2027 RULES AND REGULATIONS FOR THE
88TH ANNUAL HIGH SCHOOL ORATORICAL CONTEST SPONSORED BY
THE AMERICAN LEGION DEPARTMENT OF MASSACHUSETTS

Robert E. Jerdan	Lisa A. McPhee	Lisa A. McPhee
Department Commander	***Department Adjutant***	***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:

Lisa A. McPhee
157 Water Street
Clinton, MA 01510
deptadjutant@masslegion.org
Cell 978-230-6208

THE DEPARTMENT PRIZES ARE AS FOLLOWS:
1st - $1250
2nd - $800
3rd - $500

* 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 14-16, 2027, 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.

DISTRICTS

Districts 1 & 3 (Berkshire, Franklin, Hampshire, and Hampden Counties)
Districts 4 & 5 (Worcester and Middlesex,)
Districts 6 & 7 (Norfolk and Suffolk)
Districts 8 & 9 (Essex, and Bristol)
District 10 (Plymouth, Barnstable, Dukes and Nantucket Counties)

DISTRICT CONTESTS

The first contest that a contestant enters, sponsored by the American Legion, is the District Contest. District contests are held in January and February 2027. The districts will schedule their Oratorical Contest. All students will compete in a District contest.

DEPARTMENT CONTEST

March 6, 2027-Tentative
March 28, 2027 (snow/weather date)

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

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 who 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

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 present on a topic of their choice or choose from the sample title topics listed below.

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 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.

THE ASSIGNED TOPIC DISCOURSE FEATURE

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 2027 Oratorical Contest

The Preamble

We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, ensure 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.

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 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.

THE ORATORICAL COMMITTEE

Chairman – Lisa A. McPhee 978 230 6208 deptadjutant@masslegion.org
Vice Chairman – Grace Conner 774-239-2028 gconner2@charter.net
District Contacts

District 1 (Berkshire County)
George Oleen
413 229 6670 gao1964@gmail.com

District 3 (Hampden County)
Kelleen Weed
413 504 2288 kelleen.weed@gmail.com

District 4 (Worcester County)
Max Strickland
508-735-9763 max64.strickland@gmail.com

District 5 (Middlesex County)
Nelson Blake
978 459 4260 captblake82@gmail.com

District 6 (Norfolk County)
Michael Pazyra
617-212-5006 michaelpazyra@gmail.com

District 7 (Suffolk County)
Maureen Gilbert
617-697-6701 maureen.cruzian@gmail.com

District 8 (Essex County)
Chris Manning
978-476-1847 cjmanning140@gmail.com

District 9 (Bristol County)
Steve Souza
Home 508-642-6660 t5ssteve@yahoo.com

District 10 (Plymouth, Barnstable, Dukes & Nantucket Counties)
Bob Burke---burkerk@comcast.net Cell 508-415-8501

Oratorical Forms

1. **Form 1**: Contestants are to fill out the Contest Entry Form and must have a school official certify that the contestant is enrolled in high school.

   Mail form to:

   American Legion Department of Massachusetts
   24 Beacon Street, State House RM 546-2
   Boston, MA 02133

2. **Form 2** must be completed by contestant parent or guardian

   Mail form to:

   American Legion Department of Massachusetts
   24 Beacon Street, State House RM 546-2
   Boston, MA 02133

3. **Prepared Oration Cover Sheet**

Form 1

Department of Massachusetts Oratorical Contest Entry Form

Please print clearly and complete all sections of this form.

Student Information

Student Name	**Grade**
High School	**Phone**
Home Address Street City State ZIP	
Email	

Parent or Guardian Information

Parent or Guardian Name	**Phone**
Email	

Principal Verification

I verify that the student named above is currently enrolled at the high school listed on this form and is in good standing.

Principal Name Please Print	**School Phone**
Principal Signature	**Date**

Form 2

MEDIA RELEASE

TO BE COMPLETED BY PARENT OR GUARDIAN:

I/We understand that as part of our child's participation in The American Legion, Department of Massachusetts Oratorical Contest, photos, videos, and quotations may be taken for use in publications and reports about the program. We further understand that members of the news media invited to cover the program may take photos, videos, and quotations. We grant permission to use such materials for the promotion of the program. I/We grant permission to The American Legion, Department of Massachusetts and its subordinates, to use names and/or photographs for use in The American Legion publications such as recruiting brochures, newsletters, and magazines, and to use names and/or photographs on display boards, and to use names and/or photographs in electronic versions of the same publications or on The American Legion, Department of Massachusetts website or other electronic forms or media. I/We hereby agree to release, defend, and hold harmless The American Legion Department of Massachusetts and subordinates, including any firm publishing and/or distributing the finished product in whole or in part, whether on paper or via electronic media, from and against any claims, damages, or liability arising from or related to the use of the photographs, including, but not limited to, any misuse, distortion, blurring, alteration, optical illusion or use in composite form, either intentionally or otherwise, that may occur or be produced in taking, processing, reduction or production of the finished product, its publication or distribution.
I/We (print full name(s) _____am/are the parent or legal guardian of the child named below. I/We have read this release before signing below, and fully understand the contents, meaning, and impact of this release. Printed full name of contestant Signature of parent or guardian & date Email of Parent or Guardian Phone number of Parent or Guardian

Printed full name of contestant	
Signature of parent or guardian & date	
Email of Parent or Guardian	
Phone number of Parent or Guardian	

Sample Cover Sheet for Oration

THE AMERICAN LEGION
2026-2027 NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL
ORATORICAL CONTEST

"Title of your Prepared Oration"

Your full name, complete street address, including city, state, and ZIP code.

Participants will need to bring a hard copy of their Prepared Oration to each contest they participate in.

Resources

Hold Ctrl and click the link to open it.

1. https://www.legion.org/get-involved/youth-programs/oratorical-contest
2. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7YJ-H6uo4IE&t=5s
3. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ac9siOihMdo
4. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p1MqaycUkgo
5. https://www.legion.org/get-involved/youth-programs