



2025 – 2026

Fifth Grade Flag Essay Contest Rules

www.ialegion.org/flag-essay

General Information

The purpose of The American Legion of Iowa Essay Contest is to develop a more profound knowledge and appreciation for the United States Flag on the part of elementary-aged students. Additional objectives include the ability to gain an understanding of flag etiquette and respect for the flag. Applications may be downloaded from www.ialegion.org/flag-essay.

Awards

Local and district contest awards, if any, will be the responsibility of the individual post and district. Each district finalist must be completed in time to be forwarded to The American Legion Department of Iowa Headquarters.

The Department finalists will be recognized in the same manner as other youth champions and will be invited to read their essays at the Department Convention. First, Second, and Third Place winners will also receive \$500, \$300, and \$200 from The American Legion of Iowa and American Legion of Iowa Foundation.

Contests

Local contests will be conducted and judged by the local sponsoring American Legion Post, and the winning essay, along with the completed certification form, will be forwarded as follows:

1. Individual Legion Posts will forward one winning entry (please retain a copy) to their District Children and Youth Chairperson, with a signed Participation Application, postmarked by January 5th of the current program year. If the district does not have a Children & Youth Chairman, the District Americanism Chairman will suffice. Each section of the application must be thoroughly reviewed and completed by the deadline to be eligible for consideration. Failure to follow all directions will automatically disqualify an essay no matter how well written.
2. District entries will be judged by the respective District Children & Youth Chairman and signed off by the District Commander. A listing of District Chairmen can be found at www.ialegion.org/flag-essay. The first-place district finalist's essay and completed application form needs to be sent to Department Headquarters, postmarked no later than January 22, 2026. It is highly recommended that district chairs retain a copy of the application and essay before forwarding the original.
3. The Department Children & Youth Committee will judge the nine district entries at the Mid-Winter Conference, immediately following the Americanism meeting.

Please Note: A list of The American Legion Department of Iowa District Children & Youth Chairmen is available online at www.ialegion.org/flag-essay or upon request from Department Headquarters.

Essay

The format for the essay is limited to the following:

- A one (1) page document containing 300 words or less
- Double-spaced with 12-point font
- The student's own words and effort
- The essay must contain a title and the student's name which will not be part of the word count

The essay is to reflect the students' perspective of what the United States Flag represents to them using facts from the United States Flag Code.

Eligibility

Participants shall be citizens or lawful permanent residents of the United States. All contestants must be students enrolled in the fifth grade in a public, parochial, military, private, or state home school.

The American Legion of Iowa

Fifth Grade Flag Essay Contest Participation Application

Section I – Elementary School & Parent or Guardian – All sections must be completed clearly

This is to certify that _____ is a student currently enrolled at

_____ Elementary School located in _____,

Iowa, and is not outstanding with any school work. The high school graduation year for this student is _____.

Is the above-named student a U.S. Citizen or Lawful Resident? ____ Yes ____ No Total # of School Contestants: _____

Principal's Signature

Teacher's Full Name - Printed

Parent's or Guardian's Name(s) - Printed

Parent's or Guardian's Email Address

Parent's or Guardian's Address

City

State

Zip

I hereby authorize the publication of my child's essay in any American Legion publication or by the news and social media for public relations purposes for The American Legion of Iowa.

Parent's or Guardian's Signature

Parent's or Guardian's Phone Number

Section II – Post Commander (or Officer if necessary)

To be completed by The American Legion Post Commander and then mailed to the District Children & Youth Chairman

This must be forwarded (mail or email) no later than January 5, 2026

I, _____, Commander of American Legion Post # _____, in the Department of Iowa, do hereby certify the above-named contestant an official contestant in the Fifth Grade Flag Essay Contest.

Post Commander's or Officer's Signature

Phone

Total # of Post Contestants

Section III – District Children & Youth Chairman and Commander

To be completed by the District Children & Youth Chairman and District Commander before forwarding to (mail or email) to

Department Headquarters no later than January 22, 2026

I, _____, Commander of District _____ in The American Legion of Iowa, do hereby certify the above-named contestant was declared by the District Children & Youth Chairman as the winner, and is therefore eligible to represent the district at Department judging. **There was a total of _____ District Contestants.**

District Chairman's (C&Y or Americanism) Signature

District Commander's Signature