



**2023 RULES AND REGULATIONS FOR THE
84TH ANNUAL HIGH SCHOOL ORATORICAL CONTEST SPONSORED BY
THE AMERICAN LEGION DEPARTMENT OF MASSACHUSETTS**

Sandra Davis
Department Commander

Lisa A. McPhee
Department Adjutant

Lisa A. McPhee
Department Oratorical Chairman.

This competition is approved by the National Association of Secondary School Principals and the Department of Education Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Inquiries may be directed to

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THE DEPARTMENT PRIZES ARE AS FOLLOWS:

1st - \$1250
2nd - \$800
3rd - \$500
4th-6th - \$300

* The first-place winner receives the state prize of \$1,250 and then receives a \$2,000 scholarship upon participation in the first round of the National Contest. The state oratorical champion will automatically advance into the National American Legion Oratorical Competition. See the National Contest brochure for further details.

The National Finals Contest will be held May 17-19, 2024 Hillsdale, Michigan at Hillsdale College



ORGANIZATION

The contest will be under the direct supervision of the American Legion Oratorical Committee, appointed by the Department Commander. Final authority on all issues raised shall remain with the Committee. The State has been divided into three Zones as

Zone 1 – Districts 1, 2, 3 (Berkshire, Franklin, Hampshire, and Hampden Counties)

Zone 2 – Districts 4, 5, 6 (Worcester, Middlesex, and Norfolk Counties)

Zone 3 – Districts 7, 8,9,10 (Suffolk, Essex, Bristol, Plymouth, Barnstable, Dukes and Nantucket Counties)

Elimination contests will be held by Zones. The two top Zone winners will compete in the State Finals TBD at the Bedford Post.

Each Department (state) of the American Legion is responsible for all arrangements for Department Contests. Each Department can enter only one contestant into the National First Round Contest.

SCHEDULE OF 2023 CONTESTS CLOSING DATE FOR APPLICATIONS IS January 31, 2024

Contestants are to be selected by the school principals in any manner they deem suitable to represent the school. The name(s) shall be certified by the principal to the Oratorical Committee, postmarked no later than January 31, 2024, on a form that will be supplied to the school. Any American Legion Post may sponsor as many contestants from a school as they wish.

ZONE CONTESTS

TBD

The first contest that a contestant enters, sponsored by the American Legion, is the Zone Contest. School authorities and contestants will be notified through the mail as well as the Department web site as to where these contests will be held. All contestants should be prepared to enter this contest by February 1, 2024.

DEPARTMENT CONTEST

TBD

The two winners from the Zone Contests will compete for the Department Oratorical Championship



ELIGIBILITY

Eligible participants in the contest shall be citizens of or lawful permanent residents of the United States. All contestants must be bona fide students herein described as any student under the age of 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 home school), commencing with grade nine and terminating with grade 12.

Students must be enrolled in high school or junior high school during the time of participation at any level of the 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 at the time of the department finals contest.

Contestants must either be legally domiciled within or attend an educational institution within the department (state) where they enter competition. Contestants can enter competition in only one department

PREPARED ORATION

All contestants shall be required to deliver a prepared oration, which must be the original effort of each contestant, and must require not less than eight (8) nor more than ten (10) minutes for delivery.

The prepared oration must be based on some phase or phases of the Constitution of the United States which will give emphasis to the attendant duties and obligations of a citizen to our government. Failure to do this may result in disqualification. The same subject is to be used for the prepared oration throughout all contests.

The contestant may choose their own subject, or they may select a title similar to topics which follow:

An American Citizen's Rights and Responsibilities Under the Constitution

Our Constitution – Worth Having, Worth Defending

The Constitution in A Changing World

The Constitution in Our Everyday Life

The Bill of Rights – Reciprocal Rights and Duties

The Constitution – Guardian of People's Rights

Contestants may have in their possession a copy of their prepared oration in the first holding room. The copy may be in electronic or paper form. They may consult the copy of their prepared oration, until they exit the holding room in



order to begin the contest, at which time the copy of the prepared oration will be surrendered to the contest official who is monitoring the first holding room.

THE ASSIGNED TOPIC DISCOURSE FEATURE

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.

Each contestant speaks on the same assigned topic which 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.

Amendment II

A well-regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a Free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed.

Amendment XXIII

The District constituting the seat of Government of the United States shall appoint in such manner as the Congress may direct:

A number of electors of President and Vice President equal to the whole number of Senators and Representatives in Congress to which the District would be entitled if it were a State, but in no event more than the least populous State; they shall be in addition to those appointed by the State, but they shall be considered, for the purposes of the election of President and Vice President, to be electors appointed by a State; and they shall meet in the District and perform such duties as provided by the twelfth article of amendment.



Amendment XXV, Section 3

Whenever the President transmits to the President pro tempore of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives his written declaration that he is unable to discharge the powers and duties of his office, and until he transmits to them a written declaration to the contrary, such powers and duties shall be discharged by the Vice President as Acting President.

Amendment V

No person shall be held to answer for a capital, or otherwise infamous crime, unless on a presentment or indictment of a grand jury, except in cases arising in the land or naval forces, or in the militia, when in actual service in time of war or public danger; nor shall any person be subject for the same offense to be twice put in jeopardy of life or limb; nor shall be compelled in any criminal case to be a witness against himself, not be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor shall private property be taken for public use, without just compensation.

JUDGING

The State Contest shall be judged by five judges. The District and Zone Contests shall be judged by three or five judges. Under no condition shall a judge be used for more than one contest in the same year. The decision of the judges shall be final.

CONTEST REGULATIONS

Dress – Uniforms are not permitted. Appropriate business attire is required for all contestants. Contestants may not wear awards and medals from previous competitions.

Copies of the Prepared Oration – Contestants participating in the State Finals shall submit to the State Chairman a neatly printed copy of their prepared oration. Titles of orations must be shown.

Order of Appearance – Contestants shall draw for the order in which they appear, the drawing to be conducted by the Chairman, who will introduce the speakers as Number 1, Number 2, etc.



Notes and Lecterns – The use of notes, amplification, lectern, or speaker’s stand by contestants, or prompting in any manner, is not permitted.

Language – All contestants at each contest level are required to speak in the English language. It is acceptable to utilize or incorporate short phrases of a foreign language into the prepared oration and/or assigned topic in order 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.

Songs – 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.

Quotations – In both the prepared oration and 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.

HINTS, TIPS, AND UPDATES

Contestants are encouraged to visit the American Legion Department of Massachusetts web site at <http://www.masslegion.org/> for hints, tips, and the latest updates, especially to the contest schedules. When you reach the Department web site, click on Programs Americanism Oratorical to reach the Oratorical page. The Chairman will post all updates on the Oratorical page as soon as they are available. Contestants are also encouraged to visit the American Legion National web site at <http://www.legion.org/oratorical> for further information including videos of the top three finalists in previous years’ National contests delivering their orations [URL for videos is <https://www.legion.org/oratorical/videos> .

THE ORATORICAL COMMITTEE

Chairman – Lisa A. McPhee Cell 978 230 6208 Lredsox1964@aol.com or deptadjutant@masslegion.org

Vice Chairman – Scott Connor Phone 508-885-5618 smconner@charter.net

2nd Vice Chairman – Bob Burke Cell 508-415-8501 burkerk@comcast.net



District Contacts

District 1 (Berkshire County)

TBA

District 2 (Franklin & Hampshire Counties)

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District 4 (Worcester County)

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508-885-5618 smconner@charter.net

District 5 (Middlesex County)

TBA

District 6 (Norfolk County)

Robert Jerdan, 75 Craig St, Milton MA 02186

Wendy Eng., 49 Payne St., Quincy, MA Home 617-584-0079

District 7 (Suffolk County)

William Chisholm, 115 Eutaw St., E. Boston, MA 02128

Home 339-226-1029 bigbillwjc@yahoo.com

District 8 (Essex County)

Theodore Butler, 48 School St., Middleton, MA 01949

Home 978-774-7874 cvsbutler@comcast.net

District 9 (Bristol County)

Lisa Borges, 2396 Riverside Ave Apt 1, Somerset MA 02726

Home 703 786 4707 Lborges1215@gmail.com

District 10 (Plymouth, Barnstable, Dukes & Nantucket Counties)

Bob Burke---burkerk@comcast.net Cell 508-415-8501



2024 AMERICAN LEGION, DEPARTMENT OF MASSACHUSETTS, ORATORICAL CONTEST CERTIFICATION OF HIGH SCHOOL REPRESENTATIVE

Student Name: _____

Sponsored by American Legion Post No: _____ **District:** _____

Street Address: _____

City: _____ **State:** _____ **Zip Code:** _____

Date of Birth: _____ **Age:** _____ **Sex:** _____

Email Address: _____

Telephone Number: _____

Parent's Name: _____

Name and Location of High School Contestant Now Attends:

School: _____ **Grade:** _____

The principal of the high school must certify the contestant's age and the fact that they attend the school by signing this this form:

Principal: _____

The high school principal is authorized to select one or more school representative(s) in any manner deemed satisfactory. This application must be filled out completely and mailed, not later than 31 December 2022, to Lisa A. McPhee 157 Water St, Clinton, MA 01510. Applicants are also encouraged to send a copy of the completed and signed application as a readable PDF file to Lredsox1964@aol.com as backup, particularly if applying close to the deadline date.