The American Legion National High School Oratorical Contest. High school students that graduate early during the school year are eligible to compete if they are not enrolled in a college, university, trade school or other institution of higher learning as of May 18, 2026.

Prepared Oration

The subject to be used for the prepared oration in the Oratorical Contest must be on some aspect of the Constitution of the United States with 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.

The prepared oration must be the original effort of each contestant and must not take up less than 8 minutes or more than 10 minutes for delivery.

Contestants may have in their possession a copy of their prepared oration in the first holding room. The copy may be electronic or paper form. They may consult the copy of their prepared oration until they exit the holding room to begin the contest. At that time the copy of the prepared oration will be surrendered to the contest official who is monitoring the first holding room.

In the prepared oration, as well as in the assigned topic discourse, quotations must be indicated as such. Where quotations are more than 10 words in length, the author's name must be given in the manuscript and cited orally.

Assigned Topic

The assigned topic discourse must not consume less than 3 minutes or more than 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/her prepared oration and will be made known to the audience and each contestant approximately five minutes prior to the time of delivery. The topic will be on some phase of the Constitution of the United States selected from Articles and Sections. All contestants will speak on the same assigned topic.

Assigned Topics for 2026

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 attained.

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.

Foreign languages or songs

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

It is acceptable to utilize or incorporate short phrases of a foreign language into the prepared oration and/or assigned topic to develop the argument, establish a point, etc. The vast majority of the prepared oration and/or assigned topic must be delivered in the English language.

Also, the singing of a song in any language is not permitted and will result in the immediate disqualification of the contestant. The contestant may, however, quote a verse(s) of a song provided proper attribution is made.

What to Wear

Uniforms are not permitted. Appropriate business attire is required by all contestants. Contestants are not permitted to wear awards and medals from previous competition.

For answers to questions, please contact Matt Nelson, Chairman for American Legion Post 43 Naperville at: 312-401-4127 or Jnelson.csm99@gmail.com



Oratorical Contest

JUDGE'S SCORECARD

NAME OF JUDGE: _____

A. CONTENT		CONTESTANTS					
		1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Was the speech original, fresh, and direct, applying the contestant's knowledge?	Prepared Oration						
	Assigned Topic						
2. Did the contestant skillfully select examples, descriptions, analogies, and specific data?	Prepared Oration						
	Assigned Topic						
3. Was the speech logical, well organized, and developed?	Prepared Oration						
	Assigned Topic						
4. Did the contestant show a comprehension of knowledge of the subject matter?	Prepared Oration						
	Assigned Topic						
B. SPEAKING SKILLS		1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Did the contestant use volume, rate, pitch, and diction effectively?	Prepared Oration						
	Assigned Topic						
2. Rate the contestant's style: language use, word arrangement and selection, and transitions.	Prepared Oration						
	Assigned Topic						
3. Were body actions -- pose, eye contact, posture, gestures, facial expressions -- appropriate?	Prepared Oration						
	Assigned Topic						
SUB-TOTAL		1	2	3	4	5	6
PENALTIES: 1 point for each minute or fraction thereof over or under allotted time	Prepared Oration						
	Assigned Topic						
1-10 points for failure to speak on the Constitution							
FINAL TOTAL POINTS		1	2	3	4	5	6
Position Number - 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 (Highest Points = 1st place, second highest points = 2nd place, etc.)							

Score all contestants - NO TIES PERMITTED

JUDGE'S SIGNATURE _____

PAST WINNERS at NAPERVILLE CONTEST LEVEL Since 2000

- 2000 - 63rd Annual 1st Place Andrew Mondj, Naperville North HS, Senior
- 2001 - 64th Annual 1st Place Ian Holzhauer, Naperville North HS, Senior
- 2002 - 65th Annual 1st Place Jennifer L. Dierdorff, Naperville Central HS, Senior
- 2003 - 66th Annual 1st Place Scott Musial, Benet Academy, Senior
2nd Place Alexis Maxwell, Naperville North, Senior
3rd Place Jessica Garvert, Benet Academy, Sophomore
- 2004 - 67th Annual 1st Place Serena Raheja, Naperville North HS, Senior
2nd Place Melissa Entzminger, Home School, Junior
3rd Place Michael S. Leen, Benet Academy, Senior
- 2005 - 68th Annual 1st Place Melissa Entzminger, Home School, Senior
2nd Place Casey Verkamp, Naperville North HS, Junior
3rd Place Jennifer Cota, Naperville Central HS, Senior
- 2006 - 69th Annual 1st Place Casey Verkamp, Naperville North HS, Senior (*)
2nd Place Danielle Gewurz, Neuqua Valley HS, Senior
- 2007 - 70th Annual 1st Place Jared Canfield, Home School, Junior (**)
- 2008 - 71st Annual 1st Place Matthew Schuhriemen, a Home School Sophomore
2nd Place Kristin Hwu, a Naperville North HS Senior
3rd Place Sunameeka Panigrahy, a Naperville Central HS Junior
- 2009 - 72nd Annual 1st Place Miriam Canfield, a Home School Junior
2nd Place Matthew Schuhriemen, a Home School Junior
3rd Place Thomas Schuhriemen, a Home School Senior
- 2010 - 73rd Annual 1st Place Matthew Schuhriemen, a Home School Senior (*)
2nd Place Katherine Rudolph, a Naperville Central HS Senior
3rd Place Micah Colbert, a Home School Senior
4th Place Ryan Macwan, a Home School Sophomore
5th Place Alyssa J. Peterson, a Benet Academy Senior
- 2011 - 74th Annual 1st Place Anagha Sundararajan, Waubensee Valley HS Senior
2nd Place Ryan Macwan, a Home School Junior
3rd Place Rianka Macwan, a Home School Sophomore
4th Place Jonathan Hogue, a Metea Valley Junior
- 2012 - 75th Annual 1st Place Rianka Macwan, a Home School Junior
2nd Place Kirthi Bellamkonda, a Naperville Central HS Junior
3rd Place Ryan Macwan, a Home School Senior
- 2013 - 76th Annual 1st Place Steven Harrison, a Waubonsie Valley HS Junior
2nd Place Rianka Macwan, a Home School Senior
3rd Place Sarvasva Raghuvanshi, a Neuqua Valley HS Freshman
- 2014 - 77th Annual 1st Place Sarvasva Raghuvanshi, a Neuqua Valley HS Sophomore (*)
2nd Place Samantha Xu, a Naperville Central HS Sophomore
3rd Place Steven Harrison, a Waubonsie Valley HS Senior
- 2015 - 78th Annual 1st Place Sarvasva Raghuvanshi, a Neuqua Valley HS Junior
2nd Place Rowan Macwan, a Home HS Junior (**)
3rd Place Samantha XU, a Naperville Central HS Junior
- 2016 - 79th Annual 1st Place Regan Macwan, a Home School Freshman
2nd Place Abinaya Ramakrishnan, IL Science & Math Academy Sophomore
- 2017 - 80th Annual 1st Place Ryan Park, a Naperville Central HS Junior (*)
2nd Place Regan Macwan, a Home School Sophomore
3rd Place Nicole Tong, a Naperville North HS Freshman
- 2018 - 81st Annual 1st Place Nicole Tong, a Naperville North HS Sophomore
2nd Place Regan Macwan, a Home School Junior
3rd Place Andy Wang, a Neuqua Valley HS Senior

2019 – 82nd Annual	1st Place Kate Li, a Naperville Central HS Sophomore 2nd Place Nicole Tong, a Naperville North HS Junior 3rd Place Aparna Ramakrishnan, a Naperville Central HS Freshman
2020 – 83 rd Annual	1 st Place Aparna Ramakrishnan, a Naperville Central HS Sophomore
2021 – 84th Annual	1 st Place Aparna Ramakrishnan, a Naperville Central HS Junior
2022 - 85 th Annual	1 st Place Yashas Sardesai, a Neuqua Valley Senior (*)
2023 – 86 th Annual	1 st Place April Zhang, a Neuqua Valley Junior (*)
2024 – 87 th Annual	1 st Place April Zhang, a Neuqua Valley Junior (*)
2025 – 88 th Annual	1 st Place Chaithrika Sirpathi, a Naperville North HS Freshman (*)

(*) Also won State Contest and qualified to compete in Nationals.

(**) Also won State Contest and was one of three finalists at Nationals.

NOTE: Jared Canfield won 3rd Place in 2007 National Contest

Rowan Macwan won 2nd Place in 2015 National Contest