



# Patriot's Pen

What I Would Tell  
America's Founding Fathers

## 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 with the prospect of winning U.S. savings bonds. We invite you to join the more than 129,000 students who participated last year in this contest. The top 46 national winners all receive at least a \$1,000 savings bond. The first-place award is currently a \$10,000 savings bond 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 U.S. Savings Bonds listed below:

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

### WHAT ARE THE DEADLINES?

**POST: NOVEMBER 1 to 15, 2012 FOR JUDGING**

**DISTRICT: NOV. 16 to DECEMBER 6, 2012 FOR JUDGING**

**DEPARTMENT: DEC. 7, 2012 to JAN. 7, 2013 FOR JUDGING**

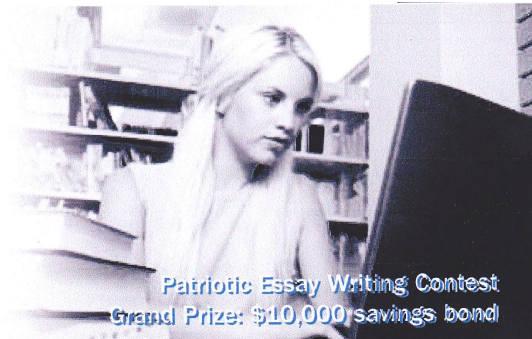
**DISTRICT PARTICIPATION REPORTS TO STATE CHAIRMAN NO LATER THAN JANUARY 15, 2013**

**DEPARTMENT WINNERS TO NATIONAL BY: JAN. 15, 2013**

**DEPARTMENT REPORTS TO NATIONAL BY: JAN. 31, 2013**

### 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.)



Patriotic Essay Writing Contest  
Grand Prize: \$10,000 savings bond

### How does the contest work?

#### Where do I submit my entry?

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, to the VFW District (regional) level where the one first-place winner is advanced to the VFW Department (state) level. The one first-place district 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.

### How do I get started?

É Ask a teacher or youth group/club adult leader to supervise the Patriot's Pen writing competition.

É Contact a local VFW Post and indicate your interest in participating.

É Establish a contact person who is a member of that VFW Post or its Ladies Auxiliary.

É Make sure that your essay is submitted to the VFW Post before the contest deadline of **Nov. 1, 2012**.

### 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 2012-13 theme is:

***What I Would Tell America's Founding Fathers***

# Patriot's Pen

What I Would Tell  
America's Founding Fathers

## 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 Nov. 1, 2012.** 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.

### 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

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 Auxiliary 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 and bonds \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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 STATE 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.

State 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

**ENTRY FORM MUST BE  
COMPLETED ENTIRELY**