

**VOICE OF DEMOCRACY  
2018-2019  
CONTEST THEME - "Why My Vote Matters"**

Voice of Democracy is a script-writing program designed to give high school students the opportunity to voice their opinion on a patriotic theme, which is chosen by the VFW Commander-in-Chief. All ninth, tenth, eleventh and twelfth grade students enrolled in Kansas public, private, parochial schools, or home school programs are eligible to participate. Exchange students and past first place department winners are not eligible to participate. **CONTEST RULES:** Students record their original 3 to 5 minute essay on an audio CD or a flash drive on the above stated theme. They submit their CD, a copy of their written essay and the completed entry form to the local Post/Auxiliary chairman. The tape must be in their own voice without music, special effects or background sounds. Songs and poetry are not acceptable. Students may not identify themselves in anyway. **THE STUDENT DEADLINE TO THE POST IS OCTOBER 31, 2018.** The winning Post CD or flash drive, the written essay, along with the complete entry form, the student biographical questionnaire, recent photograph and parent release form must be in the hands of the **District Chairman by November 15, 2018.** Then the District winner needs to be in the hands of the **Department chairman by December 10, 2018.**

**DEPARTMENT AWARDS**

**First Place: \$1,000.00      Second Place: \$500.00      Third Place: \$300.00**

Department first place winner receives an expense paid trip to Washington D.C. to compete at the VFW National level and a chance at the \$30,000.00 first place National Scholarship. In 2017 each Department winner is guaranteed at least a \$2,000.00 scholarship at National.

**ALL CHAIRMAN, POSTS, DISTRICTS, PLEASE MAKE SURE ALL FORMS ARE COMPLETE WITH A RECENT PHOTOGRAPH**

**DISTRICT PARTICIPATION REPORTING**

**District Chairman: Please forward the completed District report form and summary to your Department Chairman no later than December 10, 2018.**

**POST NO. –** List Posts that have declared students winner(s). Please list the participating Posts in numerical order.

**AUXILIARY –** If Post has an auxiliary, credit their participation by indicating YES or NO.

**NUMBER OF PARTICIPATING STUDENTS –** Number of students that actually entered the competition by writing an essay.

**NUMBER OF POST WINNERS ADVANCED –** Number of Post winners that were advanced up to the second level of competition (i.e. District).

**SCHOLARSHIP/BONDS AND AWARDS –** Total amount of dollars actually awarded to student participants.

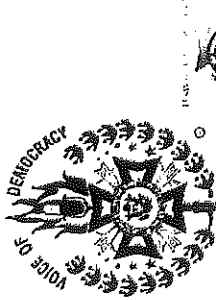
**ADDITIONAL MONEY EXPENDED –** All additional monies (other than scholarships/bonds and awards) allocated and expended in conducting their program (banquets, gifts, pins, jackets, etc)

**FORWARDING DISTRICT WINNER TO DEPARTMENT**

**District Chairman: The District winner's materials that should be forwarded to the Department Chairman (immediately after the District judging is complete) are:**

- 1) District winner's completed official entry form
- 2) District winner's recording (flash drive or CD) (VOD only)
- 3) District winner's typed essay
- 4) District winner's photograph (close-up of head & shoulders)
- 5) District Summary Participation Report
- 6) District Voice of Democracy Report Form

# Voice of Democracy



For assistance contact:

816.756.3390 ext. 6155  
Email: youth@scholarships@vfw.org  
WWW.VFW.ORG

VFW STORE ORDER NO. 4420

## LOCAL VFW POST INFORMATION

CONTACT: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

BEST TIME TO CALL: \_\_\_\_\_

ALTERNATE CONTACT: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

BEST TIME TO CALL: \_\_\_\_\_

Revised 2/2018

### OFFICIAL RULES FOR STUDENTS ADVANCING TO NATIONAL LEVEL

If selected as a first-place state winner, I have the consent of my parent/guardian and school to attend the Voice of Democracy National Finals in Washington, D.C., March 2-6, 2019, as a guest of the VFW National Organization.

I understand that state winners who do not attend as stated above will forfeit all rights to compete in the National Finals and will be replaced by their state's second place winner.

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 assigns; 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 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 title, 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/VFW scholarship awards \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Amt. of Post/VFW 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 and will attend the National Finals in Washington, D.C.

Department Chairman's Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Daytime Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

The winner  has been  will be (check one) notified that they are the first-place Department winner on \_\_\_\_\_  
Note: National Headquarters will contact your winner after this date to make travel arrangements for them to be in Washington, D.C.



# Voice of Democracy

2018-19 Theme  
"Why My Vote Matters"

Student Entry Deadline: October 31, 2018



Patricia Audio Essay Competition  
Grand Prize: \$30,000 Scholarship

## 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 40,000 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, *Why My Vote Matters*.

## WHY SHOULD I ENTER?

Prizes and scholarships can be awarded at the Post, District, state and national level. Department (state) winners receive an all-expense-paid trip to Washington, D.C., March 2-6, 2019, to tour the city, be honored by the VFW and its VFW Auxiliary and receive their portion of \$155,500 in national awards, the top scholarship being \$30,000.

## 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. 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  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  drive. One student per CD or  drive. When burning your CD, make sure that "Create Audio CD" option (or similar) is selected so the program can properly convert your sound  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  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](mailto: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.

## 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. State winners are invited to Washington, D.C., where their audio essays compete in the  competition. If you need help leading a participating VFW Post in your area, follow these instructions: First, visit this website <https://www.vfw.org/find-a-post> 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 <https://www.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 VFW National Headquarters: [youthscholarships@vfw.org](mailto: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, 2018. 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 (NAASSP)*

has again approved this contest for its National Advisory List of Contests and Activities.

## 2018-19 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/yyyy)

Grade in School

School Name, City, State

Teacher's name and Email (if applicable)

First Name You'd Like on a Name Badge

Student Jacket Size  
(Adult Size Only)

TO BE COMPLETED BY STUDENT'S PARENT/GUARDIAN  
(required even if student is 18 or over)

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