AMERICANISM ESSAY CONTEST
Contest Rules

The American Legion Auxiliary's Americanism Essay Contest is for students in grades 3-12, including students with special needs, divided into six classes.
One award in each class will be presented in each division.

Essay Title: *"How can you be a beacon of light for our veterans?"*

Essay Classes:

Class	Grade Level	Word Requirement*
I	3 and 4	150-250
II	5 and 6	250-300
III	7 and 8	350-400
IV	9 and 10	450-500
V	11 and 12	450-500
VI	Students with special needs	Word count should correspond with student's grade level

1. The Americanism Essay Contest cover sheet must be filled out **legibly** and **completely**. Failure to do so will result in disqualification.
2. Student or Parent/Guardian contact information is required in order to notify winners.
3. Departments (states) will determine the deadline for the local unit contests.
4. Essays are due from the state department chairs to the Americanism Division chairs by April 15.
5. Essays received after the contest deadline will not be accepted.
6. Submissions become property of the American Legion Auxiliary. Through submission of an essay, contestants and their legal guardians grant non-exclusive reproduction and publication rights to the works submitted and agree to have their names and writing published for commercial use without additional compensation or permission.
7. The essay shall be the work of only one individual.
8. Use of AI in writing essays is not allowed. Essays will be checked for use of AI. Any essay determined to be 30% or more AI written will be disqualified.
9. Essays will be scored using the following rubric:

Word Count	Essay does not comply with applicable word count = 0 Essay complies with applicable word count = 5	5
Cover Sheet	Cover sheet is incomplete = 0 Cover sheet is fully complete = 5	5
Topic/Theme	Essay does not address topic = 1 Essay thoroughly addresses topic = 25	25
Content - Original thought	Essay does not display original thoughts = 1 Essay displays original thoughts = 25	25
Grammar	Essay is not written well grammatically and contains many spelling errors = 1 Essay has no grammatical or spelling errors = 10	10
Clarity/Coherence	Essay is not easily understood = 1 Essay is clearly stated and easily understood = 10	10
Organization	Essay is not organized = 1 Essay is organized = 10	10
Correct Word Usage	Essay does not use correct word choices = 1 Essay uses correct word choices = 10	10
	TOTAL POSSIBLE SCORE	100

THE DECISION OF THE JUDGES SHALL BE FINAL.

AMERICANISM ESSAY CONTEST
2026 Cover Sheet

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Essay Title:
"How can you be a beacon of light for our veterans?"

Essay Classes:

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THE DECISION OF THE JUDGES SHALL BE FINAL.

Essay Checklist:

- ☐ Class competing in _____
- ☐ Sponsoring ALA unit _____
- ☐ Typed or neatly written essay conforming to the word requirement for class
- ☐ Completed essay cover sheet as first page of essay
- ☐ Word count of essay_____
- ☐ Due date for student to return to ALA unit _____

To be completed by the student and parent/guardian:
* ***Please write legibly in ink.***

Student Name: _____

Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Student or Parent/Guardian Address (Street, City, State, ZIP): _____

_____

Student or Parent/Guardian Email Address: _____

Student or Parent/Guardian Phone:_____

Parent/Guardian Name and Signature: _____

School Name: _____

Teacher Name: _____

School City/State: _____

Auxiliary Use Only (Must be completed for entry to be considered.)

Sponsoring Unit Name/Number: _____

Signature of Unit Americanism Chair: _____

Unit Winner Due to Department on:_____ Department:_____

Signature of Department Chair: _____

Department Winners Due to National Americanism Division Chair by April 15, 2027