

One \$2,500 College Scholarship

Optimist International Essay Contest

Topic for the 2016-17 School Year is: "Chasing Optimism in the Face of Challenges"

Who: Youth under the age of 18 as of October 1, 2016 located in the United States, Canada, or the Caribbean.

How To Enter: Interested students must contact their local Optimist Club. They need to submit an essay on the pre-assigned topic. To find out a contact, please e-mail the Programs Department at programs@optimist.org.

The Essay Contest planning pages are intended for use by Optimist Clubs in organizing and conducting a contest in their Club. They contain no information on entering the contest and are of no use to students wishing to enter the contest. Students must contact their local Optimist Club.

When:

Students

All Club-level contests are held by early February. Student submissions will not be accepted after the Club-level contests have closed. Please contact your District Chair for more information.

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!

The guidelines require that contestants be under the age of 18 as of October 1, 2016 and attending school in the United States, Canada, or the Caribbean. Club winners advance to the District contest to compete for a \$2,500 college scholarship. The District-level scholarships are funded by the Optimist International Foundations.

Application for 2016-2017 Optimist International Essay Contest

Name _____ M F
 Address _____
 City _____
 State/Province _____ Zip/Postal Code _____
 Telephone (____) _____
 E-mail _____
 Date of Birth ____/____/____ Age _____

Have you participated in any other Optimist Club's Essay Contest this school year? Yes No

Contestant Agreement:

I have studied the rules of the contest, and I will be bound by all of the requirements.

Contestant's Signature _____ Date ____/____/____

Parent or Guardian Permission:

I give my permission for my child/ward to participate in this contest.

Signature _____ Date ____/____/____

Relationship _____

I, _____ grant the Optimist Club/International my permission to use a picture of my son/daughter _____ for their public relations purposes. Optimist Club/International may use the photo in any publication they see fit.

Sponsoring Optimist Club Name _____

Sponsoring Optimist Club Number _____

Please send application to address below:

Official Topic: "Chasing Optimism in the Face of Challenges"

Essay Contest Rules

Each contestant must be given a copy of the rules and complete the entry form. The rules contain information about the contest, judging and awards.

Section I - General Rules

- The Optimist International Essay contest is divided into two levels of competition: Club and District.
- Contestants must enter through a local Optimist Club, or an At-Large contest if a local club is not available. An At-Large student may not have competed in an Optimist International or District contest in the same year.
- Contestants must compose an original essay with limited guidance from others. Webster's dictionary defines an essay as an analytic or interpretive literary composition. Works of fiction or poetry will not be accepted.
- All District-level competitions must have a minimum of 3 contestants participating.
- Optimist International will have the right to edit, publish or otherwise duplicate any essay entered into the contest without payment to the author.

Section II - Qualifications for Contestants

- The contest is open to students under age 18 as of October 1st of the current Optimist International Contest year (October 1 – September 30). Students must enter in the District in which they reside. U.S. students attending school on military installations outside the U.S. are eligible to enter in their last home of record.
- Contestants are eligible for only one Club's contest during any given year.

- No student who has previously won a District Optimist Essay contest scholarship will be eligible to compete at any level of the competition again.
- All contestants at each level of the contest must show proof of age before competing. Optimist Clubs may require a copy of birth certificate or passport before participating if offering a Club scholarship separate from Optimist International. District winners must provide a copy of birth certificate or passport with the District entry documentation.

Section III - Contest Rules

- Participants must write on the official topic.
- Each entry must begin with a title page containing the official topic, number of words, writer's name, address, phone number, name of school and date of birth.
- At the top of page 1 should be the official topic and the number of words (penalty of 2 points for lack of topic and 5 points for failure to identify the total number of words correctly).
- Essays must be typewritten and double-spaced. (Deduction of 5 points)
- Essays must contain at least 700 words but no more than 800 words. Every word of the essay is counted. This does not include the title, bibliography or footnotes. Hyphenated words count as 1 word (Deduction of 5 points for each 25 words over/under limit).
- Each page of the essay must be numbered starting with page 1 of the essay, not the title page. The numbers must be centered at the bottom of each page.
- Any quotations or copyrighted material used must be identified properly. For example, use of a specific writer's format (such as MLA) may be specified by the instructor overseeing the contest. Failure to identify non-original material will result in disqualification.
- No references can be made in the essay that identifies the student, parents, school, community, sponsoring Optimist Club or District. (Deduction of 5 points or fraction based on degree of identification)

- An essay may be written in either English, French, or Spanish if the language used is an official language of the country in which the sponsoring Club is located.
- The entry must be stapled together in the upper left-hand corner. Covers of any type are not accepted.

Section IV - Judging and Timing

- Judging will be completed by a panel of three qualified judges. At the Club level, judges may be Optimist Members, who are not acquainted with the contestants. At the District level, judges must be non-Optimists.
- In an effort to conceal the identity of each contestant, each entry will be assigned a number by the Essay Contest Chair. The assigned number will be placed on the title page and page 1 of the essay. The title page will then be detached and retained by the Essay Contest Chair. The judges will be given the essay bearing only the assigned number.
- Judges will not discuss or compare essays being judged.
- Only judges can assign a penalty or award points.

Section V - Scoring

- Scoring procedures at all levels of the contest will be identical.
- Material Organization – logical interpretation of the subject, adherence to topic: 40 points
 - Vocabulary and Style – phrasing and continuity: 30 points
 - Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling: 20 points
 - Neatness: 5 points
 - Adherence to Contest Rules – prepared in the proper format: 5 points

Section VI - Penalties

- Failure to list official topic: 2 points
- Failure to accurately identify total number of words: 5 points
- Failure to type essay and double-space: 5 points
- Failure to stay within the 700-800 word limit: 5 points for each 25 words or fraction based on degree

- Club level – medallion scholarship for the first-place winner
- District level – plaque and a \$2,500 college scholarship for the first-place winner

Section VII - Awards

- Scholarships are funded by the Optimist International Foundation in the U.S. and Caribbean or the Canadian Children's Foundation in Canada. Scholarships awarded are for use at a college, university or trade school only.
- All scholarships will be payable to the educational institution of the recipient's choice, subject to the approval of Optimist International.
- Scholarships must be used in a school located in the United States, Caribbean or Canada. All scholarships will be administered by Optimist International.
- Winners of an Optimist International scholarship must claim their scholarship by the age of 25.

For more information contact:

Contact Person: _____
 Contact Address: _____

Contact Phone or Email: _____