

INQUIRIES MAY BE DIRECTED TO:

The American Legion
4701 N. 19th Avenue, Ste. 200
Phoenix, AZ 85015-3799
(602) 264-7706
oratorical@azlegion.org
Paul G. Johnson
(623) 399-0633
pjchef2000@gmail.com

Craig S. Barnes
(602) 469-1225
Commanderqc129@gmail.com
Area "A" Chairman

Jim Borgman
(847) 456-1843
jaborgman9@gmail.com
Area "B" Chairman

Jeri Strande
(928) 301-9581
jeristrande21@gmail.com
Area "C" Chairman

Jim Borgman
(847) 456-1843
jaborgman9@gmail.com
SAL Chairman

Wanda Amado
(623) 251-1709
lenwanamado@gmail.com
ALA Chairman

Open at this time
ALR Chairman

ENTRY FORM:

Students may submit the proper Entry Form to participate in the program between October 2025, and January 31, 2026. Apply online at
www.azlegion.org/programs/oratorical.

2026 RULES AND REGULATIONS 88th ANNUAL HIGH SCHOOL ORATORICAL SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM www.azlegion.org/programs



THE AMERICAN LEGION
DEPARTMENT OF ARIZONA
oratorical@azlegion.org
Department of Arizona Commander
Gary Vaughan

Paul G. Johnson, Chairman
Department Oratorical Committee
The National Contest Rules Govern
Department Contests (See National Contest Brochure) <http://www.legion.org/oratorical>

THE DEPARTMENT of ARIZONA PRIZES ARE AS FOLLOWS:

First Prize - \$2000.00 plus an additional \$2000.00 Scholarship upon participation in the First Round of the National Finals in Hillsdale, Michigan.

All Contestants at the Department Finals receive Cash Scholarships.
The Department (State) Oratorical champion will automatically advance into the National American Legion Oratorical Competition. The FIRST and SECOND ROUNDS of the National Contest will be held on May 15-17, 2026, Hillsdale Michigan

The NATIONAL FINALS will be held on Sunday, May 17, 2025, followed by a banquet honoring all the contestants. 1st Place \$25,000, 2nd Place \$22,500, 3rd Place \$20,000, Contestant and one guest may accompany to Nationals.

ORGANIZATION

The contest will be under the direct supervision of The American Legion Oratorical Committee, appointed by the Department (State) Commander. Final authority on all issues raised shall remain with the Committee.

LOCAL, DISTRICT, AND AREA CONTESTS

Students will compete multiple times. Contests are progressive, will be held during the months of late February - March, (your choice of weekends) but must be completed on or before MARCH 22, 2026.

The locations of each student's contests are based on where they attend school. The dates and locations vary throughout the state. **CONTACT THE CHAIRMAN OF YOUR DISTRICT FOR DATES AND LOCATIONS OF YOUR CONTESTS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE!**

The State is divided into American Legion "Districts and Areas" as follows:

Area A: (Southern AZ) Districts 2, 3, 4, and 5
Area B: (Phoenix Metro and Yuma) Districts 1, 11, 12
Area C: (Northern AZ) - Districts 6, 7, 8

EACH AREA SENDS TWO CONTESTANTS TO THE ARIZONA FINALS.

THE ARIZONA FINALS CONTEST
Will be held on Saturday, March 28, 2026. A maximum of two contestants from each "Area" compete in the Finals. A monetary award will be given to all contestant reaching the finals

The winner of this Contest will compete in the National Semi -Finals & Finals at Hillsdale, Michigan, May 15-17, 2026.

ELIGIBILITY

Eligible participants in The American Legion High School Oratorical Scholarship Program must 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 twenty (20) years on the date of the National Finals Contest, who is currently enrolled in high school (public, charter, parochial, military, private, or home-schooled) in which the curriculum of said high school is considered to be of high school level, commencing with grade nine (9) and terminating

with grade twelve (12). Students must be enrolled in high school during the time of participation at any level of The American Legion National High School Oratorical Scholarship Program.

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. It must be delivered in the English language. Singing is NOT allowed. Before the contestant starts their oration, they will give the title of their Prepared Oration to the Chairman of the Contest. Quotations must be indicated as such. Where quotations are more than ten words in length, the author's name must be given both orally and in the manuscript. The penalty for plagiarism will be disqualification. The Prepared Oration must be based on some aspect of the Constitution of the United States which will give emphasis to the attendant duties and obligations of a citizen to our government. The same Prepared Oration is to be used throughout all levels of the Contests.

ASSIGNED TOPICS FEATURE

All contestants must participate in both the Prepared Oration and the "ASSIGNED TOPIC" features at all levels of the Contest. The Assigned Topic discourse must consume not less than three (3) nor more than five (5) minutes for delivery. The Prepared Oration quotation rule must be observed. The purpose of the Assigned Topic feature is to test the speaker's knowledge of the subject, the extent of his/her research and the ability to discuss with minimal preparation the topic as related to the basic principles of government under the Constitution. Each contestant speaks on the same topic, which is drawn by the Contest Committee at the Contest. By action of the National Americanism Commission, the Assigned Topics to be used in this year's contest are the following:

2026 ASSIGNED TOPICS

AMENDMENT IV

The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated, and no Warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause, supported by Oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized.

ARTICLE III

Section 3. Treason against the United States, shall consist only in levying War against them, or in adhering to their Enemies, giving them Aid and Comfort. No Person shall be convicted of Treason unless on the Testimony of two Witnesses to the same overt Act, or on Confession in open Court. The Congress shall have Power to declare the Punishment of Treason, but no Attainder of Treason shall work Corruption of Blood, or Forfeiture except during the Life of the Person attainted.

ARTICLE IV

Section 4. The United States shall guarantee to every State in this Union a Republican Form of Government, and shall protect each of them against Invasion; and on Application of the Legislature, or of the Executive (when the Legislature cannot be convened) against domestic Violence.

ARTICLE VI

Clause 3. The Senators and Representatives before mentioned, and the Members of the several State Legislatures, and all executive and judicial Officers, both of the United States and of the several States, shall be bound by Oath or Affirmation, to support this Constitution; but no religious Test shall ever be required as a Qualification to any Office or public Trust under the United States.

CONTEST REGULATIONS

DRESS-Business attire is required. (No Tennis Shoes)

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, 2, etc.

NOTES AND ROSTRUMS-The use of notes, amplification, lectern or speaker's stand by contestants, or prompting in any manner, is not permitted. Props are not permitted. Singing is not permitted.

THE PREPARED ORATION AND ASSIGNED TOPICS MUST BE COMMITTED TO MEMORY.

DEPARTMENT OF AZ PAST CHAMPIONS

2025 Tanish Doshi, Oro Valley
2024 Mary Sanapu, IIEA, Phoenix
2023 Kaleb Rasor, BASIS Oro Valley
2022 Kaleb Rasor, BASIS Oro Valley
2021 Hannah Shin, BASIS Oro Valley
2020 Caleb Doerksen, Verrado HS
2019 Cassandra Lawson, BASIS Oro Valley
2018 Kylie Cochran, Scottsdale
2017 Juliana Martinez, Pusch Ridge
2016 Elizabeth Baxter, AZ Lutheran
2015 Chetan Bafna, Kofa High School
2014 Chetan Bafna, Kofa High School
2013 Alex Kate Halvey, Pusch Ridge
2012 Rachel Moses, Home Schooled
2011 Rachel Moses, Home Schooled
2010 Nicholas Everetts, Fountain Hills H.S.
2009 Clayton Masterman, River Valley H.S.
2008 Michael Fleming, Mesa H.S.
2007 Ronni Stirling, Coronado H.S.
2006 Michele O'Shea, Cactus H.S.
2005 Michele O'Shea, Cactus H.S.
2004 Michele O'Shea, Cactus H.S.
2003 Thomas Joraanstad, Brophy Preparatory-
2002 Thomas Joraanstad, Brophy Preparatory
2001 Thomas Joraanstad, Brophy Preparatory
2000 Sarah Joraanstad, Xavier Preparatory
1999 Joshua Deahl, Mountain View H.S.
1998 William Self, Mountain View H.S.
1997 Katherine Forrest, Mountain View H.S.
1996 Kaleen Love, Mountain View H.S. -
1995 Shira Shafir, Sunnyslope H.S.
1994 Shira Shafir, Sunnyslope H.S.
1993 Soraya Ali-Akbarian, Sunnyslope H.S.
1992 Jimi Jo Story, Mingus H.S.
1991 Michael Wawro, Sunnyslope H.S.
1990 Jamie Lee Wagner, Chaparral H.S.
1989 Mark Light-Orr, Deer Valley H.S.
1988 William Gates, Deer Valley H.S.
1987 William Gates, Deer Valley H.S.
1986 Matthew Ortega
1985 Steven R. Houbek
1984 H. David Preston
1983 James F. Ireland
1982 Matthew Fitzgerald, Casa Grande H.S.
1981 Matthew Fitzgerald, Casa Grande H.S.
1980 Bartholmew Fitzgerald, Casa Grande H.S.
1979 Victoria Fimea
1978 Randi-Jean Hedin
1977 Thomas R. Harrell
1976 Arleen Armstrong
1975 Sari Lisa Horwitz
1974 Joyce Helen Weaver
1966 Ronald T. McCoy, Phoenix AZ
1938 John Jansen, Nogales AZ