

# Patriot's Pen

2014-15 Theme

Why I Appreciate America's Veterans

Student Entry Deadline: November 1, 2014



What is

## Patriot's Pen

Conducted nationwide, this VFW sponsored youth essay competition gives students an opportunity to write essays expressing their views on democracy. We invite you to join the more than 104,000 students who participated last year in this contest. The top 46 national winners all receive at least \$500. The first-place national award is currently \$5,000, plus an all-expense paid trip to Washington, D.C. for the winner and a parent or guardian.

### Big National Prizes

Prizes include the various amounts of awards listed below:

1st: \$5,000	7th: \$1,750
2nd: \$4,000	8-9th: \$1,500
3rd: \$3,500	10-11th: \$1,250
4th: \$2,750	12-13th: \$1,000
5th: \$2,500	14-15th: \$750
6th: \$2,000	16-46th: \$500

### When is the deadline?

To qualify, all entries must be submitted to a sponsoring VFW Post by **Nov. 1, 2014**.

*The National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) has again approved this contest for its National Advisory List of Contests and Activities.*

### How does the contest work?

All entries begin at the 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 competition. Individual students may submit their entry directly to the Post providing they have not competed at a school/class competition.

The contest consists of four levels. The first level (entry) is sponsored by local VFW Posts. Post winners advance, one for every 15 entries, to the VFW District (regional) level where the one first-place winner is advanced to the VFW Department (state) level. The one first-place winner at the Department level is then advanced into the VFW National competition. The winner from each Department (state) then competes for the national prizes.

### Who can enter?

Patriot's Pen is open to 6th-, 7th- and 8th-grade students enrolled in public, private or parochial schools in the U.S., its territories or its possessions. Home-schooled students also are eligible.

Dependents of U.S. military or civilian personnel in overseas schools can participate too. (Foreign exchange students and former winners that placed in the National finals are excluded from the contest.)

**2014-15 OFFICIAL STUDENT PATRIOT'S PEN COMPETITION ENTRY FORM MUST BE COMPLETED BY ALL CONTESTANTS**

Name: First, M.I., Last

Address

City, State, Zip

( )

Home Phone

E-mail

Date of Birth

Grade in School

Essay Word Count

SSN (optional)

School Name, City, State

**I HAVE READ AND UNDERSTAND THE CONTEST RULES**

Signature of Student Participant

Date

**TO BE COMPLETED BY THE VFW/AUXILIARY POST**

I certify that this student is an authorized entry in our VFW Post Level Patriot's Pen Competition.

Post Commander's/Chairman's Signature

Post #

Ladies Auxilliary President's/Chairman's Signature

Post Address

City, State, Zip

No. of students participating \_\_\_\_ No. of winners advanced to District \_\_\_\_

Amt. of Post/Aux. awards \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Amt. of Post/Aux. additional expenses (banquet, pins, etc.) \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**TO BE COMPLETED BY THE VFW/AUXILIARY DISTRICT**

I certify that the student named in the previous section is the duly selected winner of the Patriot's Pen Essay Contest District Competition and is our sole entry into the Department finals.

District Chairman's Signature

Dist. #

Address

City, State, Zip

( )

Phone

E-mail

**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 Patriot's Pen Essay Department Competition, and is our sole entry into the National Judging.

Department Chairman's Signature

( )

Daytime Phone

Fax

E-mail

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 notify them of their national placement.

# Patriot's Pen

2014-15 Theme

## Why I Appreciate America's Veterans

Student Entry Deadline: November 1, 2014

### What are the rules?

- Essay length: 300-400 typewritten words.
- You must write your own essay.
- All essays should be typewritten in English with no color or graphics and cannot be less than 300 words or greater than 400 words in length. (Essays under or over these word amounts will be eliminated.) Every word is counted regardless of length. The essay title (theme) or added footnotes do not contribute to the word count.

### Deadline—

The completed essay and entry form must be in the hands of the VFW Post Chairman by midnight on **Nov. 1, 2014**.

In no way may contestants identify themselves within their essay. Do not put your name on your essay. The entry form is your essay's cover sheet. Secure the Official Student Entry Form with a staple or other fastener on top of your essay. Contestants are allowed to enter only once (one Post competition). Contestants found in violation of this rule will face elimination from the competition and will be required to return any and all prize money awarded or received.

The essay must be a 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. 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. Contestants will be judged on the basis of their essay alone and are not required to present the essay orally. All essays become the property of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. The VFW retains non-exclusive rights to use your essay and likeness in the promotion and execution of the organization's programs and activities.

**Note:** All entries must be submitted to a VFW Post competition. If you have difficulty identifying a sponsoring Post in your area, call the Patriot's Pen national office at: (816) 968-1117 or e-mail: [kharmer@vfw.org](mailto:kharmer@vfw.org). You may also visit our website at [www.vfw.org](http://www.vfw.org) and select the "find a post" option.

### How do I get started?

- Ask a teacher or youth group/club adult leader to supervise the Patriot's Pen writing competition.
- Contact a local VFW Post and indicate your interest in participating.
- Establish a contact person who is a member of that VFW Post or its Ladies Auxiliary.
- Make sure that your essay is submitted to the VFW Post before the contest deadline of **Nov. 1, 2014**.

### How am I judged?

You will be judged on how well you understand, develop and present the theme. A positive approach is recommended to express your viewpoint.

#### 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.

### What is the theme?

VFW's Commander-in-Chief annually chooses the year's theme. The 2014-15 theme is **Why I Appreciate America's Veterans**.

### LOCAL VFW POST INFORMATION:

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

**PHONE:** \_\_\_\_\_ **BEST TIME TO CALL:** \_\_\_\_\_

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

**PHONE:** \_\_\_\_\_ **BEST TIME TO CALL:** \_\_\_\_\_



## Patriot's Pen Competition Veterans of Foreign Wars & Ladies Auxiliary

Kansas City, Missouri  
(816) 968-1117

E-Mail: [kharmer@vfw.org](mailto:kharmer@vfw.org)  
[www.vfw.org](http://www.vfw.org)

EMBLEM AND SUPPLY ORDER NO. 4440