



**2025 RULES AND REGULATIONS FOR THE
84TH ANNUAL HIGH SCHOOL ORATORICAL CONTEST SPONSORED BY
THE AMERICAN LEGION DEPARTMENT OF MASSACHUSETTS**

Nelson I. Blake
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 16-18 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 at Clinton High School, information below.

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 2025 CONTESTS CLOSING DATE FOR APPLICATIONS IS January 31, 2025

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, 2025, 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

Decided by each of the Zones

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 28, 2025.

DEPARTMENT CONTEST

March 23, 2025 12:00 PM-Clinton High School, 200 W. Boylston Rd, Clinton, MA 01510

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.

Assigned Topics for 2025 Oratorical Contest

Amendment 1

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

Amendment VII

In Suits at common law, where the value in controversy shall exceed twenty dollars, the right of trial by jury shall be preserved, and no fact tried by a jury, shall be otherwise re-examined in any Court of the United States, than according to the rules of the common law.

Amendment XVIII

Section 1. After one year from the ratification of this article the manufacture, sale, or transportation of intoxicating liquors within, the importation thereof into, or the exportation thereof from the United States and all territory subject to the jurisdiction thereof for beverage purposes is hereby prohibited.

Section 2. The Congress and the several States shall have concurrent power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

Section 3. This article shall be inoperative unless it shall have been ratified as an amendment to the Constitution by the legislatures of the several States, as provided in the Constitution, within seven years from the date of the submission hereof to the States by the Congress.



Amendment XXVI

Section 1. The right of citizens of the United States, who are eighteen years of age or older, to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of age.

Section 2. The Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

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



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

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2025 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 January 2025, 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.