ESSAY Contests 2026-2027

To compete in these contests (7 different ones), you must thoroughly review all guidelines. To ensure a successful submission, contact Lt Gabrielle Fletcher well in advance of the deadline to review requirements and receive writing assistance. Many of these contests have various categories with different requirements, Lt. Gabrielle Fletcher can individually email you once you let her know if your specific interests. Contests marked with an asterisk (*) indicate those in which we have achieved success previously. All these essays offer monetary prize awards & scholarship opportunities. Lt Gabrielle Fletcher's email: fletcherrg@ntin.net Remember to aways CC a second adult on emails.

OCT 17th to LT Fletcher for the OCT 23rd 2026 to Local VFW Post. Contact Lt Gabrielle Fletcher for more the contest cover sheets, specific information, where to submit, & writing assistance

VFW: www.texasvfw.org/programs/youthprograms

- 6-8 grade Patriot Pen: "*What a Veteran Taught Me About America."* 300-400 words
- 9-12 grade Voice of Democracy Audio Essay: " *What a Veteran Taught Me About America."* 3-5 minute audio recording of your essay.

***Nov. 1, 2026 Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR)**. Contact Lt Gabrielle Fletcher for the contest cover sheets, specific information, where to submit, & writing assistance

DAR: www.dar.org/outreach/education/essay-contests

I Grades 5-8 have 2 options:

1. Essay : To announce independence from Great Britain, the Declaration of Independence was publicly read in Philadelphia on July 8, 1776. Following this reading, the word spread throughout the colonies in newspapers, more public readings, and posted notices. Imagine you lived in Philadelphia or an area of the colonies where news did not reach you for weeks. How would you react to hearing the Declaration read in your community? With whom would you share the news? What action would you take after hearing it? How would this have impacted your life?

(Grade 5: 300-600 words; Grades 6-8: 600-1,000 words)

2. Video – same topic as above, but only up to 3 minutes (must have a works cited for sources used)

II. Grades 9-12 have 2 options:

1. Essay: Select a figure from the era of the American Revolution (1773-1783). Discuss how he or she influenced the course of the American Revolution, who he or she was and his/her contribution to the founding of a new nation. Figures may be any person, whether a well-known figure or an everyday man, woman, or child who supported the American Revolution in ways large or small.

Students are encouraged to use primary sources (i.e. immediate, first-hand accounts such as letters, diaries speeches, or newspaper reports) for their research. Lesser-known figures are acceptable, but subjects must have been actual participants, i.e. not fictional.

(Length: Between 800-1,200 words)

2. Video same topic as above, but only up to 3 minutes (must have a works cited for sources used)

Nov 10th **Junior American Citizens (National DAR).** THEME: "A SYMBOL OF INDEPENDENCE: THE STATUE OF LIBERTY ILLUMINATING THE PATH TO FREEDOM FOR 140 YEARS"). Contact Lt Gabrielle Fletcher for the contest cover sheets, specific information, where to submit, & writing assistance. No website- info. comes from local chapter.

1. **Art Contest**

- poster
- banner
- stamp
- photographic essay
- digital art

2. **Creative Expression**

- poetry
- short story
- graphic novel/comic

3. **Community Service Project**

Dec. 1, 2026 Fleet Reserve Association. Contact Lt Gabrielle Fletcher more the contest cover sheets, specific information, where to submit, & writing assistance

Fleet Reserve Assoc.: www.fra.org.essay

7-12 grade 350 word essay: "What does Patriotism mean to me"

Dec. 31st – Feb 1 2026 (depends on which contest) Sons of the American Revolution. They have at least 6 different categories/contests, plus it makes a difference if you live in Texas or Oklahoma. If you are interested in this, please contact LT Fletcher individually, & she will walk you through all the different options, specific information, where to submit, & writing assistance

Texas: texassar.org/award_contacts.htm

Oklahoma: okssar.com- go to the education/Youth tab

***March 1 & June 1, 2027 Founding Forward** Contact Lt Fletcher for more the contest cover sheets, specific information, where to submit, & writing assistance. Please have Lt Gabrielle Fletcher look over your essay before you submit, no later than February 12 before submission. You are better off to submit the March 1st deadline!

K-Grade 6 Topic:

Context: Two hundred and fifty years ago, during the winter of 1777 to 1778, thousands of American soldiers stayed at a place called Valley Forge, Pennsylvania. It was bitterly cold, and they did not have enough food or warm clothes. But they stayed because they believed in something important: freedom for a new country called the United States of America.

Topic: Explain what you think it means to be brave, using the story of Valley Forge as your example. In your essay, describe what the soldiers faced, explain why they did not give up, and share one way you can show that same kind of courage as a citizen today.

Typed, double spaced and corrected -250-500

To guide your writing, think about:

- *What challenges did the soldiers at Valley Forge face?*
- *Why do you think they kept going even when things were very hard?*
- *What is one brave thing a good citizen can do in their school, neighborhood, or community?*

Grades 7-12 Topic:

Context: In the winter of 1777 to 1778, General George Washington and approximately 12,000 Continental Army soldiers endured one of the most devastating encampments in American history at Valley Forge, Pennsylvania. Despite extreme cold, scarce food, and disease, they emerged as a more disciplined, unified fighting force committed to the principles of a new nation.

Topic: Analyze how the experience at Valley Forge shaped the founding principles of American citizenship. In your essay, identify at least two specific principles, rights, or responsibilities that emerged or were strengthened during the encampment, and argue why those principles remain relevant to citizens today, 250 years later.

Typed, double spaced and corrected - 500 to 750 words

To guide your writing, consider:

- *What conditions did soldiers face, and what did their perseverance reveal about the values of the new nation?*
- *Which founding principles were put to the test at Valley Forge?*
- *How do those principles connect to what it means to be an American citizen in 2027?*

https://foundingforward.org/awards/youth-essay/

***March 1, 2027 to local American Legion Post.** Contact Lt Fletcher for more the contest cover sheets, specific information, where to submit, & writing assistance

American Legion: www.legion-aux.org/americanism-essay-contest

Waiting to hear from Local Post what this year's theme will be- usually selected after national convention in September.