

VFW



VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS

EDWARD J. KEARNS POST and AUXILIARY NO 6024

MISSION VIEJO, CA

Patriot's Pen Student Guidelines and Tips to make your Essay Successful

Most importantly, your essay must be your original work. It is very tempting, but **Do Not Use AI**. If you plagiarize or use AI software when writing the essay, our AI checker will find it and your entry will be disqualified and you will be banned from future participation.

These are frequent problems that you can avoid --

- Be sure the application is fully completed IN INK, if not typed, and legible, signed and attached or emailed with your essay.
- Be sure the **word count** is included in the space provided on the application.
- **Do not write or type your name** anywhere on the essay (OK to put your name on the pdf file if emailing it).
- Make sure the title of your essay is identical to the theme: **"What A Veteran Taught Me About America"**
- Creativity and Original Thought helps make your essay stand out from the rest.
- Try not to use ideas presented in the classroom which make many essays sound similar.
- **Do not use names** of family members or references to ethnicity in your essay that could identify you.
- Stay on Topic.
- Come to a conclusion that reiterates the theme.

All entries must be emailed, postmarked or delivered to the Essay Committee / VFW Post 6024 no later than October 23, 2026 to be eligible for awards at the District, State, and National levels.

Don't wait until the last minute to turn in your essay. We encourage our entrants to submit their essays several days in advance of the deadline. That way your teacher or the essay committee can check them over for presentation problems and get corrections made if necessary before the judging begins.