

ESSAY CONTEST

The Essay Contest is sponsored by Optimist International to give young people the opportunity to write about their own opinions regarding the world in which they live. The approach can encompass a young person's personal experience, the experience of their country or a more historical perspective. In addition to developing skills for written expression, participants also have the opportunity to win a college scholarship!

One District Scholarship of \$2,500



Club / Community Level Essay Contest

Topic for the 2024 school year is: "Optimism: How It Connects Us"

Club Level Prize Cash Scholarship: 1st \$500 - 2nd \$300 - 3rd \$200

Plus chance for a East Missouri District Prize of up to \$2,500

Deadline: January 31, 2026

Topic for the 2025-2026 school year is: "How My Acts of Service Help Me Understand What My Community Means to Me" Who: The contest is open to contestants under the age of 19 as of October 1st of the current Optimist International contest year (October 1 - September 30) There is no minimum age.

Purpose This contest is sponsored by Optimist International to give young people room to develop their own views around a central idea. In addition to the opportunity for written expression, participants have the chance to win a college scholarship!

How To Enter: Interested students must submit this application with an attached essay document in written (must be legible) or typed format on the pre-assigned topic. Length 700-800 words (Title, footnotes and bibliography are not included in the final word count). Hyphenated words count as one (1) word. Words are to be counted manually.

Please submit this application and the Optimist International official application located here:

Students Full Name: _____ Grade Level _____

Name of School _____

Parent/guardian/teacher Full Name _____

Phone Number _____ Email _____

The top three winners we be asked to attend an event to be presented their essay and prizes and photos will be taken.

Event Date - All entries will be contacted to attend the Oratorical, CCDHH, and Essay event:

Date and Location will be in February (date, time and location TBD)



Contact the Optimist Club of St. Louis EMO District Governor - Jennifer Bagwell
optimistmo@gmail.com - Subject 2025 Essay

EMO District - St Louis Optimist Club OPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL YOUTH CONTESTS 2025-2026



Topic
“The Moment I Realized I Belonged
—My Definition of Community”

ORATORICAL CONTEST

Beginning in 1928, the Oratorical Contest has become the longest-running program of Optimist International. The contest is designed for young people to gain experience in public speaking and provide them with an opportunity to compete for multiple college scholarships with a pre-assigned topic.

Club Level Prizes - Plus
District Scholarships: First Place: \$2,500 • Second Place:
\$1,500 • Third Place: \$1,000

with a chance to win up to \$22,500 at the
World Championships level

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Club Level Prizes - Plus
One District Scholarship of \$2,500



Topic
“How My Acts of Service Help Me
Understand What My Community
Means to Me”



Topic
“The Moment I Realized I Belonged
—My Definition of Community”

COMMUNICATION CONTEST FOR THE DEAF & HARD OF HEARING - Fully Funded - Looking for a community host

This contest offers an opportunity for students who are Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing to present their thoughts in the community, gaining skills, which can only come from signing or speaking to a large audience. Patterned after the Optimist Oratorical Contest, the contest offers youth

the chance to compete in speech or sign language with
the chance to win a college scholarship.

Club Level Prizes - Plus

One District Scholarship of \$2,500

KIDS SPEAK OUT! SPEECH CONTEST Fully Funded - Looking for a community host

All young people can compete in the Optimist Oratorical Contest. The “Kids Speak Out” contest is a “pre-Oratorical” program that provides a more equitable competition for younger speakers.

