

SAR Knight Essay Contest Rules

The contest is designed to give high school students an opportunity to explore events that shaped American History. Contestants shall be in the freshman, sophomore, junior, or senior grade (9th-12th) of study during the contest year.

Students **MUST** follow the rules carefully. Essays submitted that do not adhere to the rules will be disqualified.

1. ELIGIBILITY, SUBMISSION OF ESSAYS and DEADLINES

This contest is open to all students who are United States citizens or legal resident aliens. Contestants shall be in the freshman, sophomore, junior, or senior grade of high school study during the contest year and attending school, including accredited home schools.

The contest must be entered through a Chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution near the student's residence. If the State does not have chapters near the student's residence or if the chapters are not participating, the contest may be entered at the State level. Find California SAR Chapters here: <http://www.californiasar.org/chapters/>

- Essays must be submitted to your local SAR Chapter prior to December 31st. Some chapters may set a different due date, so **check with your local chapter for their specific due date**. If students do not have a local SAR Chapter, they may submit to the State Chairman (patrick.cecil@ml.com) by December 31st.
- Chapters will submit their winning essays to the California State Chairman no later than January 31st.
- The winning state entry will be submitted to the National Chairman no later than February 15th.

2. ESSAY SUBJECTS and RESEARCH REQUIREMENTS

The topic of the essay shall deal with an event, person, philosophy, or ideal associated with the American Revolution, the Declaration of Independence, or the framing of the United States Constitution. The essay must be based upon **no less than five references**, at least three of which must be published works (ex: book, scholarly journal article). References to an encyclopedia or Internet websites are acceptable, but will not satisfy the requirement that at least three references be published works. If there are no published references, the essay will be disqualified. Plagiarism will be grounds for immediate disqualification.

3. ESSAY FORMAT REQUIREMENTS

General Requirements: An original copy of the essay must be submitted. If submitted by mail, no bindings or special covers are allowed. Graphics are not permitted. The essay must be written in English.
Specific Requirements: Each George S. and Stella M. Knight Essay Contest entry must have four parts: (1) cover page, (2) essay, (3) bibliography, and (4) contestant's biography, each of which is described in more detail below. The cover page, bibliography, and contestant's biography must be on separate pages. In order to avoid bias, a blind-judging process is used, and the judges are provided with only the essay and bibliography pages. Therefore, no reference to the contestant's name or other identifying information may appear on the pages of essay or on the bibliography page. Contest entries that do not conform exactly to these requirements will be disqualified.

- The **cover page** must include the title of the essay, contestant's name, contestant's grade level, home address, telephone number, and email address. In addition, the cover page must include the name, address, and telephone number of the school in which the contestant is enrolled, a brief statement of how the entrant learned of the contest (if from the Internet, include the URL of the website), and the official word count of the essay itself. The cover page is separated from the essay for judging purposes.

- The essay must be a **minimum of 800 words and may not exceed 1,200 words** (excluding cover page, citations, bibliography page, and biography). The first page of the essay must include the title of the essay. The text of the essay must be double-spaced, and written in 12-point Times New Roman font. Use 8.5 X 11-inch paper and 1-inch margins on all sides. The essay's pages, which shall include the bibliography page, must be sequentially numbered beginning with the first page of the essay as page 1. No contestant information may appear on the essay text pages. No graphics, special covers, or bindings are allowed.

- **A Note on Word Count:** The official word count is comprised of the title of the essay on the first page (pg 1) of the essay, and then the essay body itself. Clearly note the essay's word count at the end of the essay. Other parts of a contestant's entry (Cover Page, Bibliography, and Biography) as well as citations DO NOT count towards the word count. Be sure to include the official word count on the cover page (see above under cover page section).

- **Citations** in the essay text and references in the bibliography must be in accordance with a widely used and publicly available citation system. Examples of a citation system include the Chicago Manual of Style, the MLA Manual of Style, and the MHRA Style Guide. The bibliography page must specify the system used. No contestant information may appear on the bibliography page(s).

- The **contestant's biography** is limited to one page and must include information regarding the contestant's academic awards and achievements, school activities, community activities, and plans for college. This page is separated from the essay text and bibliography pages for judging purposes.

4. JUDGING CRITERIA

Essays that meet the criteria in Rules 1-3 above will be accepted and judged on the following equally weighted criteria:

- Historical accuracy
- Clarity of thought
- Organization and proven topic
- Grammar and spelling
- Documentation

5. APPLICATION FORM

A contestant must submit an Application Form in addition to the four parts (cover page, essay, bibliography, and biography) of their entry. The Application Form is available on the National Society's

website for the Knight Essay Contest: <https://www.sar.org/george-s-stella-m-knight-essay-contest/>
Contestants are to fill out their personal information, their school's information, and the SAR Chapter to which they are submitting their entry. The remainder of the application will be completed by Chapter and State Officers.

Contestants must **sign and date** the Application Form, certifying on their honor that their essay is their true work, and submit it with their entry. Failure to do so will result in disqualification. Discovery of the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) software in preparation of the essay or other attempts at plagiarism will result in immediate disqualification.

6. AWARDS

Chapter and State prizes vary. Please contact Chapter and State Chairmen for more information. The National Society awards are as follows:

- *First place: \$6,000; a medal with a recognition certificate; up to \$1,500 toward travel expenses incurred attending the SAR Annual Congress.*
- *Second Place: \$3,000 and a recognition certificate.*
- *Third Place: \$2,000 and a recognition certificate.*
- *Fourth Place: \$500 and a recognition certificate.*
- *Fifth Place: \$500 and a recognition certificate.*

7. PUBLICATION and ASSIGNMENT OF RIGHTS

The national winning essay will be submitted for publication in *The SAR Magazine*. Participants in this contest agree that their essay may be published in *The SAR Magazine* and on the NSSAR Knight Essay Contest webpage. Winning essay participants, on all levels, may be required to supply a tax identification number in order to receive their award. By entering this contest, all participants agree that if their essay is chosen as the National winning essay it will be the property of NSSAR. All participants further agree that the National winning essay may not be submitted to any other contest or used for any other purpose without the express permission of the NSSAR Knight Essay Contest Chairman.

8. NSSAR DECISIONS ARE FINAL AND NOT SUBJECT TO REVIEW

Participants in this contest agree that the interpretation of the rules and decisions of the National Chairman and its judges must govern without reservation and that decisions of the judges and/or the National Chairman are final.

Questions regarding specific rules may be directed to the National Chairman.