



The American Legion - Department of New York
 High School Oratorical Scholarship Program - "A Constitutional Speech Contest"
 Contestant Application Form # 1
 Grades 9 to 12



Please submit this report with a copy of your speech to your County Oratorical Chairperson. This must reach the County Chairperson on or before November 16, 2018. This is necessary for the County Chairperson to arrange their program for the County Contest, which you will be notified of time and place by the County Chairperson. The original of this report and attachments will follow you as you progress through each level.

SCHOOL INFORMATION

Name of School (if applicable) or Home Schooled John Jay High School
 City Hopewell Junction State NY
 Zip 12533 Telephone No. 1- 845-897-6700
 County of School Dutchess
 Date of High School Contest _____ How many Contestants _____
 Number of people in attendance: Adults _____ Students _____

- Public School
- Parochial School
- Private School
- Home Schooled

STUDENT INFORMATION

Name Isababella Hewitt Grade 12
 Address _____ Email Address: _____
 City Wappingers Falls State NY Zip 12510
 Telephone No. 1- _____
 DID YOU READ THE RULES BROCHURE: YES NO
 DO YOU HAVE A COACH: YES NO
 IF YES: NAME OF COACH _____ CONTACT NUMBER: _____

CERTIFICATIONS

CONTESTANT

I hereby certify that my speech is my personal effort and any part of same taken from another speech is so noted in quotes both in the written speech and when delivered as noted under "The Prepared Oration" in the Official Department of New York Rules Brochure. I also state that I am a Citizen of or Lawful Permanent Resident of the United States.

Date: 11/12/19 Contestant's Signature: Isababella Hewitt

PRINCIPALS

I hereby certify that the student named above will represent our High School in the County Contest and that the speech is the personal effort of the student named above and any part of same taken from another speech is so noted in quotes both in the written speech and when delivered as noted under "The Prepared Oration" in the Official Department of New York Rules Brochure. I also state that the student named above is a Citizen of or Lawful Permanent Resident of the United States.

Date: 11/12/19 Principal's Signature: D.K.J.

HOME SCHOOLERS ONLY

I hereby certify that the speech is the personal effort of the student named above and any part of same taken from another speech is so noted in quotes both in the written speech and when delivered as noted under "The Prepared Oration" in the Official Department of New York Rules Brochure, and that the curriculum is considered to be of high school grade level commencing with grade nine (9) and terminating with grade twelve (12). I also state that the student named above is a Citizen of or Lawful Permanent Resident of the United States.

Date: _____ Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

FOR COUNTY CHAIRMAN ONLY

SPONSORING AMERICAN LEGION POST: _____

COUNTY CHAIRMAN:

Name _____
 Address _____
 Telephone No. 1- _____

COUNTY	_____
DISTRICT	_____
STATE	_____

Iseabaila Hewitt
American Legion
Oratorical Contest
10 November 2019

Constitutional Speech

The Future Lies in Our Past

The first time I learned about the Constitution was in my fourth grade class. While we sat criss cross applesauce, Mrs. Watt explained to us what the constitution was, and the men who had created it: our founding fathers. I think she lost me once we saw an image of George Washington, and I was fascinated by his powdered wig! However, the history lessons continued not only throughout my fourth grade class, but also throughout middle school and then high school. We learned about the creation of America, the Civil War, Emancipation, World War One, World War Two, Suburbanization, Civil Rights, the Cold War, and the continuing War on Terror, just to name a few. Back then I saw history as a long storybook about humanity, and our nation. However, I have found that history in turn means so much more. History at its essence forecasts our future. As President Abraham Lincoln campaigned for re-election on November 10, 1864, he stated that "Human nature will not change. In any future great national trial, compared with the men of this, we shall have as weak and as strong, as silly and as wise, as bad and as good. Let us therefore study the incidents in this as philosophy to learn wisdom from and none of them as wrongs to be avenged." President Lincoln not only demonstrated the cyclical nature that is human history, but he also recognized the duty we have as citizens of the United States to learn our history, and therefore uphold the Constitution.

The precedent of knowing one's history began with the men who wrote ours. The founding fathers were very much aware of their past with Great Britain, and the future that they wanted in this new land of freedom. George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, and James Madison may have all been born in the United States, but each were well aware of their ancestors motive - the freedom to establish a new identity - that brought them to a land an ocean away from their birthplace. They also knew the abuses the Spanish and Portugese empires had committed against colonized people in the New World, and therefore the likelihood that their imperialist homeland of Great Britain would do the same. And so, once the British began to tighten their grip on the thirteen colonies with acts like the Stamp Act of 1765 and the Intolerable Acts of 1774, our patriots rebelled. The result of their knowledge of history, their bravery, and their unwavering commitment to freedom is the nation we have the privilege of calling home today. America by definition is a nation where very different people, from very different pasts, come together to create one common history. History is essentially part of our legacy, and therefore, on these strong foundations, it is our duty to share it.

The preamble of the Constitution begins with the words "We the People." However, very few of us today even know who "We the People" are. According to the Woodrow Wilson

National Fellowship Foundation who along with Lincoln Park Strategies team released a survey on October 3rd 2018, only 36% out of 1,000 naturally born citizens passed the United States Citizenship Test. Even more disturbing is the fact that while respondents 65 and older passed at a rate of 74%, only 19% of test takers 45 and younger passed. This problem has reached epidemic level proportions, however that does not mean it cannot be solved. As citizens of the United States it is our duty to increase this percentage of people who know the history of our nation. The 2016 presidential election resulted in many concerned citizens after unreliable fake news sources were accused of negatively impacting public opinions. With the supremacy of the internet, social media, and online algorithms in today's political climate, it is crucial that future generations are given strong foundations on the definitive facts of history rather than on isolated facts that fail to encapture the totality of events that led to this particular moment we exist within currently. No one could understand the war on terror if they did not have previous knowledge of events like the 9/11 attacks on the Twin Towers. No one could understand the long term debate on the legality of abortion if they did not have previous knowledge of the case Roe v. Wade in 1973, and the women's rights movement that coupled this landmark decision. Finally, no one could understand the problems in relation to race and ethnicity that persist in our nation if they had no knowledge of the Civil Rights movement, the Detroit riots, or the Charlottesville protests. History brightens the darkness that is a future without any context of the past.

It has been said that children are our future, and therefore knowledge of the progress we have already made will only serve to benefit our nation's young minds in their future endeavours to uphold our constitution. I would have to say that one of the worst feelings ever occurs when it appears as though every positive step that you take forward simultaneously results in two steps backward. This terrible reality is something we risk if not for those that uphold their duties to this nation through informing those still unaware of our past. In some regards it is a bit of a hassle to relay this knowledge to young people who at some points in time appear completely uninterested in what happened over two hundred years ago. However, ignorance is not always bliss, especially when we fail to learn lessons from our past and history repeats itself. An infamous example is the genocide that occurred under the Nazi regime during World War II, and its unfortunate likeness to the genocide and ethnic cleansing that would occur in the Western Sudan region of Darfur over 70 years later. I may be assuming too much in connecting the repetition of the past in our current age as a result of a failure to learn the lessons of our past, because in reality many other factors are involved. But, the value of history cannot be argued against.

Okay, fine. It's true that the majority of the reason we teach children about history is so that they learn from the mistakes we have already made in the past. However, learning about history also creates a sense of hope for what lies ahead. Back when the founding fathers were fighting in the American Revolution, their odds were bleak. The thirteen colonies had militias made up of inexperienced farmers while the British had a trained army ready to defend its empire at a moments notice. And yet, the American patriots were able to beat all odds and create a nation and a Constitution stronger than any other ever seen before it. This American spirit did

not end here but would continue with America's development into the greatest nation in the world. Our people were able to build skyscrapers, grow economically, and establish a unique blend of values and cultures from its diverse constituents. History may reveal a lot of mistakes, but it also reveals that we are all human and that mistakes happen. More importantly history reveals that mistakes do not need to persist, and that just as likely as we are to make mistakes, we as United States Citizens are as likely to get through it all to continue growing as a diverse, yet united people. It is not just about the history, but as citizens of these United States it is also about how we react to it. From the beginning, America has always been a nation of doing and of progress. It is written within our very constitution that the United States is a nation continually striving "to form a more perfect union..." and therefore as citizens that live according to the words of the Constitution, we must strive to continually improve and learn from time.

The duties of citizens to our United States Government as delegated by the Constitution include abiding by local, federal, and state law, participating in the democratic process, respecting the rights, beliefs, and opinions of others, and defending the country if need should arise. While not stated outright in the Constitution, sharing our history as the American people with future generations of this great nation stands among these crucial obligations. History cannot be changed, but the events of our future are still malleable. The future lies within the minds of America's children: minds that need history.