

Veterans of Foreign Wars Patriot's Pen Program 2026

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION: Since 1995, the Patriot's Pen youth essay competition program has been available to students in grades 6-8. Each year, more 66,600 middle school students compete for more than \$1 million in scholarships and incentives. Students compete by writing a 300–400-word essay on an annual patriotic theme. This year's theme is **"What a Veteran Taught Me About America"**

CRITERIA: Patriot's Pen is open to students in grades 6-8, who are enrolled in a public, private or parochial high school or home study program in the United States, its territories and possessions. 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 Patriot's Pen first place state winners, GED or Adult Education Students are not eligible for entry.

HOW TO SUBMIT: Students will submit their Patriot's Pen entry utilizing the Scholar's App Scholarship Platform, an electronic scholarship entry and tracking platform. Each Post will have flyers with a QR code for the Patriot's Pen scholarship program. Students will use the QR code to open the program and complete the application and their essay. Once completed the student will upload it to their local Post for judging.