



Patriot's Pen Rules and Eligibility

WHO CAN ENTER

Patriot's Pen is open to 6th, 7th and 8th-grade students enrolled by the Oct. 31 deadline in public, private or parochial schools in the U.S., its territories or its possessions. Home-schooled students also are eligible. Although U.S. citizenship is not required, students must be lawful U.S. permanent residents or have applied for permanent residence (the application which has not been denied) and intends to become a U.S. citizen at the earliest opportunity allowed by law. (Foreign exchange students or former winners that placed in the National contest are ineligible.)

HOW TO ENTER

Download and complete the Patriot's Pen entry form.

All essays should be typed in English with no color or graphics and 300 - 400 words in length (+ or - 5 word max). The essay must be contestant's original work and a product of the contestant's own thinking. The approach to the Patriot's Pen theme should be positive and clearly focused. Poetry is not acceptable. 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) Quotations may be used sparingly if plainly identified wherever used. A contestant's teacher, counselor or parent may check the essay for punctuation, grammar and/or spelling, but the content must remain the contestant's. Use of ChatGPT or other AI tools is not allowed.

Students can ask a teacher or youth group leader to supervise their progress in the competition. Your Patriot's Pen entry must be submitted to a participating VFW Post by the Oct. 31 deadline.

JUDGING CRITERIA

Knowledge of the theme is worth 30 points: You must show a thorough knowledge of the theme in your work. Demonstrate you have researched the issue extensively.

Theme development is worth 35 points: Answer all relevant facts about the theme such as the who, what, where, when and why. Relate the theme to your own experiences.

Clarity of ideas is worth 35 points: Write your essay in an easy-to-understand format. Leave your reader with a clear understanding of your explanation of the theme.

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