



Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States
VFW Auxiliary
Ole Beck Post 209



Assistant Principal Brian Fortmann
901 South Avenue West
Missoula, MT 59801

September 29, 2020

Dear Assistant Principal Brian Fortmann,

On behalf of VFW Post 209 and VFW Post 209 Auxiliary members, we would like to invite your students to participate in the VFW's Voice of Democracy essay contest. It is open to students in grades 9 through 12. The deadline for submitting essays is October 31, 2020. The theme for this year's Voice of Democracy essay contest is, Is This the Country the Founders Envisioned?

We would greatly appreciate it if you would announce our essay contest to your students at Sentinel High School. Last year we had a great turnout and hope to have even more participants this year. Participants win beautiful certificates and cash prizes for their efforts. Perhaps, just as important, the young individuals who participate write essays that inspire veterans at our post, who have served our great country. The prizes for those who submit their application to the VFW Post 209 by the October 31st deadline include the following:

- 1st Place - \$450 plus a beautiful VFW Certificate
- 2nd Place - \$350 plus a beautiful VFW Certificate
- 3rd Place - \$250 plus a beautiful VFW Certificate
- VFW Certificate for all other student participants

In addition, the 1st Place winner at the local post level will then be entered into the VFW District Voice of Democracy essay contest. The student that wins at the District level will then go on to the State level and possibly on to the National level, where the grand prize is \$30,000, plus an all-expense-paid trip to Washington, D.C., in March.

VFW Post 209's veterans would greatly appreciate it if you would post an announcement about this year's VFW's Voice of Democracy essay contest on your website or bulletin board where students in grades 9 through 12 will see it. We have included an informational flyer and application along with link to these documents online. Students and/or their parents should contact one of us if they have any questions. Students and/or their parents can drop off completed applications at the VFW Post 209 or they can contact us to make arrangements to have their entry picked up.

Thank you for your time and for helping to involve our local high school students in the VFW's Voice of Democracy essay contest.

Sincerely,

Paula Stricklin

Paula Stricklin

Michelle Johnson
406-461-9685
michelle@exitrealtymt.com

Paula Stricklin
406-207-1707
stricklin_paula@yahoo.com

<https://www.vfw.org/community/youth-and-education/youth-scholarships>
VFW Post 209

245 W. Main St.

Missoula, MT 59802

VOICE OF DEMOCRACY



2020-2021 Theme

"Is This the Country the Founders Envisioned?"

Student Entry Deadline: October 31, 2020

Patriotic Audio Essay Competition Grand Prize: \$30,000 Award

What Is The Voice of Democracy Program?

Since 1947, the Voice of Democracy has been the Veterans of Foreign Wars' (VFW's) premier scholarship program. Each year, nearly 57,000 high school students compete for more than \$2 million in scholarships and incentives. Students compete by writing and recording an audio essay on an annual patriotic theme. This year's theme is, **Is This the Country the Founders Envisioned?**

Why Should I Enter?

Prizes and scholarships can be awarded at the Post, District, state and national level.

The Rules

Who can enter?

The Voice of Democracy is open to students in grades 9-12 by the Oct. 31 deadline, who are enrolled in a public, private or parochial high school or home study program in the United States, its territories and possessions; or dependents of U.S. military or civilian personnel in overseas schools. Although U.S. citizenship is not required, students must be lawful U.S. permanent residents or have applied for permanent residence (the application for which has not been denied) and intends to become a U.S. citizen at the earliest opportunity allowed by law. Foreign exchange students, students age 20 or over, previous Voice of Democracy first place state winners, GED or Adult Education Students are ineligible.

What do I need to enter?

Record your original 3-5 minute (+ or - 5 seconds max.) essay on an audio CD or a flash drive. One student per CD or flash drive. When burning your CD, make sure that "Create Audio CD" option (or similar) is selected so the program can properly convert your sound file and burn it to CD. After it has finished, be sure to play back your audio CD on a system other than your computer, such as a standard radio or car CD player, to verify that the conversion/burning process was successful. You will submit the recording, typed essay and this completed entry form. Provide these items to your school/group competition or local VFW Post for judging. In addition you can submit your emailed entry form, essay, and audio file to the VFW Post upon approval. You must be the sole author of your essay. The recording must be in your own voice and in English. Hearing/speech impaired students should email the Voice of Democracy National Office at youthscholarships@vfw.org for special instructions. No music, singing, poetry or sound effects are allowed. The body of the essay must not identify you in any way, (including, but not limited to, your name, school, city, state, race or national origin) although the recording & typed essay should be labeled with your name, to show ownership. You may enter only one competition at one Post (if otherwise eligible) per year. At any time during the contest, additional participant personal information could be requested by the VFW, including but not limited to a photograph, SSN or biographical information.

2020-21 Official Entry Form Voice of Democracy Competition

Must Be Completed by All Contestants

Name: First, M.I., Last

Address

City, State, Zip

()
Phone

Email

Date of Birth (mm/dd/yy)

Grade in School

Age

School Name, City, State

Teacher's name and Email (if applicable)

To Be Completed by Student's Parent/Guardian
(required even if student is 18 or over)

Parent/Guardian Name (Printed)

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

()

Parent/Guardian's Daytime Phone

Parent/Guardian's Email

I Have Read and Understand the D.C. National Finals Rules
(On Opposite Side)

I certify that I am the sole author of the enclosed audio/essay entry and that I have only entered the competition once yearly if otherwise eligible.

I understand that if it is found that I have entered any other Post's competition or used this essay for another VFW competition, I face elimination from the competition and will return any and all prizes or incentives awarded.

Signature of Student Participant

Date

VOICE OF DEMOCRACY

2020 - 2021 Theme

"Is This the Country the Founders Envisioned?"

Student Entry Deadline: October 31, 2020

Official Rules for Students Advancing to National Level

In the event my audio essay is selected for entry into the National Voice of Democracy Competition, I do hereby for myself, for my heirs, executors, administrators and assignees; waive, release and discharge all rights and claims which I have or which may hereafter accrue against the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States (VFW) and/or the several Departments (state organizations) of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and their respective officers, agents, successors and assigns from any damages which may be sustained by me in connection with my participation in or association with the VFW Voice of Democracy Competition and/or arising out of my travel to and during the Competition. In the event of sickness, accident or injury in connection with the Competition, I consent to and accept the services of a duly licensed medical, surgical or dental specialist selected on my behalf and for such treatments, as they may deem necessary. I understand that VFW will not be liable for such treatment. I further understand that the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States retains non-exclusive rights to use my tape, essay and likeness in the promotion and execution of the organization's programs and activities.

To Be Completed by the VFW Post

I certify that this student has an authorized entry in our VFW Post level Voice of Democracy Competition.

Post Commander's/Chairman's Signature _____ Post # _____
VFW Auxiliary President's/Chairman's Signature (if applicable) _____
Post Address _____
City, State, Zip _____
VFW Post Email _____
No. of students participating _____
No. of winners advanced to District _____
Amt. of Post/Aux. scholarship awards \$ _____
Amt. of Post/Aux. additional expenses (banquet, pins, etc.) \$ _____

To Be Completed by the VFW District

I certify that the student named in the previous section is the duly selected winner of the Voice of Democracy Contest District Competition and is our sole entry into the Department finals.

District Chairman's Signature _____ Dist. # _____
Address _____
City, State, Zip _____
() _____
Phone _____ Email _____

To Be Completed by the VFW Department Chairman

I certify that the student named in the previous section is the duly selected first-place winner of the Voice of Democracy Department Competition, is our sole entry into the National Judging.

Department Chairman's Signature _____
() _____
Daytime Phone _____ Email _____
The winner ☐ has been ☐ notified that they are the first-place Department winner on _____

Where Do I Submit My Entry?

All entries begin at the local VFW Post level. The only exception is where schools/classes/youth groups have large numbers of students and wish to conduct their own competition, submitting one winner for each 15 students to the local VFW Post. Individual students may submit their entry directly to the Post. This VFW Post should be within your local area and within your U.S. state of residence. Entries sent to VFW National will be returned. One winner for every 15 entries from each Post advances to District and one District winner advances to the state (Department) competition. If you need help finding a participating VFW Post in your area, follow these instructions: First, visit this website vfw.org/FindaPost to "Find A VFW Post." Be sure this Post is within the state you reside in. If you do not have success in finding a Post, or if you have trouble getting in touch with them, you can contact your VFW Department (state) office to see if they can offer any information or assistance. You can visit this link vfw.org/ContactUs and look for "Find a State Contact" to get your VFW state office's phone number and email. If you still need assistance, please email us at youthscholarships@vfw.org

What Is the Deadline for My Entry?

All entries competing at the Post level must be in the hands of that VFW Post by midnight, Oct. 31, 2020. It is the responsibility of the student to meet this deadline by submitting their entry to the proper location by ensuring it is a participating Post.

What Are the Judging Criteria?

Originality is worth 30 points:

Treatment of the theme should show imagination and human interest.


Content is worth 35 points:

Clearly express your ideas in an organized manner. Fully develop your theme and use transitions to move smoothly from one idea to another.

Delivery is worth 35 points:

Speak in a clear and credible manner.

The National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) has again approved this contest for its National Advisory List of Contests and Activities.

 Twisted X Brands
A Proud Sponsor


VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS.

For assistance contact:
816.756.3390 ext. 6155
Email: youthscholarships@vfw.org
vfw.org

Revised 3/2020

LOCAL VFW POST INFORMATION:

CONTACT: Michelle Johnson

michelle@exitrealtymsla.com

PHONE: 406-461-9685

BEST TIME TO CALL: 9am-8pm

ALTERNATE CONTACT: Paula Stricklin

stricklin_paula@yahoo.com

PHONE: 406-207-1707

BEST TIME TO CALL: 9am-8pm