WHAT IS THE VOICE OF DEMOCRACY PROGRAM?

Since 1947, the Voice of Democracy has been the Veterans of Foreign Wars' (VFW's) premier scholarship program. Each year, almost 40,000 high school students compete for more than $52 million in scholarships and incentives. Students compete by writing and recording an audio essay on an annual patriotic theme. This year's theme is, My Responsibility To America.

WHY SHOULD I ENTER?

Prizes and scholarships can be awarded at the Post, District, state and national level. Department (State) winners receive an all-expense paid trip to Washington, D.C., Feb. 25 - March 1, 2017, to tour the city, be honored by the VFW and its VFW Auxiliary and receive their portion of $153,000 in national awards, the top scholarship being $30,000.

THE RULES

Who can enter?
The Voice of Democracy is open to students in grades 9-12 by the Nov. 1 deadline, who are enrolled in a public, private or parochial high school or home study program in the United States, its territories and possessions; or in an overseas U.S. military/civilian dependent school. Although U.S. citizenship is not required, students must be lawful U.S. permanent residents or have applied for permanent residence (the application for which has not been denied) and intends to become a U.S. citizen at the earliest opportunity allowed by law. Foreign exchange students, students age 20 or over, previous Voice of Democracy first place state winners, GED or Adult Education Students are ineligible.

What do I need to enter?
Record your original 3-5 minute (+ or – 5 seconds max.) essay on an audio CD or a flash drive. One student per CD or flash drive. When burning your CD, make sure that “Create Audio CD” option (or similar) is selected so the program can properly convert your sound file and burn it to CD. After it has finished, be sure to play back your audio CD on a system other than your computer, such as a standard radio or car CD player, to verify that the conversion/burning process was successful. You will submit the recording, typed essay and this completed entry form. Provide these items to your school/group competition or local VFW Post for judging. In addition you can submit your emailed entry form, essay, and audio file to the VFW Post upon approval. You must be the sole author of your essay. The recording must be in your own voice and in English. Hearing/speech impaired students should email the Voice of Democracy National Office at vheme@vfw.org for special instructions. No music, singing, poetry or sound effects are allowed. 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) although the recording & typed essay should be labeled with your name, to show ownership. You may enter only one competition at one Post (if otherwise eligible) per year. At any time during the contest, additional participant personal information could be requested by the VFW, including but not limited to a photograph, SSN, or biographical information.
WHERE DO I SUBMIT MY ENTRY?
All entries begin at the local VFW 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. Individual students may submit their entry directly to the Post. This VFW Post should be within your local area and within your U.S. state of residence. One winner for every 15 entries from each Post advances to District and one District winner advances to the state (Department) competition. State winners are invited to the national competition. If you need help finding a participating VFW Post in your area, follow these instructions. First, visit this website https://www.vfw.org/contacts/findpost.aspx to find a VFW Post. Be sure this Post is within the state you reside in. If you do not have success in finding a Post, or if you have trouble getting in touch with them, you can contact your VFW Post (state) office to see if they can offer any information or assistance. You can visit this link https://www.vfw.org/Contacts/ and look to the extreme far right side of that webpage (see the second gray box) for "VFW State Contacts" to get your VFW state office’s phone number and email. Some Departments have websites you can visit by visiting this link https://www.vfw.org/Contacts/VFW-State-Department-and-District-Websites. If you still need assistance, please e-mail us here at VFW National Headquarters: kharmer@vfw.org

WHAT IS THE DEADLINE FOR MY ENTRY?
All entries competing at the Post level must be in the hands of that VFW Post by midnight, Nov. 1, 2016. It is the responsibility of the student to meet this deadline by submitting their entry to the proper location by ensuring it is a participating Post.

WHAT ARE THE JUDGING CRITERIA?
Originality is worth 30 points:
Treatment of the theme should show imagination and human interest.

Content is worth 35 points:
Clearly express your ideas in an organized manner. Fully develop your theme and use transitions to move smoothly from one idea to another.

Delivery is worth 35 points:
Speak in a clear and credible manner.

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

LOCAL VFW POST INFORMATION:
CONTACT: Bill Milam
PHONE: 3H8-1020 BEST TIME TO CALL:
ALTERNATE CONTACT:
PHONE: BEST TIME TO CALL: